Civic Collaboratives:
Permanent Governance Forums
or Metastable States in Transition?

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Introduction

Community partnerships are increasingly utilized as a means to lead and implement local economic and social development. They may take many forms – public-private partnerships, business-education partnerships, community networks, etc. – but of special interest is the growing number of *civic collaboratives*. These civic collaboratives are not-for-profit organizations that exhibit hybrid characteristics of business, government, education and civic organizations and that seem to assume a local governance role in co-ordinating priorities and resources.

The focus of civic collaboratives is the range of complex issues that cross the boundaries of multiple sectors of the community, that involve multiple authorities to resolve and that have multiple accountabilities to address. From our observations of three such institutionalized partnerships in Silicon Valley, Ottawa and Glasgow, Scotland we have found that the social learning and collective intelligence generated by these collaboratives can significantly contribute to more responsive and effective community governance. This would of itself suggest the encouragement of civic collaboratives as a policy tool to enhance accountability and results based performance in the local arena.

However, our research also shows these organizations to be constantly under pressure to change, albeit for different reasons. In each case, the organizations we observed at the outset of our study in 1999 are not the organizations we see today. Each organization started with a different motivation, evolved to a state where they seemed equivalent with one another (the point where we identified them) and then has since evolved along quite different paths. The policy question is whether civic collaboratives have sufficient institutional stability to invest in, in order to promote good governance and collective decision-making at a local level. Or, are these civic collaboratives merely elaborate transitional tools to be used on an issue-by-issue basis with no long term regional learning or corporate memory possible?

This paper presents the concept of civic collaboratives as a quintessential mode of community co-operation drawing from the experiences of Silicon Valley, Ottawa and Glasgow, Scotland. It then tries to answer the question of whether these types of organizations are models of local governance that can be used by any community or whether they are just some temporary phenomena, some metastable state, that is a means to, not an end in itself. The paper begins with a discussion of civic collaboratives, their nature and activities and then uses the experiences of Silicon Valley, Ottawa and Glasgow, Scotland to illustrate. The Ottawa case is further detailed by an examination of its community Internet access program, Sm@rtSites, to better reveal the dynamics at play. The question of governance model or metastable state is addressed in the next section and finally we end with some concluding remarks on the policy significance of civic collaboratives.

Civic Collaboratives

In times of rapid change, communities can effectively govern only by developing the capacity to learn both their goals and the means to achieve them *as they proceed*. This learning is commonly accomplished by tapping a range of knowledge from community partners and collaborators and discovering collectively new ways of behaving and relating. This inevitably leads to a more distributed governance environment. For the community to learn quickly and to avoid the many ways to say 'no', stakeholders must feel a real part in the *conversation,* allowing them to bring forward their unique knowledge that has a bearing on the issue. This calls for a dispersion of power and a more negotiated governance process[1] one that can deprive the traditional 'heroic leader' of his or her monopoly on organizational governance.

The boundary crossing nature of many issues faced by communities today results in a need for multilogue[2] -- a form of exchange or deliberation that leads to an interweaving of the different accountabilities and authorities towards a fuller use of social learning and collective intelligence — and ultimately to a reconciliation of the

different perspectives — even though it be imperfect, incomplete or temporary[3]. Far from a silver bullet approach, this requires an accumulation of trust over time through regular interaction.

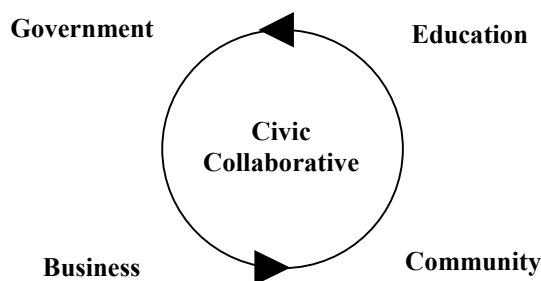As a consequence, social learning will occur if:
- the conversation is conducted [in such a manner that] a meaningful exchange is carried out – meaning that participants are willing to listen while putting their own predispositions on hold[4]; and
- the conversation, deliberation, and accumulation of judgements are conducted with tact and civility, and with an openness to multiple logics[5].

