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Harnessing Collaborative Technologies

Helping Funders Work Together Better

Produced by

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the Foundation Center

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About the Monitor Institute

Monitor Institute is a social change consultancy that works with innovative leaders at nonprofits and foundations to advance social impact across a diverse range of issues. Monitor Institute strives to be a scout for social innovation, bringing new approaches to clients and contributing to the public debate on leading-edge topics such as impact investing, strategic philanthropy, and networked collaboration. As a for-profit/for-benefit hybrid, Monitor Institute pursues social impact while operating as a fully integrated unit of Deloitte Consulting LLP. Deloitte refers to one or more of Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu Limited, a UK private company limited by guarantee, and its network of member firms, each of which is a legally separate and independent entity. For more information, please visit monitorinstitute.com or call (415) 932-5382.

About the Foundation Center

Established in 1956, the Foundation Center is the leading source of information about philanthropy worldwide. Through data, analysis, and training, it connects people who want to change the world to the resources they need to succeed. The Center maintains the most comprehensive database on U.S. and, increasingly, global funders and their grants — a robust, accessible knowledge bank for the sector. It also operates research, education, and training programs designed to advance knowledge of philanthropy at every level. Thousands of people visit the Center's web site each day and are served in its five regional library/learning centers and its network of more than 470 funding information centers located in public libraries, community foundations, and educational institutions nationwide and around the world. For more information, please visit foundationcenter.org or call (212) 620-4230.

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Download *Harnessing Collaborative Technologies: Helping Funders Work Together Better* at foundationcenter.org/gainknowledge/research/pdf/collab-tech.pdf and monitorinstitute.com/downloads/what-we-think/collaborative-technologies/Harnessing_Collaborative_Technologies.pdf.

An executive summary, *Key Findings From Harnessing Collaborative Technologies: Helping Funders Work Together Better*, is available at foundationcenter.org/gainknowledge/research/pdf/collab-tech-summary.pdf and monitorinstitute.com/downloads/what-we-think/collaborative-technologies/Harnessing_Collaborative_Technologies_(ExecSummary).pdf.

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Readers can access an interactive resource for identifying tools to facilitate collaboration created by GrantCraft, a joint service of the Foundation Center and the European Foundation Centre, at collaboration.grantcraft.org.

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Interview Study Participants

This report includes an analysis of interviews with 37 leading philanthropy professionals and technology experts. The following is a list of the interview study participants:

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GlobalGiving

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The Wallace Foundation

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Sandra Jacobsen
Jacobsen Associates

Beth Kanter (former)*
The David & Lucile Packard Foundation

Christopher Langston
The John A. Hartford Foundation

Katy Locker (former)*
Hudson Webber Foundation

Michele Lord
Public Interest Projects

Geri Mannion
Carnegie Corporation of New York

Mary Manuel
The McKay Foundation

Julie Meenan
The Josephine S. Gumbiner Foundation

Steven Midgley
Mixrun

Tad Milbourn
Intuit

Anne Miskey
Funders Together to End Homelessness

Hope Neighbor
Hope Consulting

Sarah Nichols
ClimateWorks Foundation

Catherine Obits
The Gerber Foundation

Rick Reed
Garfield Foundation

Norma Rollins
Donors' Education Collaborative

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The Annie E. Casey Foundation

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*Denotes that the participant has moved on to another position since being interviewed.

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Foreword

Today, technology is like air and water: it is everywhere and permeates virtually every challenge that foundations and donors of all kinds seek to address with their funding. A range of new collaborative technologies from both inside and outside philanthropy—social networking sites, file sharing tools, crowdsourcing systems, wikis, and almost too many others to name—are fundamentally changing the way we communicate and connect.

These new tools allow people to easily engage and connect irrespective of geographic distance, provide the opportunity to access a greater diversity of perspectives and expertise, and can facilitate accelerated learning and on-demand access to information—all while reducing the costs of participation and coordination. As network theorist Clay Shirky, the author of *Here Comes Everybody: The Power of Organizing Without Organizations*, explains, "Most of the barriers to group action have collapsed, and without those barriers, we are free to explore new ways of gathering together and getting things done."

Many funders have begun to use technology to explore new ways of working together, from casual peer learning to joint funding and strategy development. This report is a story about how new tools are changing the way funders collaborate. It is divided into three primary sections:

- **Emerging technologies and the changing context for philanthropic collaboration.** This section explores the current state of collaborative activity in philanthropy and the shifting landscape of collaborative technologies that is transforming the way we share information and work together.

- **An overview of collaborative needs and tools.** This section explores the types of supports that are required to foster collaboration in philanthropy and highlights the ways that the tools are already being used by funders to help them work together. It provides funders interested in collaboration with a better understanding of the new tools that are available and how they are changing philanthropic practice.

- **Recommendations for improving the collaborative technology landscape.** This section highlights gaps, trends, and lessons from intensive research on collaborative technologies, and discusses the incentives that could help increase collaboration and the use of these tools in the field. It is intended for funders, technology developers, and users who are interested in promoting collaboration and the use of collaborative tools in philanthropy.

And while no written document can actively keep pace with all of the continuous changes and developments in technology, the report includes profiles of a sampling of the tools that are now available to give a flavor of the wide diversity and tremendous potential of the new technologies to strengthen philanthropic practice and increase impact on public problems.

The findings are derived from a joint investigation by a combined team from the Monitor Institute and the Foundation Center. The research included an extensive literature review on collaboration in philanthropy, detailed analysis of trends from recent Foundation Center survey data, review of over 170 online tools, and interviews with 37 leading philanthropy professionals and technology experts.

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Emerging Technologies and the Changing Context for Philanthropic Collaboration

The story about tools for collaboration in philanthropy doesn't actually begin with the tools. It begins with the need. Philanthropy today faces a wide range of what design theorist Horst Rittel called "wicked problems"—large, complicated issues that are difficult to solve because of the scale and complexity of the problem, the number of stakeholders involved, and their interconnection with other problems. Examples include climate change, entrenched poverty, public education reform, and pandemics.

For these types of problems, working alone to identify the issue, formulate a theory of change, implement the solution, and measure progress may no longer be sufficient. Instead, it will be critical to identify and engage an array of stakeholders who care about addressing the issue, build a shared understanding of the problem, mobilize resources that match the scale of the challenges, work together to test a range of possible solutions, and create feedback loops and systems for sharing that can facilitate collective learning and informed action.

And while large, intensive, cross-sector co-investments have become more common, there are a wider range of approaches to working together that can be valuable. In addition to co-investing, collaboration in philanthropy can include all types of sharing, coordination, and cooperation among funders and donors—from informal, ad hoc peer learning to formal, consensus-based collaborative structures.

For the purposes of this research, we define funders' (both individual and institutional) approaches to working together across three different "intensities." *Lower-intensity* collaboration focuses on how funders can operate independently, but with an understanding of what others are doing. Funders working in this way may use awareness of collective efforts to improve their own individual choices and to align activities, but they may not necessarily "do" anything together at all. *Mid-intensity* collaboration involves interaction among funders engaging in a committed co-learning partnership or a working relationship that involves some degree of planning and exchange to align activities and responsibilities in complementary ways. *Higher-intensity* collaboration includes cases where funders formally commit to joint goals and strategies and pool resources to support collective activities.

Yet even as funders recognize that individual action may not be enough, joint efforts of all intensities remain relatively infrequent. Fifty-three percent of the 1,077 respondents to the Foundation Center's 2012 "Foundation Giving Forecast Survey" reported having collaborated with other funders, with 23 percent indicating the use of "pooled funds" and 44 percent reporting engaging in "strategic alignments." Fewer than one in five funders evaluate staff based on their collaborative efforts, about one out of every ten funders have formal policies encouraging collaboration, and just 4 percent provide incentives to encourage collaboration.

Even among foundations that do collaborate, coordinated efforts make up a modest share of their funding—almost a third of collaborative funders report that just 1 to 2 percent of their funding goes through collaborations, while only 8 percent of funders allocated more than 20 percent of their giving to collaborative approaches.

This is because too often working collaboratively means giving up individual control, overcoming logistical barriers to working together, being patient with time-consuming group processes, and figuring out ways to manage conflicting priorities, timetables, cultures, and goals—even as the benefits of doing so are often hard to see and measure. Moreover, foundations don't "have" to collaborate. Because the field is voluntary and independent by nature—unconstrained by the need to please political constituencies or maintain shareholder value—there is no pressure that forces any one actor to respond to another, to learn, or to change course. Even though they often aspire to do more, individual philanthropists and institutions can technically act without much reference to the success or failure of their efforts or to what others do.

Despite these inherent barriers to collaboration, the emergence and ubiquity of new connective technologies both inside and outside the field of philanthropy are presenting an exciting opportunity for change. New tools make it easier than ever before for funders to overcome traditional barriers to collaboration in order to share information, connect with others, and work together.

Understanding the technology landscape

Employing tools to help us do these things is nothing new—we've been using phones, photocopiers, and faxes for years. What's new is that emerging collaborative technologies now allow us to do them bigger, better, faster, and cheaper than ever before. Where we once would have had to cut out an informative article from the newspaper, photocopy it, put the copies in envelopes, add postage, and mail them to our closest colleagues, we can now instantly broadcast a link to thousands of friends—and others we don't even know—with a few simple strokes.

At this point, most of us have dabbled with at least a few of the new technologies—whether it's reading a blog or a tweet, searching for information on Wikipedia, using GIS mapping tools to find key

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data about someplace nearby or far away, or linking with friends on social networking sites like Facebook and LinkedIn. But there's an incredible array of tools available beyond what most of us have sampled. To make sense of the options, we have categorized over 170 tools into a landscape of collaborative technologies. These different types of emerging technologies are allowing people to do old things in new ways, and to develop new ways of working that could not have been imagined just five or ten years ago. And they are inherently social, because of the new relationships and structures that result from their use.

For-profit businesses have by necessity begun to embrace many of these new tools into their work processes. But in many cases, philanthropic organizations remain somewhat behind the curve, and can make important gains by beginning to explore how new collaborative technologies can increase their impact. As the Monitor Institute publication *What's Next for Philanthropy* posited in 2010, "the new connective technologies [may be] the Trojan horse of change in philanthropy and the social sector as a whole.… The changes that have already shaken the media and music industries now are sweeping into and through the social change world."

Most of the collaborative tools we discuss in this report aren't specifically tailored to the needs of philanthropy; they're built for general social or business purposes. But in many cases, the technologies can be adapted readily for use by funders. Many

Landscape of Collaborative Technologies

COLLABORATION DIAGNOSTICS

IBM Collaboration Assessment Tool
Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory

COMMUNICATIONS & MEETINGS

webex, anymeeting, StartMeeting, join.me, Adobe Connect, TelePresence, Google groups, Blackboard collaborate, Campfire, Blogger, Conceptboard, skype, GoToMeeting, twitter, yammer, WordPress.com, ClickWebinar, Zip, YouTube, Google Hangouts, FUZEBOX, GroupBoard.com, FreeConferenceCall.com

COMPREHENSIVE COLLABORATION WORKSPACES

Ubidesk, oogwave, ThoughtFarmer, SharePoint, SOSIUS, Socialtext, zoho Work.Online, Drupal Commons, fmyi, webex weboffice, jive, kablink, huddle, chatter, KARL, wiggio, iCOHERE

CONFERENCE MANAGEMENT

Lanyrd.com, Eventbrite

CONTENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

Drupal, Joomla!, Plone

DATA AGGREGATION, SHARING, & STANDARDS

FOUNDATION DIRECTORY ONLINE, GIIRS, IRIS, GLASSPOCKETS, NGOsource, eGrant Reporter, GuideStar, Virtual Data Project, foundationconnect, zoho CRM, NHI Success Measures Project, FLUXX, issuelab, salesforce, Intuit QuickBase, CHANGEIMPACT, Salesforce, OpenAidRegister, TRASI, CHARITY NAVIGATOR

DATA ANALYSIS & VISUALIZATION

GAPMINDER, orgnet.com InFlow 3.1, SocialNetFlash, GivingData, PHILANTHROPY IN/SIGHT, GoodData, COMMETRIX, IKNOW, The Community Platform, kaggle, centrifuge, WASHfunders.org, Many Eyes, STRATEGY LANDSCAPE™, tableau, CFinder

DATA GATHERING

Quora, SurveyMonkey, competiq, ALL OUR IDEAS, foursquare, uservoice, geo, YOUTHTRUTH, plaxo, StackExchange, GREAT Nonprofits

DATA ORGANIZING

EVERNOTE, MindView, mindjet, THE BRAIN, MindGenius, Mindomo, mindmeister, delicious

FILE SHARING & COLLABORATIVE WRITING

onehub, Dropbox, Drupal, Annotate, MediaWiki, Google Drive, box, egnyte, netdocuments, EtherPad, DokuWiki, Alfresco

FUNDRAISING & MATCHING

foundation REGISTRY, MissionFish, indiegogo, DonorsChoose.org, globalgiving, Network for Good, CDP, KICKSTARTER, boistr, crowdrise, Early, ventureintro, KIVA, click2cause, Give Well, AngelList, Social Impact EXCHANGE

INNOVATION MANAGEMENT

Intuit Brainstorm, IdeaScale, learning registry, changemakers, INNOCENTIVE

JOINT DECISION MAKING

groupMind express, TeamVoice, deci, thumb, loomio

NEWS AGGREGATION

PND PHILANTHROPY NEWS DIGEST, Flipboard, digg, NEWS.ME, NEWSMOTION.org

PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Project, MIRADI, Basecamp, Trello, 5pm, asana, tracky, glasscubes, LeanKit, Teambox, centraldesktop

SCHEDULING & CALENDAR SHARING

Evite, Paperless POST, Doodle, Google, agreedate, Google+ Events

SOCIAL NETWORKING & ONLINE COMMUNITY

facebook, LinkedIn, Ning, Google+, Meetup, causes, yammer, TakePart, wiser, RE AMP, OpenArchitecture, NationBuilder, care2, skoll world forum, idealist.org, reddit, Lithium

are web-based platforms and applications for smart phones (or both), so with the launch of a browser and the creation of an account, they have the potential to dramatically change the way philanthropy is practiced. And with the emergence of the virtual "cloud," large groups of people can easily share data across multiple devices and locations. This is a different world from the days when executive and program staff had to ask their information technology staff to install software onto their desktop computers.

The landscape of these new technologies is overwhelming. New entrants are emerging every day, and the rapidly shifting and category-spanning nature of many of the tools makes it difficult to develop any sort of simple, comprehensive taxonomy. The landscape on the previous page provides a sense of the wide range of new tools that are now available and which have the potential to promote collaborative activity in the field. By no means comprehensive, it is meant to provide an entry point for thinking about tools that could improve the way funders work. It's worth noting that many of the tools fit into more than just one category, but we've tried to organize them here according to their most salient collaborative function.

Across the more than 170 collaborative tools that were reviewed for this project, several key distinctions may be of interest to potential tool users, designers, and supporters:

- **Audience.** Some tools like FoundationConnect, Foundation Registry i3, and *Philanthropy In/Sight* are tailored to the philanthropy sector, while others like Basecamp, Doodle, Huddle, and Skype are designed for broader audiences and applications. Both types of tools, however, can be useful in supporting funder collaboration. And while many philanthropic tools are designed with institutional users in mind, most can just as easily serve individual donors.

- **Applicability.** Some tools, such as those for communications and meetings, comprehensive collaboration workspaces, and project management, will be useful right "off the shelf" in supporting almost any funder collaboration. Others are more specialized and are not focused directly on collaboration, such as innovation management and news aggregation tools. We included these to spark thinking about how tools can be helpful at specific moments in the collaboration process to address specific needs. But these specialized tools will require targeted use or adaptation in order to support funder collaboration.

- **Access.** Most of the tools we reviewed are available to the public, but not all are free. Many use a "freemium" pricing model that provides basic functionalities for free but requires users to purchase a premium subscription for more advanced features. Additionally, a few tools in our review were designed for private communities and are not open to the public (such as RE-AMP Commons and Intuit Brainstorm). We included these "closed" tools because they provide valuable examples of how technology can support collaboration, but the tools might need to be adapted or deals might need to be made with the original developers to apply them to other funder collaboratives.

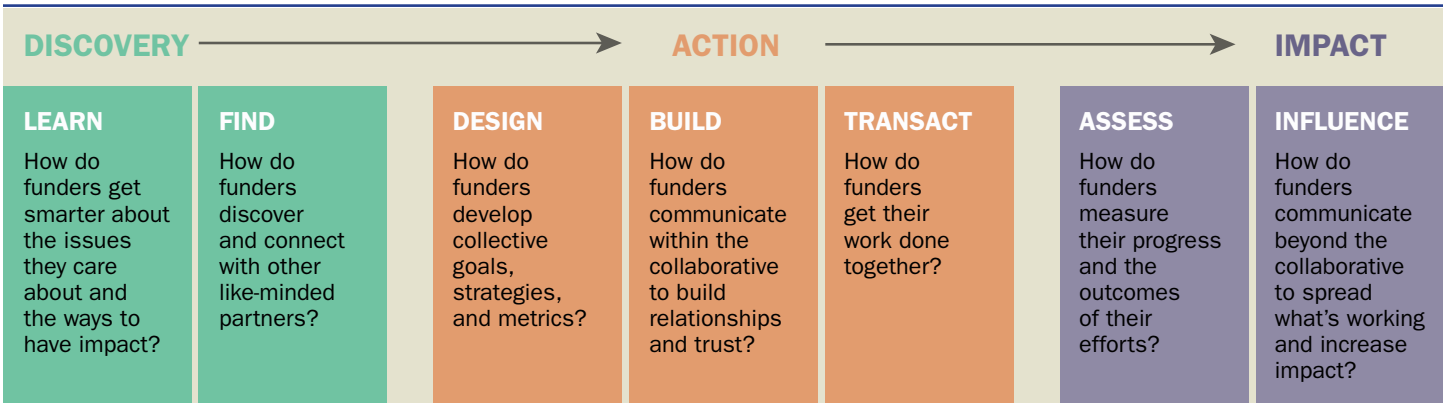
Start with needs, not tools

With so many tools to choose from, it's hard to know where to start—which is why technologists and industry experts of all stripes remind us that it's almost always a mistake to begin with the tools themselves.

