

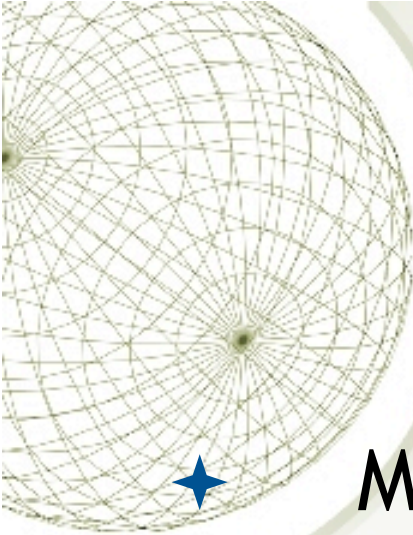


Software Not Provided:

*Challenges, Experiences, and
Opportunities in Supporting
Communities and Democracy*

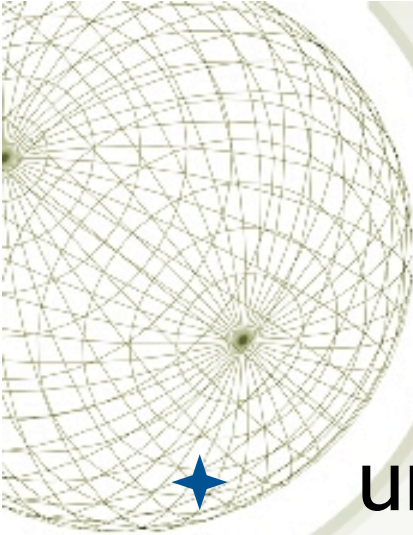
Todd Davies, SSP, Stanford

Jerry Feldman, CSEE, Berkeley
and ICSI



Under what conditions is software produced?

- ★ Money motive
- ★ Scratching your itch
- ★ Easy to write
- ★ Similar to something else that exists

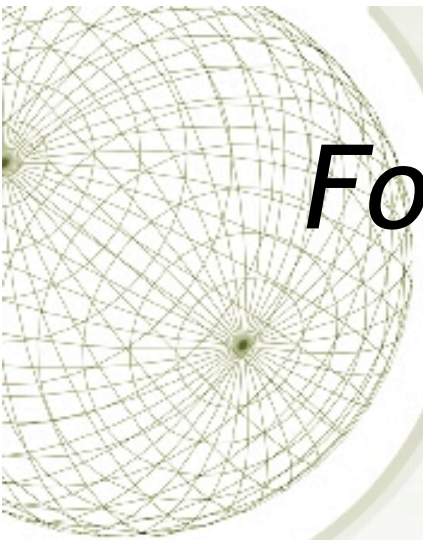


But what about software that is...

- ★ unprofitable
- ★ not widely desired by developers
- ★ hard to write/service

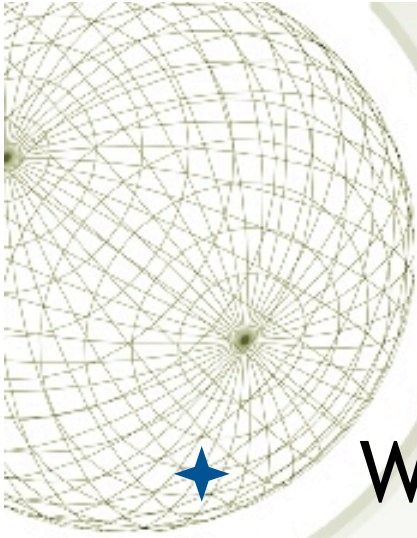
AND

- ★ novel



*For instance, software that
is...*

- ★ designed for people who have little to no money
- ★ designed to meet particular needs of those who are not computer experts
- ★ complex, either in the tasks it supports or the nature of what is needed
- ★ not already available



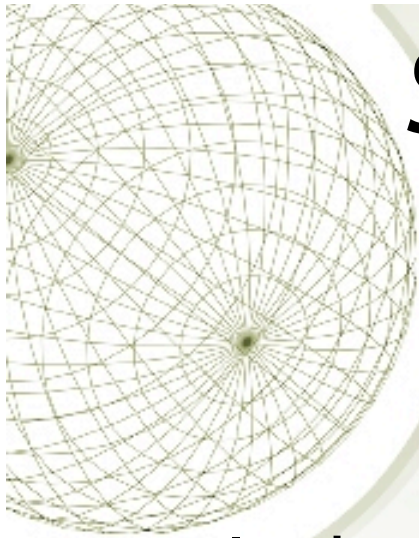
Questions for discussion

- ★ What software do under-resourced people need?
- ★ What types of tools do nonexperts need but experts not need?
- ★ What features make software hard to write?
- ★ What software is technically feasible but not available?

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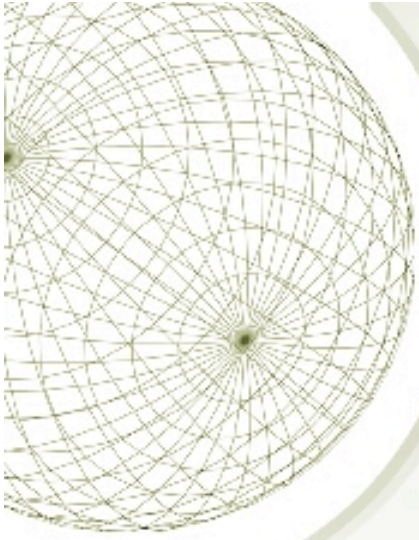
*A candidate application area
for underprovided software:*

community computing
software especially aimed at
meeting the needs of low-
income communities



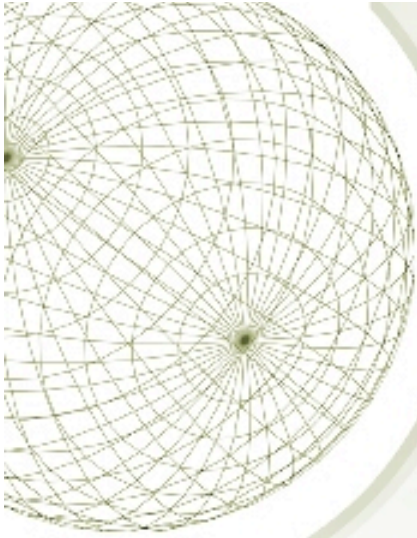
Subspecies of Community computing: Community-based software

- ★ Is the software developed by, as well as for, the community?
- ★ Do community members have control (i.e. ownership) over both technology and content?
- ★ Is community benefit the primary goal that drives the availability of the network (as opposed to motives of an external provider)?



Examples of community computing

- ★ Community networks
- ★ EPA.Net
- ★ The Election Incident Reporting System (EIRS)
- ★ Online deliberation platforms



EPA.Net

- ★ Project description
- ★ Funding model: corporate philanthropy, one-time gift to CTC
- ★ History and contribution to the community
- ★ Challenges



EIRS

- ★ Project description
- ★ Funding model: joint grant to two nonprofit advocacy groups
- ★ History and contribution to democracy
- ★ Challenges

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Deme

- ★ Project description
- ★ Funding model: university leverage grant to support student programmers
- ★ History so far
- ★ Challenges
- ★ More at Groupspace.org