The central learning blockages in a community have to do with the need to reconcile "frames of reference". Typically community collaborators may come from any number of private, public or civic organizations, therefore it is likely that the same data will be interpreted in widely differing ways. What is efficient for businesses may be callous for the community or politically threatening for a government. Therefore, there is a requirement to bridge the fundamental worldviews among the various players. This can only be achieved when stakeholders transcend their individual frames of reference and silo-mentalities and engage in learning-generating conversations. Importantly, they must avoid any form of 'turf war' or 'advocacy war'. This 'frame resolution' is the sort of governance challenge that most communities face so the central question remains -- how do you generate those learning conversations?

Generating a common language of problem solution and co-designing solutions presupposes some mutual understanding, something not easily achieved in multistakeholder collaborations. As Hatch has commented "what is essential to value realignment is that a critical mass of appreciation for a new artefact [of knowledge] be built up so that diffusion takes hold within retroactive realization processes. Of course, grand-scale value realignment...is rare"[6]. Presumably this is because the critical mass for large populations is too large. However, the corollaries to this are that incremental change will tend to be easier in large groups and that grand-scale realignment may be possible in smaller populations. Small changes or small groups – these provide the most fertile ground for achieving the critical mass necessary for social learning.

Within some successful learning regions, such as the three we have observed, there exist learning networks that can best be described as collaborative hybrids of business, government, education and civic organizations. At first glance, their activities provide only a vehicle for incremental learning but over time they have provided opportunities for large-scale community learning through the diversity of projects they have undertaken.

Though civic in form and usually non-profit by charter these 'civic collaboratives' act as neutral vehicles for facilitating the 'learning conversations' of community members. They neither threaten nor challenge any other organization's market or authority and when the collective learning they catalyze is translated into successful projects, these collaboratives earn

reputational assets that draw others to the table. They have a capacity for frame reconciliation that has often led to a better co-ordination of local resources and an improved capacity for local problem solving.

Comparing Silicon Valley, Ottawa and Glasgow

Glasgow, with a population of over 600,000, is the largest of Scotland's cities and the heart of Scotland's economy. In the 1980's however, due to the restructuring that occurred in its primary industries -- steel, coal and shipbuilding -- the city experienced great hardship from unemployment rates of up to 50%.   Today,

Glasgow's new economic vitality is primarily supported by the service sector, namely transaction processing, banking and finance, call centres, software development, biotechnology, multimedia, opto-electronics and tourism. Yet, unemployment remains stubbornly higher than the Scottish national rate of 7.1% with some pockets of the city over 15%[7].

The Glasgow Education Business Partnership (http://www.gebp.co.uk) has endeavoured to reduce unemployment, particularly among the city's youth, through a partnership approach involving over 70 projects, 1,000 schools, 3,000 businesses and over 45,000 Glasgow young people. GEBP is an independent not-for-profit organization, partially funded by the local branch of Scottish Enterprise (SEG), Scotland's economic development agency, and the Glasgow City Council. In fact, GEBP was part of a larger **government strategy** that linked access to public funds to a requirement for private-public-civic cooperation that addressed the unemployment issue. Though arising from this public mandate, GEBP is not a public sector organization. The majority of its resources, both direct and in-kind, are obtained on a project-by-project basis from private corporations.

The main focus of GEBP is linking primary, secondary and post-secondary education with the business community, in order to improve student achievement and curriculum relevancy, to equip its young people with the employability skills for tomorrow's workforce, to encourage a culture of entrepreneurship and to promote lifelong learning. For instance, GEBP helped create a *Guide to the Glasgow Economy* that is used by all S3 level pupils in every school in Glasgow. The guide contains information about the city's youth employment situation, emphasises employers' recruitment needs and illustrates how young people can develop the qualities employers most value while still at school. Through its *Glasgow Partnership Technology Education Network* GEBP brings together a number of individuals and organisations to ensure the coherent delivery of a number of technology projects in support of technology teachers. In 1999, GEBP received the Global Best Award from the International Partnership Network and the Conference Board of Canada in recognition for its work in developing broad-based community partnerships.