"Good design begins with the user," explains Cynthia Gibson, a long-time philanthropic consultant and author of the GrantCraft guide *Funder Collaboratives: Why and How Funders Work Together*. "You can't lead with tools. Tools are just a means for solving a problem, so you have to back into them by starting with people and their real needs." Tools developed with the user in mind are more likely to fit the wants, requirements, and limitations of end-users, making them more likely to be adopted.

So what are the collaborative needs of philanthropic organizations and individual donors? What are the specific functional supports funders need to be able to work better together? Our team's analysis identified three broad categories—discovery, action, and impact—and seven specific types of activities that are required to facilitate funder collaboration.

Collaborative Needs



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The **discovery** phase of donor collaboration is about a flow of ideas and people. How do funders **learn** or get smarter about the issues they care about? How do they **find** and connect with potential partners?

The **action** phase is focused on implementation. How do funders develop goals, **design** strategies, and agree upon metrics? How do they communicate within a collaborative to **build** a sense of community? And, practically speaking, how do they **transact** their work and get it done together?

The **impact** phase for a funder collaborative includes an emphasis on measuring and sharing lessons learned. How do funders **assess** their progress and measure the outcomes of their collaborative efforts? How do they communicate beyond a collaborative to **influence** programs, practice, and policy?

Funders can use tools to help them collaborate across the entire spectrum of these needs or they can come together to work with others on specific elements, such as learning about key issues or joining with peers to try to influence policymakers, while working independently in all other respects. Within each of the areas, funders are beginning to explore how new tools can help meet their collaborative needs.

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An Overview of Collaborative Needs and Tools

In this section, we provide a sense of which types of tools might be tapped to meet particular philanthropic needs and how they can be used. We also include brief illustrations that aim to capture the diversity and potential for how tools can help funders work together better on pressing societal problems. Many additional examples of tools matched to collaborative needs are included in Appendix A.

Discovery

The "discovery" phase includes work that funders do to learn and understand the issues and fields in which they engage—scanning the landscape for information about the state of the field, critical problems, lessons learned, and effective solutions, as well as finding and vetting funding partners, potential grantees, key stakeholders, consultants, and other experts. The phase was cited by funders we interviewed as the area where technology could most easily trigger major improvements in current practice. This may especially be the case for individual donors and smaller foundations, who often do not have access to the research, resources, and networks of larger institutional philanthropies.

COLLABORATIVE NEED: LEARNING

How do funders get smarter about the issues they care about and the ways to have impact? *"Learning" activities include the work that funders do to operate in informed ways and stay current on issues. They include building an understanding of the context surrounding their work, the system they're intervening in, the issue or problem they're focused on, the possible array of solutions, and the lessons learned from past efforts.*

Funders sit at a nexus of many different information and data flows—academic and applied research, field- and sector-wide analyses, program evaluations, traditional and new media, and feedback from the on-the-ground experiences of grantees themselves. There's no shortage of data about the challenges we now face. The real problem is how to make sense of the flood of information out there, using the richness of accumulated knowledge to learn and make more informed choices. There's a feeling of information overload, and funders are looking for forums and trusted filters that can help them make sense of available information, sift through all of the noise, and pick out the information they need to guide their strategies and activities.

In our interviews with program staff, one lamented, "I need a better screen for the incoming news. It's tough because there is so much information out there. I get a few health research journals, but I cannot put a screen on them to say I only want studies on children ages zero to 18. Currently I get everything under the sun on this topic."

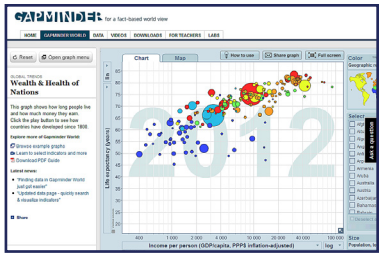
In addition, many funders have stockpiles of data and valuable reports from grantees that they do a poor job of sharing with the field. Even when data are aggregated and shared, expert analysis is often needed to identify important patterns and make sense of the data. One funder interviewed by our team described her collaborative needs by explaining, "We need tools to help us figure out what to do with all of this information. How do we maintain it and absorb it all?"

Technology tools can help meet this need by enabling groups of funders to more easily find information and learn together. For example:

- The web site **reddit** (reddit.com) allows users of all sorts to find, share, and discuss news and information, elevating "hot" content to bring it to people's attention and ensure that important information is easily accessible. The site, with more than two billion page views per month, provides an important forum for group discussions about emerging news and content, and it is increasingly being tailored to special interest sub-communities to facilitate conversation about specific topics and issues.

- The Foundation Center's **IssueLab** (issuelab.org) is working to more effectively gather, index, and share the collective intelligence of the social sector. PubHub, a catalog of annotated links to foundation-sponsored reports, has been combined with IssueLab's database of research produced by the nonprofit sector to create a unified, cloud-based platform of over 13,500 documents addressing pressing social problems. This free and open-source database can be filtered by author, funder, geography, issue area, and organization, and is searchable by keyword. The Foundation Center aims to increase access to this knowledge by making it broadly available through its web sites, building a network of knowledge centers embedded into other web sites, and developing content-sharing partnerships with libraries, archives, and online communities.

- **Gapminder** (gapminder.org) is a data visualization tool that helps users make sense of complex trends in global social and economic data using interactive, dynamic graphs that animate change over time. Developed by Swedish statistician Hans Rosling and later sold to Google, Gapminder (and Trendalyzer, the platform it was built on) aims to aggregate data and make it more accessible and easier to use for politicians and other key decision makers. It draws data from a variety of global institutions, including the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, the World Bank, and the International Labor Organization.



There are also many additional tools that can help with the collaborative need for learning. Appendix A begins with the collaborative needs taxonomy—learn, find, design, build, transact, assess, and influence—and aligns it with additional tool suggestions from the landscape of collaborative technologies. It's worth noting that several of these types of tools can also be used for other collaborative needs.

COLLABORATIVE NEED: FINDING PARTNERS

How do funders discover and connect with other like-minded partners? *"Finding" activities include tasks such as sourcing, vetting, and making connections with key stakeholders—funders, grantees, experts, thought leaders, consultants, communities, and intermediaries—to address problems.*

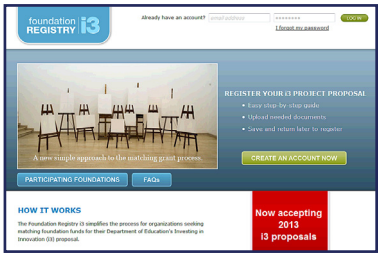
Many funders currently rely on low-tech and ad hoc means of finding funding partners and potential grantees—often through in-person meetings, conferences, traditional newspapers and periodicals, and personal connections. These current practices can be time consuming, inefficient, and limiting in the number of connections that can be made, and incur opportunity costs related to missed connections and potential partners who don't find each other.

As one funder noted, "The thing that has frustrated me the most is the lack of information on what others are doing. It would be nice if there was a place you could go to see what the other funders are doing and identify the ones you are interested in following up with."

Another funder involved in a very successful multi-funder collaborative added, "Finding other funding partners is a real need. We eventually hired consultants to help us find other potential funders, both national and local donors, who might want to join the collaborative. Maybe technology could help with this."

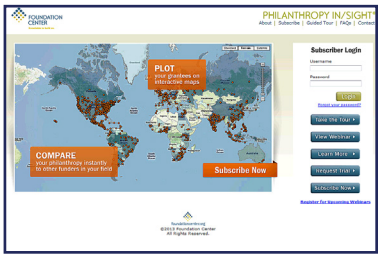
Indeed, in a few cases technology tools are already enabling groups of funders to more easily find the people and expertise they need to support their collaborative efforts. For example:

- The **Foundation Registry i3** (foundationregistryi3.org) was started by a group of education funders who recognized that the U.S. Department of Education's (USDOE) Investing in Innovation (i3) grants program created new opportunities to use technology to enhance collaboration and improve efficiency. In order to receive i3 grants from the USDOE, the highest-rated applicants must secure matching funds equal to a certain percentage of their grant award from the private sector. Starting with a founding group of a dozen funders, the Registry now includes participation by over 70 foundations and corporations.



The Registry combines an easy-to-use online platform with responsive people behind the scenes—an example of technology augmenting relationships and networks. It simplifies the discovery phase of connecting groups of like-minded applicants and funders during time-sensitive matching grant competitions and helps to create a more efficient marketplace. Applicants are encouraged to upload their materials to the Registry to increase the awareness and reach of their proposals to participating foundations. Registered funders can sort applicants by tag and category, view other foundations' interest levels and match considerations for proposals, and collaborate by sharing notes and comments on proposals in a password-protected area. During the 2010–2012 i3 grant cycles, 54 of the 85 highest-rated applicants were matched by one or more Registry funders, to the tune of over $73 million.

- **Philanthropy In/Sight®** (philanthropyinsight.org) is an interactive data visualization tool that combines the Foundation Center's data on funders, recipients, and grants with maps. Users can choose from a wide range of customization options to create maps that reveal patterns of giving and funding relationships. This grants data can be overlaid with demographic, socioeconomic, and other data sets to create compelling visual portraits showing geographic distribution, concentration, and gaps in funding. Several funder affinity groups including Animal Grantmakers, Funders for LGBTQ Issues, and the International Human



commissioned custom *Philanthropy In/Sight* maps to allow their members to see their giving in relationship to potential collaborators in their fields and regions of interest. These custom versions are accessed through their web sites for public engagement or behind a firewall as a member benefit.

Another potentially important set of tools in this space are the large social networking platforms like **Facebook, Google+,** and **LinkedIn** (facebook.com, plus.google.com, linkedin.com), which already have millions of members, including many foundation staff. If any of these existing social networks were to tailor their site more explicitly to help funders connect and collaborate more easily, they could have the advantage of enormous market share immediately. The hurdle of adoption has already been cleared with these mainstream social networking tools; instead the challenge is focusing them in ways that can be helpful for the work of philanthropy.

Action

One of the biggest ongoing challenges for funder collaboration is tied to how funders make decisions together. The "action" phase is about designing strategy, building a sense of community, and working together. In this phase, a challenge for collaborators, both individual and institutional, is related to burdensome process—the time and energy required for group decision making and action. Related predictors of trouble include a lack of clear roles and responsibilities for collaborators and an ill-defined collaborative governance process. Virtually every funder we interviewed for this project had a story about a negative experience with collaboration based on frustrations with group process.

Luckily, there are many existing tools that can make group process smoother, easier, and more efficient. Many of these tools have been built for broader markets, like the business sector, but could easily be applied to philanthropy. In addition to using individual tools to make specific aspects of collaborative work easier, funder collaboratives that want to streamline their group processes may also consider using a comprehensive collaboration workspace. These online workspaces integrate many individual tools for collaborative work like document sharing, calendar sharing, blogging, and group discussion boards and can simplify group process and reduce the need for lots of e-mail traffic among large groups.

COLLABORATIVE NEED: DESIGNING STRATEGIES

How do funders develop collective goals, strategies, and metrics? *Collaboration in designing strategies aims to ensure that collective efforts add up to more than the sum of their parts. Activities include developing a collective sense of the problem a group hopes to address, a shared vision and approach for solving the problem, and potential metrics for assessing progress.*

Collaborative action requires funders to build clarity across stakeholders about the goals they are aiming to address and the best leverage points and activities to bring about these changes. Working together requires groups to build a shared understanding of issues and circumstances, to grasp how individual goals and strategies interact, and to negotiate a framework for coordinating both joint and individual action.

A handful of new technology tools can address these challenges by helping aggregate individual information and facilitate group conversation and processes. For example:

- The **Strategy Landscape** (monitorinstitute.com/strategylandscape) is a data visualization tool that makes it much easier for funders to "see" the context in which they are investing—both the strategies that other funders are using to guide their investments and the organizations that are operating in the field and their specific projects and areas of focus. Designed by Monitor Institute, the Strategy Landscape tool aggregates data from multiple funders to create a picture of the field that includes both the forest (information on grantmaking strategies) and the trees (individual grant data). Education funders across the country are using the Strategy Landscape to better understand how their strategies intersect and to identify critical gaps in investment, and a number of local and regional funder collaboratives are piloting the tool as well.

- **competIQ** (competiq.com) could help funders tap into the collective wisdom of their colleagues and other stakeholders and experts as they develop grantmaking strategies. This tool combines wikis and prediction markets to better harness human intelligence—whether internal stakeholders or external expert networks—to solve strategic challenges. For example, a group of funders could post a strategic question or challenge on competIQ, allowing anonymous stakeholders to contribute strategies or solutions that address the core question, and stakeholders to

buy and sell the "idea" stocks. This "market" surfaces an array of solutions, statistical data about which are the most powerful ideas, and information about how the market came to its conclusions. Predictive marketplaces have been surprisingly effective in anticipating the outcomes of a wide range of future events—from product sales to elections to infectious disease activity. They can be harnessed to help funders and nonprofits use the wisdom of the crowd to assess the potential of different strategies for solving complex social problems.

COLLABORATIVE NEED: BUILDING COMMUNITY

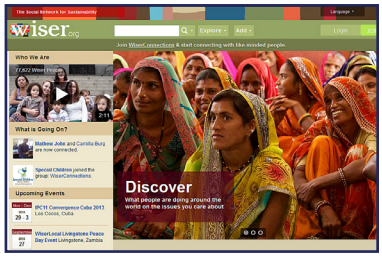
How do funders communicate within the collaborative to build relationships and trust? *Community-building activities are central to collaborative activity, and include tasks such as facilitating dialogue and communication within the group, building personal connections and bonds, developing governance systems and group processes, mediating problems, and facilitating and convening in an ongoing way.*

Virtually everyone who has studied and written about funder collaboration has emphasized the importance of personal relationships and trust. Online collaboration tools cannot replace this human element of collaboration, and shouldn't aim to. Instead, the tools can complement face-to-face interaction by providing a platform to sustain activity over time, to maintain and extend existing relationships, to facilitate dialogue and conversation, to expand a network to include others with similar interests, and to foster an ongoing sense of community.

Technology tools—from simple online user groups to sophisticated networking platforms—can help meet these needs by providing mechanisms for regular interaction and relationship building. According to one foundation staffer, "Social networking sites create a virtual table where people can find friends, sit down and chat, share ideas, and get to know each other. It'll never take the place of face-to-face meetings, but it can be an important supplement, both before and after people meet in person."

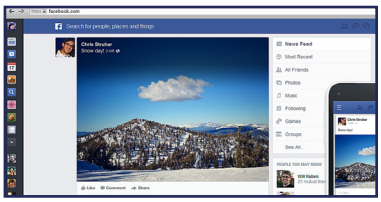
Some examples of social networking sites being used in philanthropy include:

- **WiserEarth** (wiser.org) sits at the intersection of social networking and social causes. Describing itself as "a global village for sharing and kinship-building for people who believe in a more just and sustainable world," WiserEarth provides inspiration for using technology to build community among geographically dispersed funders. Core functions for its 75,000+ members include discovering what people are doing around the world on issues; connecting like-minded people through discussion forums, online groups, and events; and sharing what members know and what they are doing to help and empower others.



- The **GEO Listserv** (geofunders.org) is a simple, low-tech tool that has been helpful in supplementing Grantmaker for Effective Organizations' regular in-person convenings and building a sense of community among a focused group of funders. GEO created the listserv as a peer information-sharing forum for its members to pose questions and solicit advice from other members. Through this listserv, members regularly share information and effective practices, and the questions often spark interesting discussion and debate.

- In addition, the social networking tools that we referred to in the "Finding Partners" section—**Facebook, Google+,** and **LinkedIn** (facebook.com, plus.google.com, linkedin.com)—are designed to create a sense of online community among people who might not be geographically close to each other. If any of these existing networks built a tailored interface to help funders interested in particular issues or places connect with each other and develop a sense of community, they could have an enormous and immediate impact on the philanthropy sector.



COLLABORATIVE NEED: TRANSACTING

How do funders get their work done together? *"Transacting" includes activities such as scheduling, holding meetings, maintaining collaborative communications, conducting shared due diligence, doing project planning, making decisions, managing financial transactions, and other coordinated activities.*

One of the biggest challenges to collaborative action is how to actually "get things done" together. Simple tasks like scheduling, conversing, and making decisions can become extremely difficult and time consuming when they have to take place across organizational walls and geographic distances. Transactions that are easily managed alone often become difficult when they have to be managed across multiple stakeholders.

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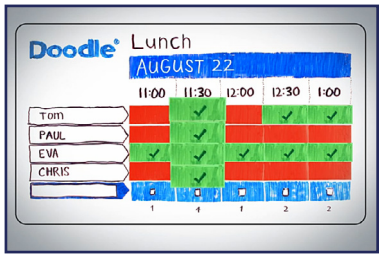
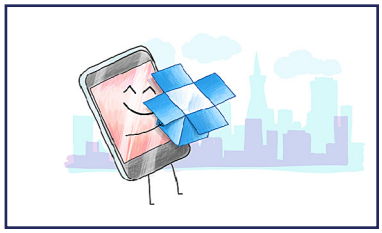
Many new technology tools are being developed for general purposes that make the coordination process easier and more efficient across organizations and geographies. For example:

- **Doodle** (doodle.com) is an effective solution to one of the most common and annoying problems for groups of people working together: scheduling meetings. Instead of dealing with a blizzard of e-mails back and forth between group members to try to find the date and time that works best for everyone, Doodle manages all of this input through a simple online interface. The meeting organizer creates an online poll including a number of the possible dates and times for the meeting, and then group members check off the time slots that work for them. Doodle totals up the responses and identifies the dates and times that work best for the largest number of people.

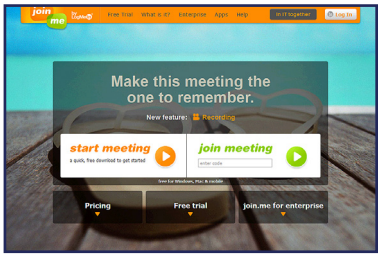


- **Dropbox** (dropbox.com) is another simple tool for a very simple purpose: sharing files among multiple people and devices. Files in Dropbox are stored in the cloud (on the Dropbox web site) and are automatically updated to all of the devices where Dropbox is installed (multiple computers, phones, etc.). When people share Dropbox files with colleagues, everyone has immediate access to their latest updates as well. Dropbox creates a local copy of each file on each device, so people can continue working on the documents in Dropbox even when they are offline. As soon as they are online again, the files are automatically updated for them.