While generally recognizing the benefits of corporate social responsibility, increasingly Scotland's businesses have begun to recognize[8] that community partnerships spawn internal benefits that include positive PR, easier recruitment, increased organizational learning, increased staff motivation and improved access to resources. An independent survey[9] in 1998 reported that 40% of the organizations involved with GEBP experienced widespread organizational benefits, on average 25% higher than other organizational development approaches used internally. The GEBP's success prompted the Scottish Government in 2001 to roll out similar entrepreneurial programs across the country and to give GEBP a leadership role in a new 'super enterprise agency' for Scotland.

California's Silicon Valley is centred on Santa Clara County, including portions of San Mateo, Alameda, and Santa Cruz counties. It is home to more than 2.5 million people and more than 7,000 technology-based companies. In 1992, business and high-tech leaders concerned about a slowing economy created a cooperative vehicle to deal with regional issues. They called it Joint Venture: Silicon Valley (http://www.jointventure.org) and used it to try and make the Valley more business friendly and to head off a perceived exodus of companies and technology workers. Despite early scepticism, Joint Venture forged a collaborative model that eventually included government, educational and civic leaders and began identifying problems, finding answers and implementing solutions. A San Jose columnist once described Joint Venture as having, "created a mechanism that prompted people from all three sectors to set aside their differences temporarily, to understand each other's problems and, wherever possible, to develop solutions that help everyone."[10]

According to one of Joint Ventures early exponents, Doug Henton of Collaborative Economics, "we did not want to create another task force. We wanted to move beyond committees to creating active programs. In essence, Joint Venture was a **network of leaders**. It was not a grassroots organization."[11] Those leaders included people like Jim Morgan the CEO of Applied Materials, Ed McCracken CEO of Silicon Graphics, John Young CEO of Hewlett-Packard, Susan Hammer the Mayor of San Jose and California Senator Rebecca Morgan.

In the nineties, Joint Venture pursued an ambitious agenda of regulatory and policy reform through its *Regulatory Streamlining* initiative, fostered the development of new businesses through business incubation services like *The Enterprise Network* and the *Environmental Partnership*, created innovative educational models through initiatives like *Challenge 2000*, and worked to improve the Valley's quality of life through *Smart Valley* and its *Healthy Community - Healthy Economy* initiatives. Its many corporate, government and civic partners favoured collaboration for three reasons:
1. It yielded creative solutions,
2. It built commitment for implementing those solutions, and
3. It created a decision-making capacity where multiple authorities existed.

More recently, Joint Venture has shifted its focus from "developing jobs to developing people" in line with the changing needs of Silicon Valley's knowledge economy. The basis of this new strategy was an extensive public visioning process conducted by Joint Venture in 1998 involving citizens from across the region at all levels in, from corporate CEOs to parents and students. Joint Venture's current focus is three-fold – *broadened prosperity, livable communities* and *civic engagement* and their activities are aimed at creating neutral forums for the discussion of innovative ideas and creative solutions that have impact across the region.

Canada's national capital region has a population of more than 1 million and its economy has historically enjoyed relative stability due to the presence of the Canada's federal government. However, during the 1990's it witnessed a series of setbacks – a major recession, a significant downsizing of the federal government and a major downloading of provincial responsibilities to the local community. Fortunately, Ottawa had already been shifting its economic base since the early 1980's from government to advanced technology, which is now the region's leading employer. Today, Ottawa's export clusters include life sciences, photonics, telecommunications, professional services, microelectronics, software and tourism.

The Ottawa Centre for Research and Innovation (OCRI -- http://www.ocri.ca) has positioned itself at the core of region's capacity to generate broad community collaboration. It has evolved from a research collaborative in 1983 to being a key player today in orchestrating the coordination of people, ideas and resources in order to improve the region's talent pool, its economic performance, innovativeness and its quality of life. Its activities have included the promotion of research, a variety of professional development networks, support for K-12 education, advocacy for the local advanced technology sector, and economic development.