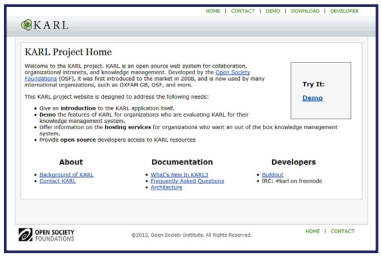


Other technology tools allow for synchronous or asynchronous collaboration. Synchronous tools such as chat platforms, videoconferencing, and screen-sharing software enable real-time communication in a same time but different place mode. Asynchronous tools such as collaboration workspaces and project management software allow users to connect according to their own convenience and schedule. For example:

- **join.me** (join.me) combines instant screen sharing and meeting tools in an application that anyone can use for both quick show-and-tells and formal presentations. The presenter launches the "share your screen with others" option and receives a nine-digit code. When the people on the other end of the line enter that code in the join/"view someone else's screen" option, they are able to see the initiator's desktop, allowing for mutual viewing of web sites, presentations, and other documents.



- **KARL** (karlproject.org), short for the Knowledge and Resource Locator, was initially developed in 2008 as a way to help the Open Society Foundations (OSF), a decentralized network of cultural and civil society organizations established by George Soros, to collaborate and share information. OSF tailored an open-source collaboration platform called Plone to allow individuals across the 40+ different Soros organizations to self-organize within topic-based communities of practice, each with their own wikis, blogs, and content management systems that allow the groups to manage ongoing discussions, share files and information, and develop joint calendars. Since it was created, the system has been iterated several times, and the platform is now used by approximately 1,600 Soros employees and more than 4,500 other invited guests (including community leaders, consultants, and issue experts). The customizable comprehensive collaborative workspace has been tailored to meet the needs of more than 15 disparate groups outside OSF, including Ariadne (a collaborative of European human rights funders), Oxfam, and a commercial architecture firm.



Impact

The "impact" phase of collaboration is a critical moment for funders to learn, assess progress, and make adjustments together, and also to extend the reach of their work to a broader audience. Funder needs related to impact can often involve the important tasks of gathering and disseminating feedback and other data, as well as the sharing of knowledge broadly with the field.

Technology has long played an important role in the collection, analysis, and sharing of data. But the emerging concept of "open data" and the growing capacity of groups of individuals to build collective data sets in the "cloud" using tools from organizations like Salesforce and Google are opening up important new possibilities for how the field can aggregate information and share it broadly with interested stakeholders.

According to Ralph Smith of the Annie E. Casey Foundation, though, "It's about more than just putting what we have in a shared database." It's about creating systems for helping leaders make sense of information and sharing that information across a group of actors to help everyone move towards desired outcomes.

Below we discuss some of the ways that online tools for data collection and for communication with large audiences can be applied to help funders increase the impact of their collaborative efforts.

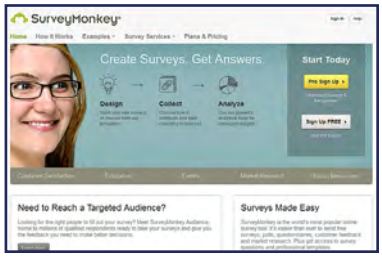
COLLABORATIVE NEED: ASSESSING

How do funders measure their progress and the outcomes of their efforts? *Collaborative assessment includes activities such as developing common approaches to data collection and reporting, conducting joint synthesis and pattern recognition of data, and implementing collective monitoring and evaluation to see whether collaborative activities are really moving the needle on shared issues of concern.*

After making significant investments, funders typically assess how the efforts they have supported are going, whether they are on course to deliver the desired outcomes, and what needs to be adjusted. But the process of evaluating progress in addressing social and environmental problems can be tricky for funders working on their own. It's even more difficult when working across organizational boundaries. Assessing a collaborative's impact adds new challenges, from developing common standards for data collection that allow aggregation to helping groups see and reflect on patterns in joint data sets to building feedback loops for sharing learning across organizations and activities.

Fortunately, new technologies are beginning to make it easier than ever before for groups of stakeholders to gather input and share information. For example:

- **SurveyMonkey** (surveymonkey.com) is a tool for designing online surveys, analyzing survey data, creating reports, and sharing findings with others. Surveys are one of the fundamental building blocks of assessment and evaluation. This tool can help groups of funders who are interested in soliciting feedback from a number of grantees, stakeholders, or beneficiaries.



- The **Cultural Data Project** (CDP) (culturaldata.org), a shared data system for tracking arts and cultural activities in local communities, has helped standardize outcome data for the arts sector and aggregate these data so that it is much easier to show the impact of arts and cultural organizations on local communities and regional economies. Incubated by the Pew Charitable Trusts, CDP collects data on finances, programming, operations, and performance of more than 14,000 arts and cultural organizations. Today, the data system is used heavily by hundreds of funders and thousands of organizations in the arts and cultural sector in 12 states and the District of Columbia.

By aggregating data from many arts organizations, CDP has become an important driver of efficiency, improvement, and increased investment in arts and cultural organizations across the country. Researchers are using CDP data to study the arts and culture sector and document its impact on local economies, schools, and communities. Arts advocates are using the data to make the case to policymakers for government investments in the arts. Funders are using CDP data to better understand the arts sector and to identify areas where capacity building is needed.

The Foundation Center creates custom web portals for funders and philanthropy networks that combine grants information, data visualization, research, news, and social media.

- **WASHfunders** (WASHfunders.org), for example, serves as a centralized information hub for any funder interested in water access, sanitation, and hygiene issues around the world. Components include a mapping application with aggregate and drill-down information on funders, grant recipients, and grants by geographic area served; curated research and abstracts of "must-read" publications; guest blogs and case studies highlighting what works; timely streams of news stories and social media; and a database compilation of outcome tools created by the field. A custom web portal focused on black male achievement, BMAfunders.org, has launched, and one on sustainable arts in America, sustainarts.org, is under development.

COLLABORATIVE NEED: INFLUENCING

How do funders communicate beyond the collaborative to spread what's working and increase impact? *"Influence" includes activities such as sharing and disseminating results and lessons learned; communicating with boards, policymakers, and other actors; and building additional support for key activities.*

In years past, "influencing" activities like disseminating the results of assessments were considered the wrap-up phase of a grant or funding initiative. Increasingly, funders and donor collaboratives are seeking strategies for sharing what they are learning in real time to allow for course correction, knowledge dissemination, and policy change. Social media tools enable iterative conversations to occur throughout the life cycles of funder collaborations.

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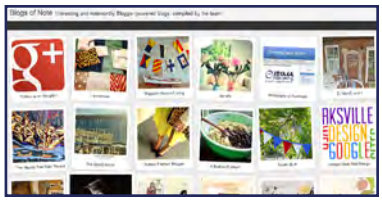
In some cases, this involves trying to convince policymakers to provide government support for an effective, proven program that was originally given seed funding by foundations. Other groups of funders will focus their "influencing" efforts on service providers in the field, aiming to spread an innovation or an effective practice more broadly.

Funders also face challenges in figuring out how to effectively learn from successes and failures in ways that can help grantmakers, grantees, policymakers, and other stakeholders develop the judgment to guide and improve efforts in the future. The challenge is not to avoid mistakes. Failures are inevitable when confronting complex social and environmental problems. The challenge is to make only new mistakes. Donors and nonprofits that admit their wrong turns and share what they learn can advance the whole field in the process. In this way, the lessons from failure become the essential building blocks for future success.

Technology tools can help groups of funders to spread the word about what they have learned and what works in many ways. For example:

- Self-publishing and mass communication tools like **Blogger** and **Twitter** (blogger.com, twitter.com) have become increasingly important for dissemination. As the traditional media sector shrinks, blogs have become a new "soapbox" for funders to share what they are learning and thinking about and to enable others to find and benefit from that knowledge. Beth Kanter's popular blog on nonprofits and social media is a good example, helping funders and activists keep pace with a rapidly shifting landscape of new technologies and networked approaches. Likewise, Twitter is a specialized communication service, referred to as "microblogging." All messages on Twitter must be very short, no more than 140 characters per tweet, but they allow for both "push" and "pull" strategies in engaging with target audiences.



- The **Learning Registry** (learningregistry.org) is an online platform that uses openness and a set of technical protocols to accelerate the dissemination and use of new knowledge and resources across the field of education. It is an open community of education content creators, publishers, curators, and consumers who are collaborating to broadly share digital educational resources, as well as information about how those resources are used in diverse learning environments. Applications that harvest and analyze data from the Learning Registry will allow educators to quickly find content specific to their unique needs, with user ratings and comments.

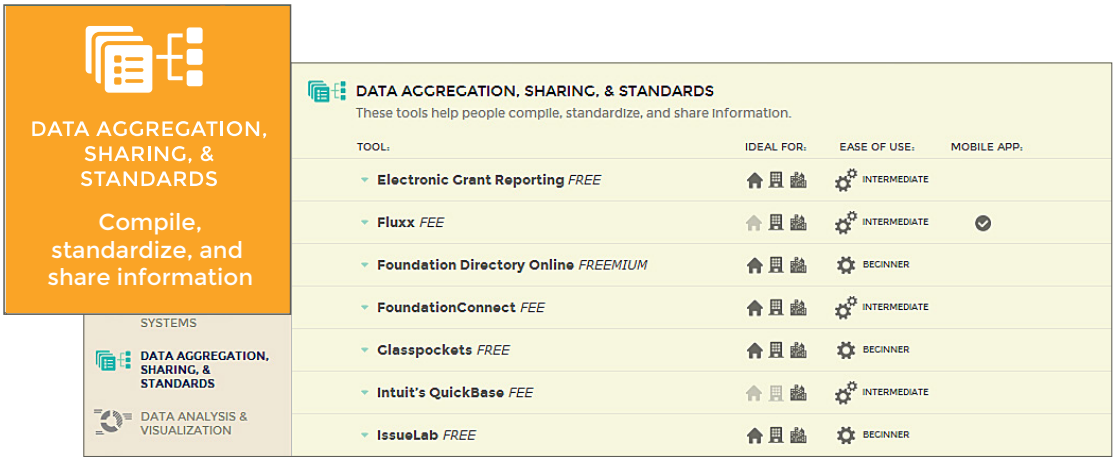
For a catalog of the full set of online tools we investigated for this report, see Appendix B.

Spotlight on GrantCraft's *Harnessing Collaborative Technologies* Interactive Tool Finder

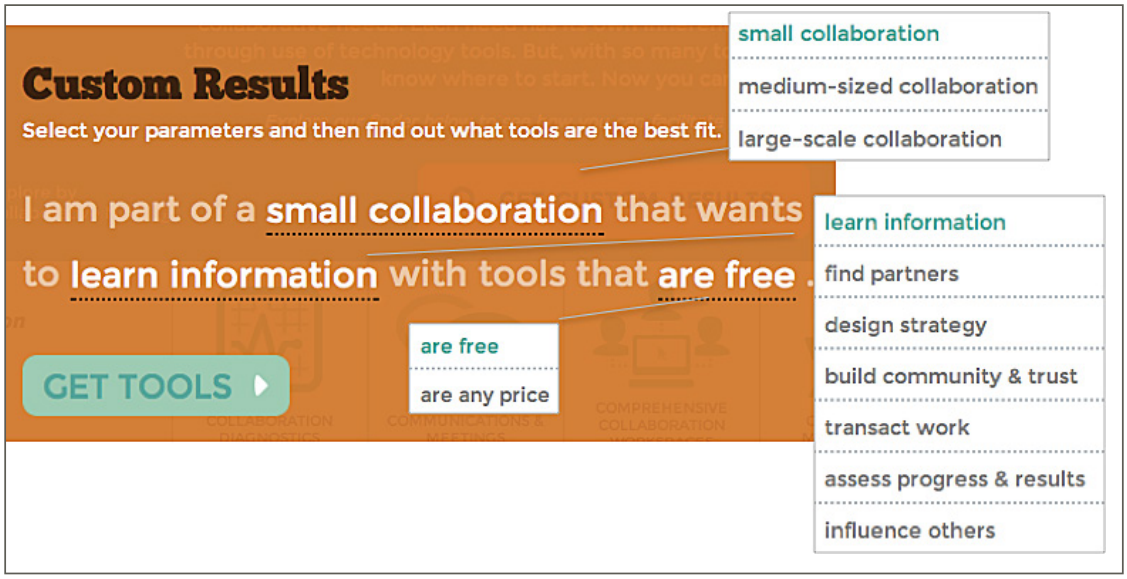
Using the research in this report, GrantCraft created an interactive tool finder (collaboration.grantcraft.org) to help funders get started. This free resource allows for exploration by the seven collaborative needs, 17 categories of tools, custom searching, or by the full list of tools. GrantCraft taps the practical wisdom of funders to develop resources that improve the philanthropy sector.

Funders can explore tools by their **collaborative need**:

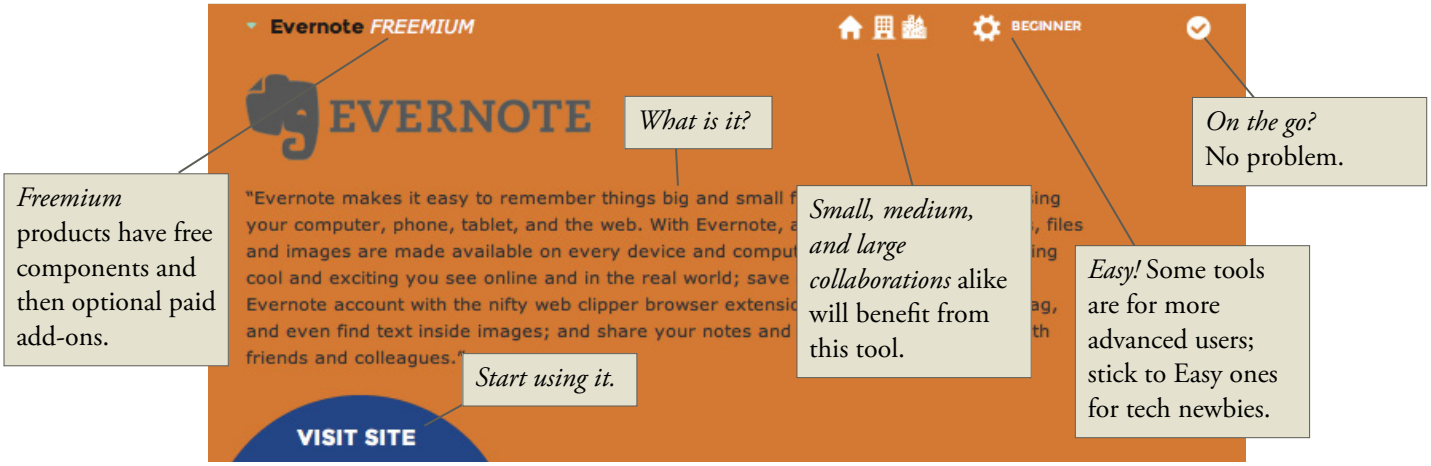
Or they can review by the **17 categories of tools**:



The **custom results** feature lets users focus on a few parameters:



The tool finder shares key information about each featured product: description, cost, the ideal collaboration size to maximize use, ease of use, and if there is an associated mobile app. For example:



The finder will be updated periodically to ensure that the latest technologies are being shared to give maximum fuel to budding collaborations. Have a tool that should be added? Submit it. Like the results you see? Share them.

Recommendations for Improving the Collaborative Technology Landscape

Our team's investigation highlighted two types of activities that could significantly improve the landscape of tools that are available to promote collaboration: developing, adapting, or applying technologies to address several important gaps in the system and drawing lessons from existing technologies to help build better tools.

Gaps in the landscape

In our research, we identified a number of areas where current tools aren't sufficiently meeting funder and donor needs. In some cases, no tools exist to address the philanthropic need, while in other instances, existing tools simply need to be adapted or scaled to broader use. Below we have highlighted a number of the most common unmet needs raised over the course of our research:

1. **Tools for helping people find new partners.** Many funders, both individual and institutional, emphasized a desire for tools that could help them find potential funding partners and grantees working on issues or places of shared interest. According to Li Bian of the MIT Media Lab, "Most existing tools are for people who already know each other and are already working together. But the bottleneck problem with collaboration is often at the very beginning: deciding what you want to do and with whom. It's a search problem."

2. **Social networking tools for accessing expertise.** Another frequently cited need in the field was for tools that could help funders find and access expertise about the issues and places they care about. Several interviewees mentioned the desire for specialized Facebook- or LinkedIn-type social networking sites that could be used to help them identify, contact, and review experts, including consultants, researchers, nonprofits, or other funders with particular interests and experience.

3. **Tools for helping with shared impact assessment.** Several of the experts we spoke with emphasized the potential for tools that could help funders identify and build consensus around shared indicators, as well as standardized systems for the collection and tracking of the data required to assess collective progress and outcomes. According to Steve Andersen of the Salesforce.com Foundation, "There are a bunch of one-off platforms that have been built for keeping track of collective indicators. But you could create a system that lets you invite partners and have a shared workspace where everyone contributes the metrics they use, and then it helps you find the common indicators across all of the groups."

4. **Process diagnostics for helping funders with collaboration.** Many experts highlighted the importance of process diagnostics that could help funders make sense of the right types of collaborative structures for their particular members, goals, and context, as well as their readiness for certain types of collaborative activities.

5. **Tools for sharing due diligence and strategies.** Several informants highlighted the need to create effective platforms like the Foundation Registry i3 that would also allow individual donors to piggyback on the due diligence and grantmaking choices of larger, more established funders. They also stressed the need for mechanisms to easily extract data from foundations' databases, files, and systems.

In addition, many experts our team spoke with have emphasized the importance of replicating, adapting, and scaling the use of tools that have thus far only been applied in relatively limited domains, including the broader use of issue- or place-based comprehensive collaboration platforms like KARL, the expansion of issue-based information hubs like WASHfunders to new issues and geographies, the growth of visualization tools like the Strategy Landscape to include new issues and places, and the extension of data standardization and aggregation systems like the Cultural Data Project to new topical areas.

Part of this growth will happen naturally, as new developments spur interest and build upon one another. In his book *Where Good Ideas Come From: The Natural History of Innovation*, Steven Johnson highlights scientist Stuart Kauffman's theory of the "adjacent possible." Kauffman used the phrase to describe a set of first-order combinations that can be formulated from what already exists. Johnson notes that new ideas tend to be networks of other ideas, a combination of odds and ends. We take the ideas that we have inherited or stumbled across, and we jigger them together into some new shape.

When it comes to donor and funder collaboration, a new set of offerings is now possible that wasn't imaginable before. And with each new tool that is developed, the adjacent possible expands even further. But rather than passively waiting for tool development to proliferate and tool usage to increase, funders and donors can create environments for exploration, foster interaction among tool builders and end-users, and lay the groundwork for improving tool design.

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Improving tool design

The experience of early philanthropic experiments with collaborative technologies can tell us a great deal about what it takes to build more effective tools moving forward. And while the tools identified in this study serve a wide range of different functions, we were able to identify six helpful trends that emerged in the design of many of the most effective new technologies:

1. **Ease of use is key.** Because of the functionality and user-friendliness of established online tools like Google and Facebook, people now expect systems that look as good and work as well as the other technologies they're accustomed to using. The less help someone needs with putting a tool into practice the more likely they are to use it, and the most effective new technologies are being built with practical, intuitive interfaces that can be employed even by consumers with relatively little or no technological sophistication. In some cases, this will mean investing in creative new interfaces, but in others, it will mean developing systems that incorporate familiar "looks and feels" and are particularly comfortable for users. As one tool developer explained, "We used a simple text editor in our system…because it's what is familiar to people and we didn't want them to have to learn something new." Regardless of the specifics of any particular technology, investing in quality design and iterative user testing are becoming integral to successful tool development.

2. **New tools should integrate seamlessly with other commonly used systems.** Because many donors and philanthropy professionals are reluctant technology users, it is helpful for new tools to integrate well with existing systems. The most effective tools are designed to be interoperable with existing user workspaces, like e-mail and instant messaging. Users are less likely to use new technologies if they have to toggle between different systems for each new activity. According to philanthropy consultant and author Lucy Bernholz, "Tools need to enable users to collaborate within their existing technology environment—so that using the new tool looks just like their broader workspace and flows seamlessly into their regular work day. A tool like Doodle calendar, for example, would be much better if it was integrated seamlessly with the larger Outlook calendar program."

   This integration is part of a broader technological trend called "continuous awareness" that is likely to grow significantly in the coming years. According to Michael Bove and Henry Holtzman of the MIT Media Lab, "Continuous awareness integrates the ecosystem of 'stuff' in your life, like clocks, phones, or car stereos, with the ecosystem of stuff somewhere else that you're interested in. Information gets pushed to you through your existing systems and devices. Imagine an alarm clock, for example, that doesn't just tell you the time, but also lets you know the weather and previews your schedule for the rest of the day once it wakes you up. It enables you to receive constant updates without having to proactively log into a new site or tool."

3. **Flexibility and customization can increase the likelihood of adoption.** Like any consumers, funders typically want tools that are tailored specifically to their particular needs and circumstances. But the cost of custom tools, especially for small funders and individual donors, can be prohibitive. Flexible tools like Social Text and Basecamp can be used "off the shelf" with standardized functionality but a high degree of customization that lets users themselves tailor the systems to look and feel relatively unique. Other tools, like the Strategy Landscape data visualization tool and software development platforms like Plone and Drupal, require significant technological customization from designers and programmers to meet the needs of different users, which can result in significant limitations to their spread and adoption. Many of the most rapidly adopted tools today are built in a modular way, allowing users to customize look and feel while tailoring the particular functionality required by different groups.

4. **Carefully consider the issue of inclusiveness.** Successful tools now need to thoughtfully reflect on issues of access and openness. In some cases, restricting access to collaborative tools to a small set of participants can build trust and increase efficiency. But as new technologies allow funders to access input and ideas from a wider set of stakeholders more cheaply and easily than ever before, there may be critical and unforeseen benefits to allowing data sets and tools that were traditionally closed to be opened up to broader audiences, enabling a larger and more diverse set of users to interpret, mash up, reconfigure, and adapt data to create new information and learning.

5. **New tools should aim to balance simplicity and comprehensiveness.** For those interested in using technology tools to increase collaborative behavior in philanthropy, there is a critical choice in the design process: is it better to try to design a "killer app" that will meet a comprehensive set of needs all at once, or to design very simple tools that clearly meet specific individual needs, gradually adding new functionality over time? Both approaches have clear positives and negatives.

   On one hand, *developing comprehensive applications* (like the collaboration workspace tools listed in Appendix B) is appealing because they allow people to buy one integrated package that can solve a large number of needs all at once—providing all the functionality funders need to collaborate in one fell swoop. But it's difficult to build a single system that can meet the various needs of many different types of users, and these multi-use systems can often feel quite overwhelming to people (with users unable to figure out where to dive in and how to get started). At the same time, the individual

components and functions of the larger package can often quickly be surpassed by smaller, more specialized tools that evolve much more rapidly than the larger systems.

According to Lisa Gansky, the author of *Mesh: Why the Future of Business Is Sharing*, "The problem with trying to have comprehensive platforms is that the tools are usually only mediocre, and they are outdated quickly. It's like when you have a Swiss army knife: you have a cute, useful thing, but it has very average tools within it. When you really need a good tool (like a screwdriver), you go to find that separately. And at the same time, the technology changes so quickly that each of the specific tools is quickly out of date."

On the other hand, there is a clear power in *building and incrementally adding to small, simple tools*. "Use is king" when it comes to tools, and the most likely way to encourage use is to design small, simple solutions that explicitly meet very specific needs. As one foundation professional explained, "To be honest, the technologies that work best are the very simple tools like Dropbox for simple file sharing. They don't put huge demands on people to change their current ways of working."

Many of the most successful tools profiled in this report began small, and then gradually added functionality over time once funders began to use the systems regularly. Yet creating too many small-scale tools may result in over-fragmentation, putting people into "tool overload." And there isn't any assurance that incremental improvements to individual tools will ultimately add up to create systemic, disruptive change.

The answer may lie somewhere in between these two poles: that it is possible to invest in iterating on small, simple tools that meet specific needs, building them deliberately with *interoperability* in mind, so that they can fit together and grow functionality as new pieces are added and integrated. In the programming world, this concept of interoperability has guided the development of application program interfaces (APIs), a set of common standards and technical protocols that allow different tools to communicate and share information with one another.

According to John Hecklinger, Chief Program Officer at GlobalGiving, an online giving marketplace, "APIs are the backbone that makes all these little tools more effective because they can share information. Without them, the tools can't talk to one another. They're all sitting out there and are useful in their own way, but until you can tie it all together, they aren't nearly as useful as they can be." Expanding the use of these types of protocols around social sector tools and data could allow people to piece together collaborative technology solutions from a range of tailored tools that could be designed to work together and build on one another.

6. **Use the cloud.** Consultant Roberto Cremonini observed that nearly all of the tools we reviewed are fundamentally accessed by the same platform: a web browser. For those tools that exist in both web and smartphone application formats, users can now take advantage of having data stored in the virtual cloud that they can access through accounts—Gmail, Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, or an iCloud account—that allow groups to access and share data and information instantly, across geographies, platforms, and organizations. Cremonini gave the example of a recent three-hour brainstorming and design session with a client where they captured information on poster-sized flipcharts. At the end of the meeting, instead of taking down the flipcharts to type them up, a participant took pictures and created a photo stream on his iPhone. Within minutes, everyone was invited to join the photo stream and instantly they had all of the notes propagated to their devices.

Supporting the ecosystem around the technologies

New and better tools are important. But our research suggests that even the most effective technologies alone often aren't enough to make people change their behavior. The new tools can help reduce many of the transactional costs and barriers to working together, but that doesn't necessarily mean funders will begin to adopt them. The simple reason: changing behavior is hard. Just ask anyone who's ever tried to go on a diet or quit smoking.

Our research suggests that behavior change is most likely to occur when tools are implemented as part of a larger supportive ecosystem that facilitates their adoption. That means not only developing effective and accessible tools, but thinking deliberately about both the internal **capabilities** required to promote and support new ways of working and the **motivation** that prompts people to use new tools and act in new ways. Below we examine these two key elements in turn, looking across the emerging field of tools and technologies to identify the enabling factors that are likely to be most critical to increasing collaborative activity in the field.

CAPABILITIES

"It's definitely not a case of 'if you build it they will come,'" explains Rick Reed of the Garfield Foundation, who has used a customized technology platform to facilitate the work of RE-AMP, a collaborative of funders and nonprofits focused on developing a clean energy system in the U.S. Midwest. "Just because you have something great, something better, doesn't mean people will necessarily use it."

Successful new technologies are adopted most easily when they are bolstered by a mutually reinforcing infrastructure of support that can help funders put the new tools into action. This includes three primary components: data, people, and processes.

1. **Data.** Shared data is the fundamental building block for collaboration. Working collaboratively requires the free flow of information that allows people to make better decisions, both individually and together. But the data infrastructure that undergirds the flow of information in philanthropy is underdeveloped, even as new technologies are making it easier and easier to access, share, and analyze information about almost everything we do.

To address this challenge, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, and LiquidNet launched Markets for Good (marketsforgood.org) to build the information infrastructure for the social sector. The effort aims to promote investment into a "knowledge commons" for the sector that aligns several key elements:

- ***Classifications*** that create a common language so data can be understood and interpreted consistently across organizations, making data aggregation possible;
- ***Technical standards*** for electronic data exchange that allows information to be accessed by multiple parties and systems;
- ***Reporting protocols*** that ensure data is consistently provided in standardized ways;
- ***Knowledge platforms*** that compile and make multiple types of data and data sources accessible; and
- ***Governance*** to provide oversight and ensure the maintenance and management of the data system.

This type of data infrastructure could create a virtuous cycle like the one described by Lucy Bernholz, Edward Skloot, and Barry Varela in their 2010 report, *Disrupting Philanthropy: Technology and the Future of the Social Sector*. They articulate an approach whereby an increased availability of data provides a platform for more-informed decision making in philanthropy, which in turn creates demand for more data and increases expectations for transparency and openness. Over time, access to the data allows people to make new connections, "remix" and build upon existing data to create new knowledge, and analyze and act on that knowledge in new ways.

The **Reporting Commitment** (glasspockets.org/reportingcommitment) is another important step towards the development of this "knowledge commons" for the sector. Initiated by a group of the largest U.S. foundations and launched in October 2012, the Reporting Commitment is grounded in the belief that accurate and accessible information is critical to effective collaboration, strategic decision making, and a more engaged philanthropy sector. Participants in the Reporting Commitment agree to make grant information available to each other and the public at least quarterly in a machine-readable, open format and coded to a geographic standard known as GeoTree. The Foundation Center was selected as a partner to support the participants' reporting goals, with the Center's Glasspockets web site serving as a hub for the data and knowledge tools coming out of the Reporting Commitment.

An improved data infrastructure can then serve as the base for additional tool development. According to Steve Andersen of the Salesforce.com Foundation, "Once the data that undergirds the system is in place, tools become easy. If you can build a system for managing the basic data needs for day-to-day functions, then you have the backbone set up—and the ceiling for what's possible starts to disappear. You can build whatever tools and apps you need to on top of the data."

2. **People.** At its core, collaboration is about personal interactions and relationships. New technologies aren't likely to change this; tools can help people work together and can facilitate solutions, but in most cases they cannot solve problems themselves. So it's no surprise that people—and individual leadership—play a central role in making collaboration successful and accelerating the adoption of new collaborative technologies. Through our analysis of existing tools, we were able to identify several critical roles that need to be in place to facilitate the incorporation of tools into regular organizational practice:

- ***Visionaries are essential to tool development.*** Someone—or some set of individuals—needs either to identify a need and spearhead the development of a tool to address it, or to see and adapt a tool that might be applied to solving an existing problem.
- ***Champions and influencers*** are needed once a tool exists to encourage others to experiment with applying a tool to address real challenges. These are often leaders who see the potential for tool adoption and are willing to take a risk in trying something new.
- ***Evangelists, shepherds, and docents*** are needed to introduce and train people unfamiliar with the new technologies to use the tools in their work, and to act as triggers that break people out of the status quo and remind them of the benefits of new approaches.
- ***Early adopters and first followers*** are also essential, as they visibly pave the way for others to feel comfortable attempting a new tool or approach, and they provide critical early pilot testing and feedback that can improve tools for more reticent users.

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Thinking carefully about how to recruit, support, and in some cases fund individuals to play all of these roles can provide dramatic results in hastening the adoption process. In the case of the KARL system developed by the Open Society Foundations, for example, knowledge management staff members served as both evangelists and shepherds for the new platform, identifying early adopters and champions, and working closely with them to encourage use and experimentation with the tool.

3. **Processes**. Tools need to be socialized. And the processes, training, and social norms around the use of tools in many cases will end up being just as important as the technology itself. Even very intuitive technologies often require significant investment in helping people shift from their usual ways of doing things. This means building a culture that embraces innovation, investing in support services, allowing for the time required to learn new systems, and rewarding and celebrating experimentation and use. Neville Vakharia of the Pew Charitable Trusts, for example, points to the extensive support services—now including a call center and on-the-ground training for users—that have been provided by the Cultural Data Project since it was launched. "You need to work with users from day one," he explained. "The help desk and training systems we set up have been critical to the success of the Cultural Data Project."

MOTIVATION

In most cases, lack of collaboration isn't a technical problem. It's a very human one. Because funders don't need to change, it's often difficult to overcome the status quo of doing things as they have always been done. As one funder explained, "There are so many redundancies in how we do things. And many of the usual ways work well enough, even if they're not optimal. You know that your old legacy systems can get the basic job done, even if they can't do everything you want them to. But a new tool may have unforeseen problems. So it's often a case of going with the devil you know. The presence of things that are *good enough* makes it really hard to overcome the barriers and risks of trying something new." In some cases an attachment to redundant processes and legacy systems can also be about job security and a fear of obsolescence.

So what types of incentives might help increase the benefits of working together and decrease the friction that makes collaboration and tool adoption so difficult? We interviewed foundation program officers, program directors, and executive directors to learn more about the drivers and incentives that compel individual staff to collaborate today. Below are some of the main insights we gleaned about incentives that funders can use to promote more collaborative behavior.

1. **Institute formal incentives.** Some foundations have begun to officially encourage collaboration from the top down. Approximately 10 percent of foundations now have formal policies and reporting practices that promote collaboration with other funders, according to the Foundation Center's 2012 survey.

   In particular, program staff reported that explicit encouragement from trustees and foundation leadership can be a powerful lever in creating a culture that embraces collaboration within their organizations. One of the program staff interviewed by our team said, "Donor intent and values are critical. Foundations really grow out of a focus on what the donors care about." Another commented, "Our board is very supportive of collaboration, so it's a priority for us," while a third noted, "Our trustees will often ask us if we don't have partners on a particular grant."

   A few foundations have also developed dashboards and metrics for regular reporting to their boards, emphasizing "dollars leveraged" through collaboration to maximize the impact of their own investments. One program officer explained, "Most of our board members have limited programmatic experience, but strong financial backgrounds, so they are very interested in leveraging more funding for our work." These foundations have also deliberately designed their staffing and performance management structures to provide extra time and support for collaboration with other funders.

2. **Reduce individual workloads.** According to Ralph Hamilton in his report, *Moving Ideas and Money*, "Most collaborations originate and are dependent upon the interest, relationships, and commitment of a particular program officer or a small group of program officers." But program staff are typically deluged with information, meeting requests, and many other demands on their time. Their primary responsibility and personal accountability is to make wise investments for their own foundations. As one consultant interviewed for the project explained, "Program officers are mostly responsible for internal objectives. So collaboration is almost always icing on the cake, not built into the job. Program staff really have to exceed their job descriptions in order to be good collaborators."

   Effective tools will often appeal to individual self-interest by helping funders do some small portion of the work they already have to do faster, better, or more easily. Several funders our team interviewed highlighted the efficiency of "piggybacking" and "riding on the coattails" of other funders in doing research and field-level assessment and in conducting financial review and due diligence.

   Many of the most successful tools in the coming years will find ways to ease the work of collaborating, using technology to take on some of the burden of coordination, rather than requiring new effort and processes. As consultant Lucy Bernholz puts it simply, "Tools that are additive to existing workflows are a huge pain...."

3. **Introduce new benefits.** Our team's interviews suggest that collaborations can often allow funders to reap benefits that can't be achieved through individual action. A few of the additional benefits that can play an important role in promoting the use of new collaborative tools include:

   - ***Facilitating learning.*** Many funders emphasize the value of shared learning opportunities, where they can "get smart" together about new developments in their field of interest or explore new areas of work. One funder described the many benefits of an informal learning community in which she participates: "The information that is shared is very valuable in itself, and some smaller funders really appreciate the access to expert speakers and information that they couldn't get alone. For me in particular, the forum widens my view of the world and of our work. There are moments in discussions where key insights are raised that widen my own perspective. These are insights that you wouldn't get sitting alone in a room."

   - ***Sharing risk.*** Program staff also find collaboration valuable when they want to make a risky investment or do work that is considered edgy or controversial. Linking arms with other funders spreads the risk and creates greater confidence and credibility. One small local funder participating in a national funder network on homelessness commented, "The national advocacy work done by this collaborative has been powerful, and none of the funders could have taken on this policy agenda alone. We have a number of local funders who could never have connected with the federal policy conversation without a network like this one."

   - ***Decreasing isolation and increasing leverage.*** Funders who feel that they are alone or relatively isolated in their fields of work are often highly motivated to find other funders to collaborate with. Developing a set of co-funders provides an organization or donor with moral support, thought partners, and additional capital and other resources to help tackle difficult challenges. As one funder explained, "From the beginning of this program, we had a very strong sense of being isolated as a funder of aging and health. This is not one of the top 10 things that most foundations are interested in. So we had a lot of personal commitment to trying to grow the field of funders interested in these issues."

4. **Build momentum.** Getting fiercely independent organizations to work together is not a fast process. It's extremely difficult to go from doing things on your own to seamlessly sharing and acting in concert with others. Change often occurs by starting slow, taking baby steps, and building momentum. Blogger and social media expert Beth Kanter, for example, developed a simple practice model she terms "crawl, walk, run, fly" to emphasize the process that organizations often need to take to get ready to adopt the use of social media tools. A similar process may be critical for other collaborative tools as well. Funders can begin to "crawl"—sharing basic information about their activities and learning through web sites and other forums. Once the process of sharing becomes familiar, then funders can begin to "walk," testing out basic collaborative functions like sharing files, creating joint calendars, and making contact information available. The next stage of readiness involves "running"—using technology to help funders mimic the sorts of collaborative behaviors that normally take place in person. And finally, funders begin to "fly": using technology to help them do things bigger, better, faster, and cheaper than they already do, and envisioning entirely new uses and ways of working that go beyond what was possible before the technologies.

   A few approaches for building momentum for collaborative activity in philanthropy include:

   - ***Creating triggers.*** "Triggers" are small prompts that can help shake people out of their routine behaviors to begin to try new ones. Social networking sites like Facebook and LinkedIn, for example, use periodic e-mail alerts to push people to check their accounts when they haven't been active. Similarly, personal reminders from tool "evangelists" within an organization or formal tracking of collaborative activity can also serve as important behavioral triggers. Most current philanthropic tools don't use triggers in a significant way, but these important cues and prompts may play an increasingly important role in helping to remind people about the benefits of using new tools and strategies moving forward.

   - ***Developing visible proof points*** to give people confidence that a tool can improve outcomes and provide value. Finding early innovators and highlighting their successes can help build a set of stories that make people feel more comfortable with trying new collaborative tools and reassuring them that there are real benefits on the back end that can make them willing to push through inertia and early challenges.

   - ***Building on existing relationships and social networks*** can give funders a head start on developing the trust and connections that underlie collaborative activity and successful use of collaborative tools. This can help funders leapfrog some of the time-intensive relationship-building processes that are required to undergird good collaborations. In this sense, regional associations and grantmaker affinity groups are well positioned to facilitate collaborative tools because they already serve as hubs of relationships that are required to make collaboration work, allowing tools to "piggyback" on existing social networks.

   - ***Exploring the potential of lower-intensity collaborations.*** Some funders have narrowed their view of effective collaboration to only the most intensive efforts. While

high-intensity collaborations can demonstrate results, they can also be seen as slow and labor intensive, and may at times prevent people from exploring additional collaborative activities. As one funder we interviewed explained, "I think there is some confusion in the field about what collaboration has to be. It is a mistake to let the 'best' be the enemy of the 'good'… or to let the comprehensive, deep collaborations be the enemy of more bounded or limited collaborations." Expanding understanding and recognition of the many benefits of lower-intensity collaboration models can lower the stakes and make it easier to engage in collaborative work. The interviews our team conducted with funders found that the simple act of learning together, while still retaining grantmaking independence, can be both satisfying and valuable. These less intensive approaches—often facilitated by new technology tools—can help increase alignment across funders by allowing them to work in more coordinated ways while still acting independently, circumventing some of the logistical hurdles and loss of control that often accompany more formal collaborations. And the simpler collaborations often produce real results and help build relationships and momentum that can later evolve into more intensive approaches.

Conclusion

More and more, foundations are engaging in collaboration as a way to leverage their impact as they try to address large, complex public problems. From peer learning and identifying new funding partners to developing large-scale, multi-year pooled funding initiatives, many grantmakers believe that by working with other funders they can be more effective. Yet many of these same foundations also struggle with the time needed to manage the collaborative process, the challenge of sharing information and taking action across organizations, the limitations of current processes for identifying new funding partners, and other challenges in working together.

New technologies, however, represent an important opportunity to make collaboration easier, alleviating some of the "friction in the system" and enabling new ways of working together that were difficult to imagine just a few years ago. Project management tools are streamlining the process of aligned action. Communications technologies are making it easier than ever to build relationships and share ideas across organizations and geographies. Matching systems are helping donors and foundations more efficiently find and support impactful organizations and projects. Data visualization tools are helping funders see the bigger picture and make collective decisions. These new capabilities can create a new context in which new technological tools routinely complement face-to-face interactions to help funders overcome many of the hurdles that traditionally make collaboration difficult.

But the potential of the collaborative technologies doesn't mean that funders should simply build a lot more philanthropy-specific tools. In many cases, existing technologies built for more general purposes can already substantially reduce the challenges of working together. From basic online scheduling resources to sophisticated strategy tools and web-based knowledge portals, technology exists to address many of the barriers grantmakers have identified in facilitating their collaborations.

And, in fact, more important than the creation of new tools may be deliberate attention to the ecology that surrounds tools. Technology solutions are unlikely to realize their full benefit without a fuller commitment within foundations to the collaborative process. The 2012 Foundation Center survey showed that among foundations that reported engaging in collaborations, very few had formal policies in place to evaluate and reward staff for this often challenging and time-consuming work. Without real thought to providing incentives and motivation to drive collaborative behavior, and without investment in the people, data, and processes required to facilitate joint work, it will be unrealistic to expect any type of technology alone to result in greater foundation collaboration.

With wise investment in building the broader ecosystem of motivation, capabilities, and tools required to drive collaboration in the coming years, funders can begin to lay the groundwork for a more collaborative and effective philanthropic future.

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Appendix A: Examples of Tools Matched to Collaborative Needs

Collaborative Needs

DISCOVERY → **ACTION** → **IMPACT**

LEARN	FIND	DESIGN	BUILD	TRANSACT	ASSESS	INFLUENCE
How do funders get smarter about the issues they care about and the ways to have impact?	How do funders discover and connect with other like-minded partners?	How do funders develop collective goals, strategies, and metrics?	How do funders communicate within the collaborative to build relationships and trust?	How do funders get their work done together?	How do funders measure their progress and the outcomes of their efforts?	How do funders communicate beyond the collaborative to spread what's working and increase impact?

Discovery Tools for Learning

Communications & Meetings: Webinar tools like AdobeConnect, Blackboard Collaborate, FuzeBox, Google Hangouts, GoToMeeting, and WebEx can help funders host online meetings and share information in ways that are coming closer and closer to approximating in-person meetings.

Comprehensive Collaboration Workspaces: Workspaces like Huddle, KARL, Sharepoint, SocialText, and Wiggio create flexible and multi-purpose virtual spaces that persist over time, where groups of funders can share files and other critical information with their peers.

Conference Management: Groups of funders can use Lanyrd to find relevant conferences, track what's happening in real time during these events, and access video and other materials from the sessions.

Data Aggregation, Sharing, & Standards: Tools like *Foundation Directory Online* and GuideStar compile data from multiple sources into easily accessible centralized databases that are used to understand foundations and nonprofits. IssueLab gathers, indexes, and shares the collective intelligence of the social sector.

Data Analysis & Visualization: Tools like GapMinder, *Philanthropy In/Sight*, and Strategy Landscape can help groups of funders analyze and make sense of large data sets to make better strategic decisions.

Data Gathering: Funders can use competIQ, Quora, and UserVoice to easily poll and gather input from a wide variety of sources.

Data Organizing: Delicious and Evernote can help funders to capture and tag important information from the Internet and other sources and share it with their peers.

File Sharing & Collaborative Writing: Simple tools like Dropbox, Google Drive, and NetDocuments allow groups of funders to share documents and work on them together, helping to reduce the messiness of sending versions back and forth on e-mail.

Innovation Management: Platforms like Ashoka Changemakers, Innocentive, and the Learning Registry allow people to share and collect new ideas and solutions from a wide set of potential collaborators.

News Aggregation: Tools like Flipboard allow groups of funders to collect and share news from public sources based on their specific interests, while Philanthropy News Digest provides a ready-made compilation of philanthropic news for funders.

Social Networking & Online Community: Social networking platforms like Facebook, Google+, LinkedIn, and WiserEarth enable funders to share information about issues and activities with selected groups of their peers.

Discovery Tools for Finding Partners

Data Aggregation, Sharing, & Standards: Databases like *Foundation Directory Online* and GuideStar compile data from multiple sources to help people find and learn about potential partners and grantees.

Data Analysis & Visualization: Tools like *Philanthropy In/Sight*, Strategy Landscape, and WASHfunders can help groups of funders see their funding in relationship to that of their colleagues.

Fundraising & Matching: Tools like the Foundation Registry i3, GlobalGiving, KickStarter, and Kiva can connect groups of funders to effective NGOs and projects that align with their interests.

Social Networking & Online Community: Social networking platforms like Facebook, Google+, LinkedIn, and WiserEarth enable funders to find like-minded peers.

Action Tools for Designing Strategies

Communications & Meetings: With webinar tools like AdobeConnect, Blackboard Collaborate, FuzeBox, Google Hangouts, GoToMeeting, and WebEx, groups of funders can host online meetings and working sessions to develop strategies together even if they are geographically dispersed.

Comprehensive Collaboration Workspaces: Groups of funders developing a shared strategy can use online workspaces like Huddle, KARL, Sharepoint, SocialText, and Wiggio to share and edit files, have threaded discussions, and link to key web sites and resources relevant to the strategy.

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Data Aggregation, Sharing, & Standards: Tools like *Foundation Directory Online*, GuideStar, and IssueLab compile data from multiple sources into easily accessible databases that can be helpful to groups of funders who are trying to analyze a problem together and design a strategy for solving it.

Data Analysis & Visualization: Tools like GapMinder, *Philanthropy In/Sight*, and Strategy Landscape can help groups of funders analyze and make sense of large data sets to inform strategic decision making.

Data Gathering: Funders can better inform their strategy development processes by using competIQ, Quora, and UserVoice to gather input and ideas from a wide variety of sources.

Data Organizing: Delicious and Evernote can help funders to capture, tag, and share important information with a group of funders who want to develop a common understanding of a particular field as a baseline for building a shared strategy.

File Sharing & Collaborative Writing: With Dropbox, Google Drive, and NetDocuments, groups of funders who are developing strategies together can share and edit documents.

Innovation Management: Platforms like Ashoka Changemakers, Innocentive, and the Learning Registry can help inform the development of grantmaking strategies by sharing and collecting new ideas and solutions from a wide set of actors in the field.

Joint Decision Making: Tools like Deci and TeamVoice can be used by groups of funders to quickly poll many people for feedback on collective decisions during a strategy development process.

Action Tools for Building Community

Collaboration Diagnostics: The Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory can help funding partners to assess the health of their collaboratives and identify areas for improvement.

Communications & Meetings: Tools like Google Hangouts and Yahoo Groups can help groups of funders to be more easily in touch with each other for quick comments and feedback, even if they are geographically dispersed.

Comprehensive Collaboration Workspaces: Many collaboration workspaces, like Huddle, KARL, Sharepoint, SocialText, and Wiggio, allow groups of funders to post profiles and get to know each other better in the process of working together.

Joint Decision Making: Tools like Deci and TeamVoice can be used by funder collaboratives to seek feedback and actively engage funding partners in key decisions.

Social Networking & Online Community: Social networking platforms like Facebook, Google+, LinkedIn, and WiserEarth can help funders to build a sense of community with other funding partners through regular interactions and updates on what people are doing.

Action Tools for Transacting

Communications & Meetings: Meeting tools like Adobe Connect, Fuzebox, Google Hangouts, GoToMeeting, Skype, and WebEx can help groups of funders work together virtually, with audio and video connections. Some tools include screen sharing for looking at documents or images together as well.

Comprehensive Collaboration Workspaces: Tools like Huddle, KARL, Sharepoint, SocialText, and Wiggio make the process of working together easier and more efficient by integrating a number of basic tools for collaboration—document sharing and wikis, blogs and discussion boards, shared calendars, group e-mails and alerts, project management tools, and other features.

Conference Management: Tools like Eventbrite make it easy for groups of funders to plan and manage conferences and special events together, including registration, payments, RSVPs, session information, and recordings.

Data Aggregation, Sharing, & Standards: Online grants management tools like FoundationConnect can help groups of funders to share information and process paperwork related to joint investments.

File Sharing & Collaborative Writing: With Dropbox, Google Drive, and NetDocuments, groups of funders who are working together can share and edit documents easily.

Fundraising & Matching: Tools like Foundation Registry i3, GlobalGiving, KickStarter, and Kiva can connect groups of funders to effective nonprofit organizations and projects that align with their interests.

Joint Decision Making: Tools like Deci and TeamVoice can be used by funder collaboratives to seek feedback and actively engage funding partners in key decisions.

Project Management: Tools like Asana, Basecamp, 5 pm, and Trello make it easy for groups of funders to track progress on their projects and have clarity about deadlines and who is responsible for what.

Scheduling & Calendar Sharing: Scheduling meetings with groups of busy funders is much easier with tools like Doodle, Evite, and Google Calendar.

Impact Tools for Assessing

Comprehensive Collaboration Workspaces: Tools like Huddle, KARL, Sharepoint, SocialText, and Wiggio can encourage assessment of shared work by integrating a number of basic tools for collaboration – document sharing and wikis, blogs and discussion boards, shared calendars, group e-mails and alerts, project management tools, and other features.

Data Aggregation, Sharing, & Standards: Online grants management tools like FoundationConnect can make it easier for groups of funders to share information and process paperwork related to joint investments. In addition, online databases like the Cultural Data Project and TRASI allow funders to assess the efficacy and impact of nonprofits over a broad range of social causes.

Data Analysis & Visualization: Tools like CFinder, GapMinder, Many Eyes, and WASHfunders can help groups of funders analyze and make sense of data generated through assessment and evaluation processes.

Data Gathering: Funders conducting evaluations can use SurveyMonkey and UserVoice to easily poll and gather feedback from a wide variety of sources.

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Impact Tools for Influencing

Communications & Meetings: Tools like Blogger, Google Groups, Twitter, and YouTube can help groups of funders spread the word to larger audiences about what they've been doing and what they have learned.

Comprehensive Collaboration Workspaces: Tools like Huddle, KARL, Sharepoint, SocialText, and Wiggio can make the process of shared learning easier and more efficient by integrating a number of basic tools for collaboration – document sharing and wikis, blogs and discussion boards, shared calendars, group e-mails and alerts, project management tools, and other features.

Data Analysis & Visualization: Tools like CFinder and Many Eyes present data in a visually compelling way. This can be very helpful for funder collaboratives that are ready to disseminate their lessons learned.

File Sharing & Collaborative Writing: With Dropbox, Google Drive, and NetDocuments, groups of funders who want to share their lessons learned can write and edit documents together.

Innovation Management: Platforms like Ashoka Changemakers, Innocentive, and the Learning Registry can help accelerate the dissemination of innovation across a network.

Social Networking & Online Community: Social networking platforms like Facebook, Google+, LinkedIn, and WiserEarth can help groups of funders interact with peers to share their knowledge through like-minded networks.

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Appendix B: Tool Catalog

This catalog provides a sample listing of online tools to support collaboration organized by functional category. It is not intended to be comprehensive, but to provide a general overview of the range and types of tools that are available. Inclusion in this appendix does not in any way indicate endorsement by the authors of this report.

Descriptions included in the appendix are derived from the language used on the web sites of each of the tools. They are provided for informational purposes only, and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the authors of the report. Marketing claims have not been verified.

Collaboration Diagnostics

COLLABORATION DIAGNOSTICS	Help partners assess the health of their current collaboratives

IBM COLLABORATION ASSESSMENT TOOL

Access: Free

"This on-line assessment tool compares your company's collaboration practices with organizations achieving best-in-class performance. IBM Collaboration Assessment Tool is a complimentary diagnostic tool to help your organization: assess your current collaboration practices; define the business benefits of collaboration solutions—on premise or in the cloud; drive a dialogue across your organization about becoming a premier collaboration business; and answer a series of questions to gain knowledge collected from third-party research on 450 organizations. Upon completion, you will receive a comprehensive report plus scorecard through email."

Source: ibm.com/software/lotus/collaboration/assessment

WILDER COLLABORATION FACTORS INVENTORY

Access: Free

The Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory is "a free online collaboration assessment. This tool will help you assess how your collaboration is doing on 20 research-tested success factors. When you complete this inventory, you will receive summary scores for each of these factors."

Source: wilderresearch.org/tools/cfi/index.php

Communications & Meetings

COMMUNICATIONS & MEETINGS	Cover the gamut of online communication technologies—chat, conference calls, video calls, webinars, virtual meeting spaces, and blogs

ADOBE CONNECT

Access: Fee

"Adobe Connect is a web conferencing platform for web meetings, eLearning, and webinars…. With Adobe Connect for Web Meetings, you can: engage in complete mobile-to-mobile collaboration, with the ability to host, present, and collaborate anytime, anywhere on virtually any device; help ensure easy meeting access for all participants with no desktop client downloads; create your own personal digital office in the cloud with a customized URL that's always on, and content and layouts that remain in place; [and make] interactive, customizable, and indexed recordings."

Source: adobe.com/products/adobeconnect.html

BLOGGER

Access: Free

"Blogger is a web-based tool that helps you publish to the web instantly—whenever the urge strikes….

Blogger gives you a way to automate (and greatly accelerate) the blog publishing process without writing any code or worrying about installing any sort of server software or scripts. And yet, it still gives you total control over the look and location of your blog. Instead of hand-coding your blog posts and frequently uploading the newest version of your page, you make posts to your blog by submitting a simple form on the Blogger web site, and the results immediately show up on your site."

Source: blogger.com

FREE CONFERENCECALL.COM

Access: Freemium

"FreeConferenceCall.com is a reliable, cost-effective, reservation-less and easy-to-use audio conferencing service. Features include: unlimited audio conferencing (up to 96 callers with optional free call recording); international audio conferencing; toll free conferencing; screen sharing for online meetings; incoming voicemail; and outgoing audio messaging."

Source: freeconferencecall.com

FUZEBOX

Access: Fee

"Fuze offers reliable, pixel perfect, hi-definition meetings and video conferencing solutions that are compatible with any device, from anywhere in the world." Features include: "multi-party HD video conferencing; rich media sharing; desktop and app screen sharing; remote control; Fuze Telepresence; Call Me; chat; cross-platform compatibility; easy integration into your communications infrastructure; meeting recording; reusable meeting space; content publishing; annotations; and auto-reconnect."

Source: fuzebox.com/about

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GOOGLE GROUPS

Access: Free

"The new Google Groups is an improved way to participate in online discussions." Google Groups allows you to: "organize with favorites and folders, choose to follow along via email, and quickly find unread posts; use rich-text editing to customize your posts with fonts, colors, and images; and use photos, nicknames, and automatic translations to share your thoughts with the world."

Source: https://groups.google.com/forum/#!overview

GOOGLE+ HANGOUTS

Access: Free

"Google+ Hangouts allows you to make free video calls with up to 10 people and connect from any device. You can instantly go from an email conversation to a group video chat, and get work done faster in virtual meetings with powerful tools like screen sharing and Google Drive collaboration. Google+ Hangouts allows you to broadcast your live Hangout On Air on Google+, your YouTube channel, and website, and share the public recording once you're done. You can [even] stream a conference keynote, host a concert, or moderate a panel discussion with international experts."

Source: google.com/+/learnmore/hangouts

GOTOMEETING

Access: Fee

"GoToMeeting is the extremely simple, extraordinarily powerful way to hold unlimited online meetings with up to 25 attendees. [You can] start a meeting and share your screen with just a click; collaborate face to face with HDFaces video conferencing; [and] save with integrated audio conferencing (via VoIP and telephone). Attendees can join from a Mac, PC, iPad, iPhone or Android device."

Source: gotomeeting.com

GROUPBOARD

Access: Freemium

"Groupboard is a free online whiteboard and chat app that can be easily embedded into your website. Groupboard has been used by universities, online tutors, architects, designers, and artists since 1998 for distance learning, collaborative design, and online doodling! With the whiteboard you can upload background images and draw on top of them, and all users connected to the whiteboard will see the changes in real-time. Groupboard works on any web browser with no plugins or downloads required."

Source: groupboard.com

JOIN.ME

Access: Freemium

"join.me combines instant screen sharing and powerful meeting tools in an app that anyone can use to present, train, demo, or concept. join.me is designed to be intuitive and accessible, providing features that you'll use every day for everything from show-and-tell to formal presentations. Features include: screen sharing; internet calling; share control; multi-monitor; chat; send files; annotation; unified audio and international conference lines; presenter swap; personal link and background; meeting scheduler; meeting lock; user management and reporting; and window sharing."

Source: join.me

SKYPE

Access: Freemium

"Skype allows you to call, see, message, and share with others—wherever they are. Features include: video and voice calls to anyone else on Skype; instant messaging and file sharing; calls to mobiles and landlines worldwide at low rates; text messaging from just a few pennies; and group video calls with up to 10 people."

Source: skype.com

STARTMEETING

Access: Freemium

"StartMeeting is an audio and web conferencing service that includes a suite of professional tools designed for screen sharing and standard conferencing. This service combines desktop sharing with integrated audio conferencing that may be utilized at the same time or individually." Features include: "audio conferencing; screen sharing; customizable meeting wall; meeting recording; web controls; and StartMeeting Studio."

Source: startmeeting.com

TWITTER

Access: Free

"Twitter is a real-time information network that connects you to the latest stories, ideas, opinions, and news about what you find interesting. Simply find the accounts you find most compelling and follow the conversations. At the heart of Twitter are small bursts of information called Tweets. Each Tweet is 140 characters long, but don't let the small size fool you—you can discover a lot in a little space. You can see photos, videos, and conversations directly in Tweets to get the whole story at a glance, and all in one place."

Source: twitter.com

TYPEPAD

Access: Fee

"Typepad is the reliable, flexible blogging platform that puts the publisher in control." Typepad allows you to: "publish quickly and easily from your computer, mobile, or even via email; stay on top of your blog and audience with smart stats and easy integration with Google Analytics; use Theme Builder to easily build your own design; or design your own template from the ground up. Typepad is fully optimized for search and social discovery."

Source: typepad.com

WEBEX

Access: Freemium

WebEx allows you to "meet with colleagues across your organization, or halfway across the planet. Meet online and share files, information, and expertise... You can do almost anything with WebEx that you can do in person, minus the travel time. Use WebEx specialized products to: present dynamic online events and webinars; deliver online training and eLearning experiences; provide outstanding remote technical support; build stronger relationships with in-person telepresence experiences delivered over the cloud; and share knowledge, experience and ideas across your organization."

Source: webex.com

WORDPRESS

Access: Freemium

With WordPress you can "start a blog or build a full-fledged website… connect your WordPress site to the most popular social networks… learn

more about your readers, where they're from, and how they found you. Publish near and far with mobile apps for iPhone, iPad, Android, and BlackBerry."

Source: wordpress.com

YAHOO GROUPS

Access: Free

"Yahoo Groups allows you to connect with a world of people who share your passions. With millions of groups at your fingertips, it's easy to find the group that's best for you—no matter your interest. What's a Yahoo! Group? It's where people with a shared interest meet, get to know each other, and stay informed. Your group gives you instant access to: shared message archives; photos and photo albums; group event calendars; and member polls and shared links."

Source: groups.yahoo.com

YOUTUBE

Access: Free

"YouTube allows billions of people to discover, watch, and share originally-created videos. YouTube provides a forum for people to connect, inform, and inspire others across the globe and acts as a distribution platform for original content creators and advertisers large and small."

Source: youtube.com

ADDITIONAL COMMUNICATIONS & MEETINGS TOOLS:

AnyMeeting (anymeeting.com)

Blackboard Collaborate (blackboard.com/platforms/collaborate/overview.aspx)

Campfire (campfirenow.com)

ClickWebinar (clickwebinar.com)

Conceptboard (conceptboard.com)

GroupMind Express (groupmindexpress.com)

Pidgin (pidgin.im)

TelePresence (cisco.com/go/telepresence)

Twiddla (twiddla.com)

Zip Conferencing (zipconferencing.com)

Comprehensive Collaboration Workspaces

Combine many basic tools (file sharing, calendar sharing, member profiles, communications, wikis, etc.) into more comprehensive, all-in-one solutions

CHATTER

Access: Freemium

"Salesforce Chatter makes business processes social, so you can collaborate in real time—in context—from anywhere…. Chatter makes it easy to share ideas, documents, and anything else with your coworkers, instantly." Chatter features include: "file sharing, profiles, status updates, activity feeds, workflow approvals, groups, Chatter communities, Chatterbox, social intelligence, Chatter messenger, Chatter desktop, Chatter mobile, Chatter for Sharepoint, contacts, dashboards, reports, answers and ideas, calendars and events, tasks and activities."

Source: salesforce.com/chatter/overview

DRUPAL COMMONS

Access: Freemium

"Drupal Commons is a packaged form of Drupal (a 'Drupal distribution') that contains the majority of pre-built features that a social community or external community site might need to create productive interactions among employees, customers—blogs, wikis, calendars, and much more. It provides a robust community site out of the box so that you don't have to assemble all of the pieces yourself, all you need to do is invite people to participate."

Source:
acquia.com/products-services/drupal-commons-social-business-software

HUDDLE

Access: Freemium

Huddle lets you "store, share, and work on files with anyone inside and outside your organization—from your desktop, iPad, or smartphone." It allows you to "share files across the firewall with your colleagues and partners… comment, assign tasks and approvals—all in one central location—to get work done efficiently and effectively… and [to create] user profiles [that] allow you to connect with the specific people you need to contribute to your project."

Source: huddle.com/this-is-huddle/about-huddle

ICOHERE

Access: Fee

"The iCohere platform offers a single, one-stop solution for all your online communication and collaboration needs, from webinars to courses to conferences to learning communities all in one place under one annual license. Core features include: welcome pages, announcements, discussion forums, a media player, icohere mobile, resource libraries, web forms, chat rooms, webcast/webinar rooms, registration and payment processing, quick meetings, a project task tracker, messages, calendars, and member profiles."

Source: icohere.com

KARL

Access: Freemium

"KARL is an open source web system for collaboration, organizational intranets, and knowledge management. KARL is simple to use and enables small and large groups to create communities and to share information… Top features include: topic-based communities, powerful search, secured external collaboration, rich text wiki, collaborative blog, layered group calendar, strong email integration, and outstanding security."

Source: karlproject.org

OOGWAVE

Access: Free

"Oogwave is a private environment designed just for you, your co-workers, and your company, for sharing the content your company depends on.... With Oogwave you can connect and sync your coworkers in interactive groups to share and work on content or great ideas anytime, anywhere all in real-time. [You can] even broadcast messages to and from organizations in a simple and seamless manner to all coworkers. You can also create an

external network for your clients, contractors, and suppliers to enable collaboration and strengthen relationships while working on projects, ideas, and events on the same platform."

Source: oogwave.com

SHAREPOINT

Access: Fee

"Sharepoint introduces new ways to share your work and work with others, organize your projects and teams, and discover people and information." The platform allows you to: "share ideas, discover answers, and keep track of what your colleagues are working on… organize all your projects and tasks to get visibility into upcoming deliverables… set up a new team site in minutes, track meeting notes, and bring together all your team's email and documents in one place… connect with people across your organization and easily discover interests, past projects, and documents they've worked on… and use familiar design tools and flexible controls to create dynamic intranet and internet sites to share your organization's vision with everyone."

Source: sharepoint.microsoft.com

SOCIALTEXT

Access: Fee

"By simplifying people's ability to share knowledge, ideas and corporate data, Socialtext removes silos and corporate barriers that have traditionally hampered companies' ability to respond to change and better serve customers. Socialtext's enterprise social networking products — including microblogging, blogs, wikis, profiles, and social spreadsheets — provide simpler ways for employees to share vital information and work together in real-time. Delivered in a variety of hosted cloud services, as well as on-site appliances, enterprise customers are provided with flexible deployment options that meet their security requirements."

Source: socialtext.com

THOUGHTFARMER

Access: Fee

"ThoughtFarmer combines traditional intranets with social features to make the social intranet: an easy yet powerful platform for employee communication and collaboration…. Communication features include: news, personal homepage, branding, mobile internet access, photo galleries, calendars, employee directory, navigation, manuals, search, and tags. Collaboration features include: wikis, blogs, forums, groups, documents, direct document editing, expertise locator, and discussion capture. Employee engagement features include: forums, comments, profiles, relationship browser, activity stream, favorites, like, revision history, and notifications."

Source: thoughtfarmer.com

WEBEX WEBOFFICE

Access: Fee

WebOffice allows you to "share documents, coordinate calendars, hold web meetings, manage tasks, build web databases, follow discussions, make announcements, and run your business on the web. You can control access to sensitive files while allowing guests to view public ones, take polls, and manage expense reports…. WebOffice's powerful, professional, web-based business applications include: document manager, online calendar, web meetings, task manager, expense reports, web database, discussions, announcements, contacts list, opinion polls, admin tools, customization, and other add-ons."

Source: weboffice.com

WIGGIO

Access: Free

"Wiggio.com is a free, online toolkit that makes it easy to work in groups. Over 100,000 groups are using Wiggio to: host virtual meetings and conference calls; manage events with a shared calendar; create to do lists and assign tasks; poll your group in real time; send email, text and voice messages; and upload and manage files in a shared folder."

Source: wiggio.com

ADDITIONAL COMPREHENSIVE COLLABORATION WORKSPACES:

FMYI (fmyi.com)

Jive For Teams (jivesoftware.com/social-business/solutions/team-collaboration)

Kablink (ifolder.com)

Sosius (sosius.com)

Ubidesk (ubidesk.com)

Zoho (zoho.com)

Conference Management

CONFERENCE MANAGEMENT	Help people track conferences happening in their field and also organize and manage conferences

EVENTBRITE

Access: Freemium

"Eventbrite enables people all over the world to plan, promote, and sell out any event—from photography and yoga classes to sold out concerts and festivals." Eventbrite provides "everything you need to sell tickets and manage registration for any kind of event. It allows you to organize successful events in three easy steps: create an event webpage; promote your event; and manage event entry."

Source: eventbrite.com

LANYRD

Access: Free

"With a host of events around the world, Lanyrd allows you to add events, discover new and exciting conferences, and track your friends to see what events they are attending." Lanyrd helps you you to: "find fascinating events [by seeing] where your friends are speaking or going, find[ing] conferences near you, or brows[ing] conferences by topic... enjoy a better event [by tracking] what's going on during the conference, even if you're not there. [by sharing] who's tweeting what and what links are hot… and catch up afterwards [by viewing] slides, video, and podcasts from conferences you attended or tracked."

Source: lanyrd.com

ADDITIONAL CONFERENCE MANAGEMENT TOOLS:

iCohere (icohere.com)

Content Management Systems

Help web developers to build feature-rich web sites that enable user editing

DRUPAL

Access: Free

"Drupal is an open source content management platform powering millions of websites and applications. It's built, used, and supported by an active and diverse community of people around the world. Use Drupal to build everything from personal blogs to enterprise applications. Thousands of add-on modules and designs let you build any site you can imagine. Drupal is used by some of the biggest sites on the Web, like The Economist, Examiner.com, and The White House."

Source: drupal.org

JOOMLA

Access: Free

"Joomla is an award-winning content management system, which enables you to build Web sites and powerful online applications. Many aspects, including its ease-of-use and extensibility, have made Joomla the most popular Web site software available. Joomla is designed to be easy to install and set up even if you're not an advanced user. Best of all, Joomla is an open source solution that is freely available to everyone."

Source: joomla.org

PLONE

Access: Free

"Plone is a powerful, polished, and user-friendly content management system. Plone is among the top 2% of all open source projects worldwide, with 340 core developers and more than 300 solution providers in 57 countries. The project has been actively developed since 2001, is available in more than 40 languages, and has the best security track record of any major CMS. It is owned by the Plone Foundation, a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization, and is available for all major operating systems."

Source: plone.org

Data Aggregation, Sharing, & Standards

Help people compile, standardize, and share information

CHARITY NAVIGATOR

Access: Free

Charity Navigator "works to advance a more efficient and responsive philanthropic marketplace by evaluating the Financial Health and Accountability and Transparency of 6,000 of America's largest charities. In a quest to help donors, a team of professional analysts has examined tens of thousands of non-profit financial documents. [Charity Navigator has] used this knowledge to develop an unbiased, objective, numbers-based rating system to assess charities. [Their] ratings show givers how efficiently [they] believe a charity will use their support today, how well it has sustained its programs and services over time, and their level of commitment to good governance, best practices, and openness with information."

Source: charitynavigator.org

CHARTING IMPACT

Access: Free

"Charting Impact encourages strategic thinking about how [you can] achieve your goals…. At the heart of Charting Impact are five deceptively simple questions: 1) What is your organization aiming to accomplish? 2) What are your strategies for making this happen? 3) What are your organization's capabilities for doing this? 4) How will your organization know if you are making progress? 5) What have and haven't you accomplished so far? Responding to the five questions creates a unique report that shares concise, detailed information about plans and progress with key stakeholders, including the public. You can publish your own Charting Impact Report, use Charting Impact with your grantees to build their capacity, and integrate Charting Impact into your application or reporting processes."

Source: chartingimpact.org

CULTURAL DATA PROJECT

Access: Free for arts and cultural organizations

The Cultural Data Project (CDP) is "a unique system that enables arts and cultural organizations to enter financial, programmatic, and operational data into a standardized online form. Organizations can then use the CDP to produce a variety of reports designed to help increase management capacity, identify strengths and challenges, and inform decision-making. They can also generate reports to be included as part of the application processes to participating grantmakers." The CDP aims to "strengthen the national nonprofit arts and cultural sector by collecting and disseminating comprehensive, high-quality longitudinal data that supports fact-based decision-making for grantmakers, researchers, advocates, policymakers, and individual arts and cultural organizations."

Source: culturaldata.org

ELECTRONIC GRANT REPORTING

Access: Free

"The Foundation Center's eGrant and hGrant Reporting Programs enable grantmakers to quickly and easily share grants data, and equip you with interactive maps that showcase your grants activity. Through the eGrant Reporting program, you can submit your grants electronically to the Foundation Center on a regular basis, expediting their inclusion in *Foundation Directory Online*, the nation's most widely used searchable database of U.S. grantmakers and their grants, and *Philanthropy In/Sight*, the Foundation Center's tool for tracking the work of foundations worldwide."

Source: foundationcenter.org/grantmakers/e-grants.html

FLUXX

Access: Fee

Fluxx is "a collaborative work platform, connecting everyone in your organization to the data that runs your business." Fluxx provides "unified software systems… [where] segregated data streams are brought together, fostering entirely new interactions and revolutionary insights; a usable user interface [that] allows everyone in your organization to interact with data via custom dashboard views; and a social work platform [that] bridges organizational gaps with practical social features that foster more efficient workflow and catalyze collaboration." Fluxx has been used in philanthropic settings to help streamline grants management processes.

Source: fluxx.io

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FOUNDATION DIRECTORY ONLINE

Access: Freemium

"*Foundation Directory Online* (FDO) is the nation's leading online funding research tool, developed by the Foundation Center. FDO provides the most current, accurate, and comprehensive information available on U.S. grantmakers and their grants, drawn from reliable sources, including IRS Form 990s, grantmaker web sites and annual reports, and the grantmakers themselves. The Foundation Center has combined its data with the latest technology. These advances have led to improvements such as the ability to keyword-search across an entire database of IRS Form 990s, map and chart the distribution of a funder's grants, and sign up to receive funder-specific e-mail alerts."

Source: foundationcenter.org/fdo

FOUNDATIONCONNECT

Access: Fee

"NPower's FoundationConnect is a total solution for managing the grantmaking lifecycle. FoundationConnect is a fully cloud-hosted solution that provides a stable, secure, and scalable platform that can grow and adapt to a foundation's evolving needs. Features include: online grant applications; 501c3 verification; flexible forms & workflows; real-time core & ad hoc reports; Salesforce.com platform; web portal on Amazon cloud; and MS Office/Outlook integration."

Source: npower.org

GLASSPOCKETS

Access: Free

"Glasspockets.org is a web site created by the Foundation Center focused on transparency in philanthropy. With Glasspockets, the Foundation Center and its partners are working to: inspire private foundations to greater openness in their communications; increase understanding of best practices in foundation transparency and accountability in an online world; illustrate how institutional philanthropy is relevant to the critical issues of our time; highlight the many stories of philanthropy that show how private wealth is serving the public good; and illuminate successes, failures, and ongoing experimentation so foundations can build on each other's ideas to increase impact."

Source: glasspockets.org

GLOBAL IMPACT INVESTING RATINGS SYSTEM

Access: Freemium

"In order to scale the impact investing marketplace, investors require an independent third-party impact ratings product that is comparable, transparent, and easy to use…. GIIRS is a comprehensive and transparent system for assessing the social and environmental impact of developed and emerging market companies and funds with a ratings and analytics approach analogous to Morningstar investment rankings and Capital IQ financial analytics. GIIRS is uniquely positioned in the impact investing marketplace because GIIRS is the only entity that has a focus on the impact performance of private companies, that uses a cross-industry and cross-geographic methodology, and that provides transparent, independent, and verified data."

Source: giirs.org

GUIDESTAR

Access: Freemium

"GuideStar has the most comprehensive, up-to-date information available on more than 1.8 million nonprofits—and the tools and services to deliver exactly the data you need, in the way you need it. Products and services include: nonprofit intelligence, whether you're doing a quick search or need to dig deeper and manage a large volume of nonprofit data; charity verification and supporting organization research to verify nonprofits' charitable status and identify supporting organizations; benchmarking and compensation research; and standardized analysis of nonprofit financial data."

Source: guidestar.org

IMPACT REPORTING AND INVESTMENT STANDARDS

Access: Free

"IRIS is a set of standardized metrics that can be used to describe an organization's social, environmental, and financial performance. IRIS metrics span an array of performance objectives and include sector-specific metrics for areas such as financial services, agriculture, and energy. IRIS aims to increase the value of non-financial data by enabling performance comparisons and benchmarking, while also streamlining and simplifying reporting requirements for companies and their investors. IRIS provides a credible set of standards that can be applied across multiple sectors and geographies to serve as the basis for impact reporting by funds. Member organizations can use IRIS as the basis for a shared reporting framework to assess their individual member and aggregate impacts."

Source: iris.thegiin.org

ISSUELAB

Access: Free

"Through IssueLab, the Foundation Center is working to more effectively gather, index, and share the collective intelligence of the social sector. IssueLab provides free access to thousands of case studies, evaluations, white papers, and issue briefs addressing some of the world's most pressing social problems. If you have worked, volunteered, or interned for a social sector organization, foundation, or university based research center, you can create an account and add resources to the IssueLab collection. As long as your materials are free and available to the public, IssueLab accepts annual reports, case studies, datasets, evaluations, fact sheets, issue/policy briefs, literature/research reviews, presentations, reports/white papers, surveys, congressional testimony, and toolkits."

Source: issuelab.org

MAKING THE CASE

Access: Fee

"With just under a 10 year global track record, Women's Funding Network's Making the Case™ evaluation framework provides: a common way for partners to communicate accomplishments, impact and learnings—all benefiting from use of a common language; standardized evaluations covering diverse issue areas and types of grants to more effectively manage a social change portfolio for its overall impact; shared learning among and between partners, funders and the community; and tools, templates, and online access for ease of use." Making the Case can be viewed at makingthecaseglobal.org using the login e-mail: Randy@Change.com and password: demo.

Source: makingthecaseglobal.org

NGOSOURCE

Access: Fee

"NGOsource helps U.S. grantmakers streamline their international giving through easier equivalency determinations. NGOsource simplifies the task of evaluating whether a non-U.S. organization is the equivalent of a U.S. public charity—a process known as equivalency determination or ED.

[NGOsource's] global reach, legal expertise, and standardized methodology enable a thorough, accurate analysis in compliance with IRS regulations. Backed by a database of detailed information about non-governmental organizations around the world, the data and analysis that NGOsource uses to issue an ED to one grantmaker can be used to issue EDs to other grantmakers. In this way, NGOsource reduces the complexity and costs of EDs for grantmakers and their intended grantees."

Source: ngosource.org

OPEN AID REGISTER

Access: Free

Open Aid Register helps "non-profits and NGOs publish their aid data using the most common data standard for aid: IATI (International Aid Transparency Initiative) and ensures that this data remains open. One of the key problems facing global aid transparency initiatives today is knowing who is doing what, where. Publishing aid data in IATI allows the aid information from NGOs and non-profits to be cross-referenced and compared with aid data published by donors. Striving to get all global aid information published in the same format will allow funders, providers, and recipients of aid, in addition to the general public, to understand what is currently being done and what should be done in the global aid arena."

Source: openaidregister.org

SUCCESS MEASURES DATA SYSTEM

Access: Fee

"Success Measures is a practical, user-friendly outcome evaluation resource for the community development field. The Success Measures Data System (SMDS) is the secure, online environment that provides organizations with access to Success Measures' outcome indicators and data collection tools and enables users to collect data, tabulate, aggregate, store, export and share data, as well as customize their evaluations."

Source: successmeasures.org

TOOLS AND RESOURCES FOR ASSESSING SOCIAL IMPACT

Access: Free

"Tools and Resources for Assessing Social Impact (TRASI) is a searchable, expert-reviewed database of over 150 approaches to measuring the impact of social programs and investments. It also features a community portal for nonprofits, grantmakers, and social enterprises to connect with peers and evaluation experts. With TRASI you can: browse a listing of over 150 tools and resources for assessing social impact; search for tools and resources based on the framework outlined in McKinsey's Learning for Social Impact initiative; find ready-to-use tools to conduct a program evaluation; learn what leading foundations, nonprofits, and social enterprises are using to measure their impact; read the latest foundation-funded reports and case studies; and connect with a network of peers and experts interested in assessment."

Source: trasi.foundationcenter.org

ADDITIONAL DATA AGGREGATION, SHARING, & STANDARDS TOOLS:

Intuit's QuickBase (quickbase.intuit.com)

Salesforce (salesforce.com)

SugarCRM (sugarcrm.com)

Zoho CRM (zoho.com/crm)

Data Analysis & Visualization

DATA ANALYSIS & VISUALIZATION	Help groups develop a shared understanding of the patterns within their data

CENTRIFUGE VISUAL NETWORK ANALYTICS

Access: Fee

"Centrifuge Visual Networks Analytics gives you the power and flexibility to connect, visualize, and collaborate without complex data integration, costly services, or a data science degree. Using advanced link analysis, you can 'bring your own data' from any source, filter and combine as desired, and quickly make connections between people, behavior, and events. Centrifuge Interactive Visualizations move beyond simple visual dashboards to give you the ability to interpret data within the context of your business."

Source: centrifugesystems.com

THE COMMUNITY PLATFORM

Access: Fee

"The Community Platform is the latest tool from the National Center for Charitable Statistics (NCCS) and combines NCCS data with maps and other new web tools to help communities and nonprofit organizations work together more effectively. The Community Platform allows you to: map community resources and needs; share nonprofit resources; build the local knowledge base; analyze nonprofit finances; track program outcomes; map resources near schools; manage community projects and teams; and link to local data sources. The platform is customized for local partners."

Source: nccs.urban.org/Community-Platform.cfm

GAPMINDER WORLD

Access: Free

"Gapminder World shows the world's most important trends. Gapminder is a non-profit venture—a modern "museum" on the Internet—promoting sustainable global development and achievement of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals." Gapminder is based on the "Trendalyzer software, [which] sought to unveil the beauty of statistical time series by converting boring numbers into enjoyable, animated and interactive graphics. The current version of Trendalyzer has been available since March 2006 as Gapminder World, a web-service displaying time series of development statistics for all countries."

Source: gapminder.org

GIVINGDATA

Access: Fee

"GivingData is a dashboard, data visualization, and grantmaking analytics platform for philanthropic organizations. Grants can be analyzed, measured, tracked, and compared in new ways—providing unprecedented degrees of clarity, insight, and process management capabilities. With GivingData you can track grantmaking dollars against your annual budget, manage your grantmaking budget, identify trends over multiple years, and view programmatic allocations – all through a web browser. There is no software to install…. Currently, GivingData works with MicroEdge GIFTS, and plans to add support for other grants management platforms in the future."

Source: givingdata.com

KAGGLE

Access: Fee

"Kaggle is the world's largest community of data scientists. They compete with each other to solve complex data science problems, and the top competitors get invited to consult on interesting projects from some of the world's biggest companies through Kaggle Connect…. Kaggle Connect is a consulting platform that connects companies to the elite from [Kaggle's] community of 99,905 data scientists. Kaggle works with companies of all sizes to answer the question 'what's in your data?'"

Source: kaggle.com

MANY EYES

Access: Free

"You can explore data using your eyes! This site is set up to allow the entire internet community to upload data, visualize it, and talk about their discoveries with other people…. The heart of the site is a collection of data visualizations. On Many Eyes you can: view and discuss visualizations; view and discuss data sets; and create visualizations from existing data sets. If you register, you can also: rate data sets and visualizations; upload your own data; create and participate in topic centers; select items to watch; track your contributions, watchlist, and topic centers; and see comments that others have written to you."

Source: 958.ibm.com/software/data/cognos/manyeyes

PHILANTHROPY IN/SIGHT

Access: Freemium

"This interactive mapping tool was designed for grantmakers, advisors, policymakers, researchers, academics—virtually anyone interested in the impact of philanthropy around the world today. *In/Sight* combines the Foundation Center's rich data on grantmakers and their grants with Google maps to tell the story of philanthropy. Choosing from a wide range of customization options, users can quickly create maps that reveal patterns of giving and funding relationships as never before. Plus, users can overlay grant data with their choice of over 150 demographic, socio-economic, and other data sets to create compelling visual portraits showing where philanthropy has made an impact and where opportunities exist to fill critical needs."

Source: philanthropyinsight.org

STRATEGY LANDSCAPE

Access: Fee

"The Strategy Landscape is an online, interactive data visualization tool that makes it easy for users to see and understand patterns of grantmaking and strategies across multiple funders. The tool can help: compile in one place and make easily accessible information about the grants and programmatic strategies of multiple funders; graphically represent the distribution and relative scale of grantmaking within and across foundations, grantees, geographies, outcomes, and strategies; allow groups of funders to understand how the work of different institutions is aligned across various strategies, highlighting critical overlaps and gaps; and support individual institutions or groups of funders in developing strategy with a better understanding of how they fit into the ecosystem of activity around them, thus helping to identify new opportunities for coordination and collaboration."

Source: monitorinstitute.com/strategylandscape

TABLEAU

Access: Fee

Tableau "helps anyone quickly analyze, visualize and share information." It allows people to "see and understand data differently: faster, easier data discovery working with databases and spreadsheets of any size… live data connection for up-to-the-minute changes…. [the ability to] combine multiple data sources in one view… drag-and-drop [functionality] to create rich visualizations… interactive reporting dashboards that combine multiple views into a dashboard… and [the capacity to] develop analytics on the web and everywhere in minutes to share to thousands."

Source: tableausoftware.com

WASHFUNDERS

Access: Free

"The Foundation Center has developed WASHfunders.org as a 'one stop shop' for funding and needs-related data and information for donors, policymakers, and other stakeholders interested in water, sanitation, and hygiene. With dynamically updated information, news, and knowledge relating to philanthropy and sustainable access to safe water, WASHfunders.org aims to facilitate better collaboration and more strategic decision-making among funders and seeks to raise awareness about water and the full WASH continuum among donors."

Source: washfunders.org

ADDITIONAL DATA ANALYSIS & VISUALIZATION TOOLS:

Cfinder (cfinder.org)

C-IKNOW (ciknow.northwestern.edu/)

Commetrix (commetrix.de)

CuttleFish (cuttlefish.sourceforge.net)

GoodData (gooddata.com)

Orgnet (orgnet.com)

The Community Platform (nccs.urban.org/Community-Platform.cfm)

Data Gathering

DATA GATHERING	Make it easy to collect data, solicit feedback, or ask a question to a large group of people

COMPETIQ

Access: Fee

"competIQ leverages human networks to generate the most comprehensive, statistically rigorous business intelligence available. Human intelligence—whether it's from internal stakeholders or external expert networks—is the most powerful and untapped resource in business. competIQ gets at it by combining two powerful mechanisms: Wikis and Prediction Markets… In competIQ's Intelligence Market, each strategic question forms a discrete marketplace. Approved participants contribute best solutions and strategies to address the question, and those solutions are transformed into idea stocks that are traded by the market."

Source: competiq.com

PLAXO

Access: Freemium

"Your address book is full of people who won't stay still. New jobs, new homes, and new social networks make it difficult to keep track of it all. Plaxo pulls it together automatically so your address book is always up-to-date, accurate, and ready to go when and where you need it."

Source: plaxo.com

STACK EXCHANGE

Access: Free

"Stack Exchange is a fast-growing network of 100 question and answer sites on diverse topics from software programming to cooking to photography and gaming. [The company] builds libraries of high-quality questions and answers, focused on the most important topics in each area of expertise. When someone asks a question on a Stack Exchange site, the community reviews, revises, and proposes answers to it. Answers are rated and ranked by the rest of the community. Members also vote for questions they find useful... Questions and answers can be edited by other members, Wikipedia-style. This lets the community continue to polish and update content even when the original authors aren't available… Stack Exchange's focus on professional communities and real world problems results in over 80% of questions getting great answers, fast."

Source: stackexchange.com

SURVEYMONKEY

Access: Freemium

"SurveyMonkey is a free, online survey software and questionnaire tool. It helps users create surveys and get answers. SurveyMonkey allows you to build your own surveys or choose from templates; to choose how to distribute [the survey] and start collecting responses; and to use powerful analytical tools for intelligent insights."

Source: surveymonkey.com

YOUTHTRUTH

Access: Fee

"For school leaders striving for student success, the YouthTruth survey translates students' unique perspectives into actionable data and insight to help districts, schools, and teachers improve. YouthTruth provides a cost-effective, rigorous, and meaningful way to incorporate candid student feedback into school improvement and teacher development. Key themes include: student engagement, school culture, students' relationships with teachers, rigor of classes and instruction, preparedness for the future, student engagement in class, teachers' relationships with students, classroom environment, content and relevance, academic expectations, and instructional methods."

Source: youthtruthsurvey.org

ADDITIONAL DATA GATHERING TOOLS:

AllOurIdeas (allourideas.org)

Four Square (foursquare.com)

GEO Listerv (geofunders.org)

GreatNonprofits (greatnonprofits.org)

GroupMind Express (groupmindexpress.com)

Quora (quora.com)

UserVoice (uservoice.com)

Data Organizing

DATA ORGANIZING	Allow people to curate and share with others their reading lists, bookmarked webpages, mind maps, and other schemes for organizing information

DELICIOUS

Access: Free

"Delicious is an easy, free tool to save, organize, and remember the links you find interesting on the web. It's a great place to develop a rich network of people who share your interests." With Delicious, you can: "add links to Delicious and never lose what you find and share on the web; organize your collection of links and share it with like-minded people; and browse links curated by the Delicious community to discover content you care about."

Source: delicious.com

EVERNOTE

Access: Freemium

"Evernote makes it easy to remember things big and small from your everyday life using your computer, phone, tablet, and the web. With Evernote, all of your notes, web clips, files and images are made available on every device and computer you use: save everything cool and exciting you see online and in the real world; save entire webpages to your Evernote account with the nifty web clipper browser extensions; search by keyword, tag, and even find text inside images; and share your notes and collaborate on projects with friends and colleagues."

Source: evernote.com

MINDMEISTER

Access: Freemium

"MindMeister is a collaborative mind mapping tool for organizations that improves productivity and communication between staff, departments, and all levels of management. MindMeister has been built from the ground up to facilitate collaboration. You can share any creation easily by inviting users by email, or simply send them a unique and secure direct link. Once shared, you can start a thinking session and collaborate on any mind map in real-time. Color-coded effects will highlight changes by other users within seconds, and the integrated live chat will let you exchange thoughts with your peers directly."

Source: mindmeister.com

THEBRAIN

Access: Freemium

"TheBrain Technologies helps people see, share, and find information faster. TheBrain software helps users organize and capture ideas, projects, and information on their desktops and synchronize their digital knowledge hubs online or to any machine cross platform…. Think of it as a living mind map with unlimited space for everything you want, are learning, or need to remember. Each idea can grow and evolve with all related [ideas] instead of being separated in folders or lists…. With [these] products you can visualize thinking on your computer desktop, collectively on a server, or in the cloud…."

Source: thebrain.com

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ADDITIONAL DATA ORGANIZING TOOLS:

MindGenius (mindgenius.com)

Mindjet (mindjet.com)

Mindomo (mindomo.com)

MindView (matchware.com)

Egnyte (egnyte.com)

Etherpad (etherpad.org)

Onehub (onehub.com)

MediaWiki (mediawiki.org)

NetDocuments (netdocuments.com)

File Sharing & Collaborative Writing

FILE SHARING & COLLABORATIVE WRITING

Make it easy for many people to share and edit documents

BOX

Access: Freemium

"Box provides a secure content sharing platform that both users and IT love and adopt. Content on Box can be shared internally and externally, accessed through iPad, iPhone, Android, and Windows Phone applications, as well as extended to partner applications such as Google Apps, NetSuite, and Salesforce." Box allows you to "easily upload content, organize it into folders, share links to files, and manage file/folder permissions."

Source: box.com

DROPBOX

Access: Freemium

"Dropbox lets you bring all your photos, docs and videos anywhere. Any file you save to your Dropbox will automatically save to all your computers, phones, and the Dropbox website. Dropbox works hard to make sure that all your files are the same no matter where you're working from. You can start working on a computer at school or the office, and finish from your home computer. Never email yourself a file again! Dropbox also makes it easy to share with others. Invite your friends, family, and teammates to any folder in your Dropbox, and it'll be as if you saved that folder straight to their computers."

Source: dropbox.com

GOOGLE DRIVE

Access: Freemium

"Google Drive lets you store and access your files anywhere—on the web, on your hard drive, or on the go. Here's how it works: go to Google Drive on the web at drive.google.com; install Google Drive on your computer or mobile device; throw your files in Google Drive, and it's right there on your device.

Now your files go everywhere you do. [If you] change a file on the web, on your computer, or on your mobile device, it updates on every device where you've installed Google Drive."

Source: drive.google.com

ADDITIONAL FILE SHARING & COLLABORATIVE WRITING TOOLS:

Alfresco (alfresco.com)

A.nnotate (a.nnotate.com)

DokuWiki (dokuwiki.org)

Drupal Wiki (drupal-wiki.com)

Fundraising & Matching

FUNDRAISING & MATCHING

Help funders connect with specific projects or organizations in need of funding

CENTER FOR DISASTER PHILANTHROPY

Access: Free

"The Center for Disaster Philanthropy offers tools, expert analysis, and strategic one-on-one guidance to maximize the impact of dollars given to disaster preparedness, relief, and recovery. It provides: trustworthy, objective insights and strategies from seasoned disaster philanthropy specialists; reliable updates and briefs on recent disasters for journalists, philanthropists, and others seeking to use their resources to reduce human suffering; a permanent clearinghouse of information on best practices in disaster management and issues related to disaster response; and pooled resources for maximum impact in disaster philanthropy through the Disaster Recovery Fund."

Source: disasterphilanthropy.org

CROWDRISE

Access: Free

"CrowdRise is a unique blend of crowdfunding, social networking, contests, and other nice stuff." It allows you to: "raise money online for your favorite cause, whether you're running a marathon, volunteering in Haiti, pledging your birthday or raising money for a cause you're super passionate about… and email a link to your fundraising page to all your friends, family, co-workers, or classmates. The idea is to make your online fundraiser so fun that everyone you reach out to wants to give money and join your fundraising campaign."

Source: crowdrise.com

DONORSCHOOSE

Access: Free

"DonorsChoose.org is an online charity that makes it easy for anyone to help students in need. Public school teachers from every corner of America post classroom project requests on [the] site, and you can give any amount to the project that most inspires you. When a project reaches its funding goal, [DonorsChoose] ships the materials to the school. You'll get photos of the project taking place, a letter from the teacher, and insight into how every dollar was spent."

Source: donorschoose.org

FOUNDATION REGISTRY I3

Access: Free

"The Foundation Registry is a website created by a set of funders around the [U.S. Department of Education's Investing in Innovation (i3)] program. It simplifies the process for organizations seeking matching foundation funds for their i3 proposals. Applicants need only register their proposals

once to reach a broad set of foundations for potential support, and each foundation maintains its own decision-making authority to determine which programs fit within their investment strategies. Registered funders can sort applicants by tag and category, view other foundations' interest levels and match considerations for proposals, and collaborate by sharing notes and comments on proposals in a password-protected area."

Source: foundationregistryi3.org

GIVEWELL

Access: Free

"GiveWell is a nonprofit dedicated to finding outstanding giving opportunities and publishing the full details of [their] analysis to help donors decide where to give. Unlike charity evaluators that focus solely on financials, assessing administrative or fundraising costs, [GiveWell] conducts in-depth research aiming to determine how much good a given program accomplishes (in terms of lives saved, lives improved, etc.) per dollar spent. Rather than try to rate as many charities as possible, [they] focus on the few charities that stand out most (by [Givewell's] criteria) in order to find and confidently recommend the best giving opportunities possible."

Source: givewell.org

GLOBALGIVING

Access: Free

"The world is full of problems. GlobalGiving is full of solutions. Solutions run by innovative, grassroots projects and organizations that are working to educate children, feed the hungry, build houses, train women (and men) with job skills, and hundreds of other amazing things. GlobalGiving is a charity fundraising web site that gives social entrepreneurs and non-profits from anywhere in the world a chance to raise the money that they need to improve their communities…. Select the projects you want to support, make a tax-deductible contribution, and you'll get email updates from the project so you can see how your gift is making a difference."

Source: globalgiving.org

SOCIAL IMPACT EXCHANGE S&I 100

Access: Free

"The S&I 100 is the first-ever broad index of nonprofits with proof of their results and are ready to grow. Choose from among 100 high-impact solutions to America's most pressing problems and nearly 16,000 local affiliates implementing them. You can easily give to issues and locations you care about and trust you're making a difference…. The S&I 100 Index consists of high-impact nonprofits that have been carefully vetted through a comprehensive selection process. More than 150 experts have participated in a cross-sector collaborative effort to identify and assess the nonprofits that have been selected to be part of the Index."

Source: socialimpactexchange.org/exchange/si-100

ADDITIONAL FUNDRAISING & MATCHING TOOLS:

Angel List (angel.co)

Bolstr (bolstr.com)

Click the Cause (ClickTheCause.org)

EarlyShares (earlyshares.com)

Indiegogo (indiegogo.com)

Kickstarter (kickstarter.com)

Kiva (kiva.org)

MissionFish / PayPal Giving Fund (missionfish.org)

Network for Good (www.networkforgood.org)

VentureIntro (ventureintro.com)

Innovation Management

INNOVATION MANAGEMENT	Support group brainstorming and innovation

ASHOKA CHANGEMAKERS

Access: Free

"Changemakers is a global online community that supports everyone's ability to be a changemaker and to inspire, mentor, and collaborate with other members of the community at every level of changemaking. Changemakers identifies and connects the best social innovators and implementers through online competitions and changeshops, an online network for scaling-up innovation. Participants compete to surface the most promising solutions, and then collaborate to refine, enrich, and implement them. Changeshops offer a place to plug game-changing ideas into networks of resources, talent, and support."

Source: changemakers.com

IDEASCALE

Access: Fee

"IdeaScale is an easy-to-use, yet powerful solution for the collection of feedback and ideas." It helps users "empower innovation, bring[ing] out the best ideas from your customers and stakeholders by giving them a platform to share, vote, and discuss feedback. How it works: users submit ideas… others vote on those ideas… and the best ideas bubble up. This process allows you to get feedback from your loyal constituents, understand those constituents, solve problems, and steer innovation by knowing what your community really wants."

Source: ideascale.com

INNOCENTIVE'S CHALLENGE PLATFORM

Access: Fee

"InnoCentive is the open innovation and crowdsourcing pioneer that enables organizations to solve their key problems by connecting them to diverse sources of innovation including employees, customers, partners, and the world's largest problem solving marketplace. [InnoCentive's] proven Challenge Driven Innovation methodology, community of millions of problem Solvers, and cloud-based technology platform combine to fundamentally transform the economics of innovation and R&D through rapid solution delivery and the development of sustainable open innovation programs."

Source: innocentive.com

LEARNING REGISTRY

Access: Free

"The Learning Registry is a new approach to capturing, sharing, and analyzing learning resource data to broaden the usefulness of digital content to benefit educators and learners. The Learning Registry is not a website or repository… it's not a search engine… and it's not a replacement for

the excellent sources of online learning content that already exist… The Learning Registry is an open source technical system designed to facilitate the exchange of data behind the scenes, and an open community of resource creators, publishers, curators, and consumers who are collaborating to broadly share resources, as well as information about how those resources are used by educators in diverse learning environments across the Web."

Source: learningregistry.org

ADDITIONAL INNOVATION MANAGEMENT TOOLS:

GroupMind Express (groupmindexpress.com)

Intuit Brainstorm (brainstorm.intuit.com)

MindMeister (mindmeister.com)

Joint Decision Making

Allow many people to easily weigh in on group decisions

GROUPMIND EXPRESS

Access: Fee

"The purpose of GroupMind Express is to help teams make effective decisions based on shared data, resulting in increased alignment and faster implementation. Services include: conven[ing] interactive meetings online; us[ing] decision tools to distill the team's collective wisdom; updat[ing] action lists, with links to files or discussions; and build[ing] surveys and assessments for alignment." For example, the GroupMind weighted voting and ranking tool allows you to: "move quickly from brainstormed possibilities to initial priorities; understand which issues float to the top within the group's current context; develop alignment around key issues; and highlight differences in interpretation, so that assumptions and definitions can be clarified for tighter agreement."

Source: groupmindexpress.com

LOOMIO

Access: Freemium

"Loomio is a user-friendly app for building shared understanding, making clear decisions, and turning talk into action. Loomio reduces the cost of participation in decision-making, making it easy for any group to translate online communication into real-world collective action." Loomio provides tools that help groups to "have a discussion, make a decision, see how everyone feels, and build shared understanding."

Source: loomio.org

TEAMVOICE

Access: Freemium

TeamVoice allows people to "make team decisions easily and confidently…. After you and your team mates join TeamVoice, anyone can start a new decision process which is called a 'case.' Enter the question and optional description of the decision you want to be made such as, 'Which web browsers should we support?' and provide possible options. Once you are done, a call for action email is sent out to your teammates…. Everyone chooses the options they support and can leave [a] comment there as well, to make others aware of motivations and assumptions…. When the last person submits his/her answers, the results are instantly ready!"

Source: teamvoiceapp.com

ADDITIONAL INNOVATION MANAGEMENT TOOLS:

Deci (deciapp.com)

Thumb (thumb.it/)

News Aggregation

Help individuals and groups to monitor the news and to focus on topics of greatest interest to them

FLIPBOARD

Access: Free

"Flipboard is on a quest to transform how people discover, view, and share content by combining the beauty and ease of print with the power of social media. Add news you care about, sources that inspire you and social networks you love and Flipboard becomes your personal magazine. Your account gives you the same personalized experience anywhere you go, whether you're on your iPhone, iPad, Android, Kindle Fire and NOOK. From world news to your favorite blogs, use the Content Guide to find the best sources curated from around the web. Share the photos, videos, stories, and sounds that inspire you."

Source: flipboard.com

PHILANTHROPY NEWS DIGEST

Access: Free

"*Philanthropy News Digest* (PND), a daily news service of the Foundation Center, is a compendium, in digest form, of philanthropy-related articles and features culled from print and electronic media outlets nationwide. Published daily, each PND abstract summarizes the content of, or from, an original article, press or news release, or grantmaker web site. Each abstract includes a citation of the original news source, which readers of the *Digest* can use to read the original web site, or to find a copy of the original article through a library or a document delivery service. Sign up for the *Philanthropy News Digest* newsletter, published on Tuesdays, to get a full week's news in one place."

Source: foundationcenter.org/pnd

ADDITIONAL NEWS AGGREGATION TOOLS:

Digg (Digg.com)

Facebook (facebook.com)

News.me (news.me)

Newsmotion (newsmotion.org)

reddit (reddit.com)

Twitter (twitter.com)

Project Management

Help manage collaborative projects and keep group members informed about roles, responsibilities, and timelines

BASECAMP

Access: Fee

"Basecamp keeps all your projects, data, and people in one place. No matter how many projects you have, or how many people you have working on them, Basecamp keeps everything organized." Features of the web-based project-management tool include file sharing, joint calendars, group to-do lists, project tracking and documentation, and collaborative writing tools.

Source: basecamp.com

CENTRAL DESKTOP

Access: Fee

Central Desktop "connects your people, content and customers in the cloud, so everyone can get things done together from one private, secure, centralized website." The online collaboration workspace lets you: "make everyone's stuff [including files, calendars, conversations, and project plans] accessible from anywhere… speed up existing business processes [by] automatically assign[ing] tasks, update[ing] databases, send[ing] email reminders, and rout[ing] documents for approval… [and] knock down the (fire)walls between you, vendors, and customers, [allowing you to] share and communicate as easily with third parties as you do with your in-house folks."

Source: centraldesktop.com

MICROSOFT PROJECT ONLINE

Access: Fee

"Microsoft Project Online with Project Pro for Office 365 is a flexible online solution for project portfolio management and everyday work." Features include the ability to: "add teams and projects within minutes with a web-based portal; keep your teams organized in one location—their project site—where they can view project summaries, documents, tasks, newsfeeds, and calendars; easily share and curate what teams are talking about and working on by following people, sites, tags, and documents with newsfeeds; promote visibility with collaborative tools to seamlessly flow calendar, presence, and capacity information across your organization; and collaborate with your team quickly by dragging and dropping them into a Lync meeting for group conferencing, instant messaging, screen sharing, and shared workspaces."

Source: office.microsoft.com/en-us/project

TEAMBOX

Access: Freemium

Teambox focuses on "project management from start to finish: conversations for daily group discussions; tasks for mid term planning; pages to share your notes and documentation; files for simple storage and sharing; and time tracking to keep track of workloads…. It's a communications hub, but it'll go beyond that [by installing] apps like: Dropbox and Box integrations for file synchronization; Helpdesk support to turn email inquiries into tasks; Github integration for commits and tasks; or Pivotal Tracker integration for tasks."

Source: teambox.com

TRELLO

Access: Free

"Trello is a collaboration tool that organizes your projects into boards. In one glance, Trello tells you what's being worked on, who's working on what, and where something is in a process….Trello lets you organize anything easily, from life goals and to-do lists to group projects. [You can] add images, checklists, due dates, attachments, and more to your Trello board. [And] team projects are where Trello really shines: improve communication, eliminate email traffic, and get everyone on the same page—fast."

Source: trello.com

ADDITIONAL PROJECT MANAGEMENT TOOLS:

5pm (5pmweb.com)

Asana (asana.com)

Glasscubes (glasscubes.com)

LeanKit Kanban (leankitkanban.com)

Miradi (miradi.org)

Tracky (tracky.com)

Scheduling & Calendar Sharing

Make it easier to schedule meetings with many participants and to keep groups informed about events of shared interest

DOODLE

Access: Freemium

"Doodle eliminates the pain of scheduling by simplifying the way [groups of] people find a suitable time to meet. Instead of playing email ping-pong, spending time on the phone, or sending meeting requests with only one option, you can send a poll with several options, and let the participants indicate their availability online. A quick look will show you which time works the best. You can then close the poll and select that option."

Source: doodle.com

EVITE

Access: Freemium

"With more than 22 million registered users and over 25,000 invitations sent each hour, Evite is the top online invitation and social planning website. Unlike a printed invitation, you and your guests get the party started right on your online invitation: you pick the design, give the party a title and write a personal message to guests, and guests add comments with their replies…. You choose the invitation features you want, and your guest replies are tracked automatically so you always have an accurate headcount."

Source: evite.com

GOOGLE CALENDAR

Access: Free

"Organize your schedule and share events with friends. With Google's free online calendar, it's easy to keep track of life's important events all in one place." Google Calendar enables you to: "share your schedule; let your family and friends see your calendar, and view schedules that others have

shared with you; get your calendar on the go; access your calendar from your phone using its built-in calendar or mobile browser; and receive event reminders via email or have text messages sent right to your mobile phone."

Source: google.com/calendar

ADDITIONAL SCHEDULING & CALENDAR SHARING TOOLS:

agreeAdate (agreeadate.com)

Google+ Events (google.com/+/learnmore/events)

Paperless Post (paperlesspost.com)

Social Networking & Online Community

Connect people to others with whom they have something in common

FACEBOOK

Access: Free

"Founded in 2004, Facebook's mission is to give people the power to share and make the world more open and connected. People use Facebook to stay connected with friends and family, to discover what's going on in the world, and to share and express what matters to them." Facebook is an online social networking platform, with features that include: user profiles; 'friending'; news feeds with updates about friends and events; timeline (your collection of photos, stories, and experiences that tell your story); groups; messaging; chat; video calling; and sharing of likes, interests, and events."

Source: facebook.com

GOOGLE+

Access: Free

"Google+ is an online community platform that allows you to connect and share with others. Features include: user profiles; 'circles' that allow users to organize people into groups for sharing; public communities around shared interests and private communities with selected people; photo sharing; 'hangouts' that enable users to video chat for free with up to nine friends at the same time; and a mobile app that allows users to stay connected while they're on the go."

Source: plus.google.com

LINKEDIN

Access: Freemium

LinkedIn is "the world's largest professional network with 225 million members in over 200 countries and territories around the globe." The web site can help you: "establish your professional profile; build and maintain a broader network of professionals you can trust; find and reconnect with colleagues and classmates; learn about other companies; leverage powerful tools to find and reach the people you need; tap into the knowledge of your network; and discover new opportunities."

Source: linkedin.com

REDDIT

Access: Free

"reddit is a type of online community where users vote on content. How reddit works: redditors vote on which stories and discussions are important. The hottest stories rise to the top, while cooler stories sink. Comments can be posted on every story on reddit. Anyone can create a community (called 'subreddits'). Each subreddit is independent and moderated by a team of volunteers. reddit is open source, and community members are constantly tinkering and contributing features, bug fixes, and translations back to the site."

Source: reddit.com

SKOLL WORLD FORUM

Access: Free

"The Skoll World Forum website is now a year-round platform where executive audiences can learn about the latest news and innovative approaches in a variety of focus areas (e.g., deforestation, education and economic opportunity, or healthcare access and treatment), and engage with the world's leading thinkers and doers of social change on key questions, challenges, and opportunities."

Source: skollworldforum.org

WISEREARTH

Access: Free

"Wiser.org's mission is to help the global movement of people and organizations working toward social justice, indigenous rights, and environmental stewardship to connect, collaborate, share knowledge, and build alliances." Features include: "a global community of 75,166 people around the world who are connecting, collaborating, and sharing knowledge; 3,141 online community forums where members engage in discussion, exchange knowledge, and collaborate on projects; local face-to-face gatherings supporting collaboration across sectors working towards social change; an organizational and nonprofit directory; event listings; solutions database; resources database; and job board."

Source: wiser.org

WORLDCHANGING/OPEN ARCHITECTURE NETWORK

Access: Free

"Worldchanging [now merged with the Open Architecture Network] is an online, open-source community dedicated to improving living conditions through innovative and sustainable design. Here designers of all persuasions can: share their ideas, designs and plans; view and review designs posted by others; collaborate with each other, people in other professions and community leaders to address specific design challenges; manage design projects from concept to implementation; communicate easily amongst team members; protect their intellectual property rights using the Creative Commons 'some rights reserved' licensing system; and build a more sustainable future."

Source: openarchitecturenetwork.org

YAMMER

Access: Freemium

"Yammer brings the power of social networking to your company. Yammer is as easy to use as great consumer software like Facebook and Twitter, but is designed for company collaboration, file sharing, knowledge exchange, and team efficiency." With Yammer you can: "create, discuss, and share content with coworkers without sending a single email; store large files, post documents to team workspaces, and collaboratively edit pages in real time; find the content, conversations, people and business data you need, when you need them; search instantly across your entire company and all your other business applications; and connect and collaborate with external customers, vendors and business partners."

Source: yammer.com

ADDITIONAL SOCIAL NETWORKING & ONLINE COMMUNITY TOOLS:

Care2 (care2.com)

Causes (causes.com)

Idealist (idealist.org)

Lithium (lithium.com)

Meetup (meetup.com)

NationBuilder (nationbuilder.com)

Ning (ning.com)

RE-AMP Commons (reamp.org/about/The%20Commons)

SAP Jam (successfactors.com/en_us/solutions/bizx-suite/jam.html)

TakePart (takepart.com)

WASHfunders (washfunders.org)

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