Unlike JVSV and GEBP, OCRI is a **grassroots, member-driven organization**. Member involvement in individual projects drives OCRI's direction and success. OCRI projects tend to involve more mid-level managers, small business leaders, teachers, consultants, service providers, researchers, community activists and local government officials. Today, with support from over 600 members including large corporations, school boards, research laboratories, colleges and universities, OCRI aims to enhance the region's talent base, ensure the adequacy of Ottawa's infrastructure, attract and develop new businesses and ensure that the benefits of technology are bestowed inclusively across the region.

OCRI has flourished as a facilitator of cooperation. Often seeming like a project-based cooperative, OCRI's style and culture has not directly reflected those of its partners which has allowed it to become a meeting ground for a wide variety of community stakeholders. The diversity of its projects has allowed it to act as a catalyst for ongoing dialogue and frame reconciliation on issues of regional importance. While OCRI has tended not to take ownership of initiatives brought its way, it has amply benefited from the work of civic entrepreneurs by way of the enhanced reputation that flowed from successful innovations and programs.

Its growing membership base, over 400% growth in five years, evidences the impact of that growing reputation as does the growing national and international interest in the OCRI model, and by the increasing ease by which it can attract resources to its sponsored projects. Over the past decade, OCRI too has been the recipient of a variety of local, national and international awards, including the Year 2000 Global Best Award from the International Partnership Network. More recently, because of its broad credibility many sectors in Ottawa, OCRI was tasked by *The Ottawa Partnership*, an informal regional body that coordinates local development, to

create *TalentWorks*. *TalentWorks* is a community forum to coordinate workforce information, programs and strategies in Ottawa. Lastly, OCRI's international reputation, led the newly amalgamated City of Ottawa to push for a merger between OCRI and the publicly funded Ottawa Economic Development Corporation (OED) in 2001, a union that gave OCRI additional responsibilities for entrepreneurial development and regional marketing.

Ottawa's Sm@rtSites

Ottawa's SmartSites is one example of a broad collaborative initiative run under OCRI's umbrella and has created 150 free public Internet access locations across the region. The SmartSites program began in 1999 with the introduction of a new federal government-funding program[1] that was aimed at reducing the 'Digital Divide' in Canada. These centres were to be located in a variety of trusted neighbourhood locations - places in which non-users could learn to use these 21st century tools in non-intimidating environments.

Many organizations in Ottawa wanted to participate in SmartSites in order to deliver this opportunity to disenfranchised individuals but most interested organizations were unfamiliar with the technology and/or the delivery systems required to meet this new mandate. OCRI was asked to broker the process in which these groups came together to form like-minded networks of access sites, each lead by its own champion, and in turn, allowed them to create a consortium or "network of networks" in order to advance the project and to find effective solutions to their common challenges.

By May 2000 the Ottawa SmartSite consortium had located public Internet access sites in networks of schools, municipal offices, libraries and community locations throughout the City of Ottawa and had adopted the following mission statement:

> "…to insure co-ordination of an on-going city-wide strategy, enabling all citizens of Ottawa to participate and have public access via the Internet, to a suite of E Services (i.e. E Government, E Democracy, E Training, E Commerce) by leveraging the energy, skills, resources and economies of scale available through a network of networks."

Led by OCRI, working groups were formed with representation from each network, to develop the following assistance & central services:

> Technical Harmonization: (Hardware, software and connectivity) needs vary considerably according to the capacity of each site and network but the goal is consistent service and standards for all sites.
>
> Training and Training Resources: (for staff, volunteers and the public). Centralized training for front-line staff, all SmartSite volunteers and a unique package of on-line and hard copy resources for use by novice users.
>
> Volunteer Management: A professionally managed, central service in which volunteers are recruited, screened, trained and placed in SmartSites throughout the region.
>
> Marketing: A regional campaign was launched May 2001 to introduce SmartSites to the Ottawa community; including major events, ongoing promotion, media coverage, print ads, posters and a SmartSite website.
>
> Impact Analysis & Reporting: Public & private sector funders, sponsors, numerous supporting organizations and the community at large, all need to make well informed decisions about continued involvement. By utilizing new technology and methodologies, matrices for measuring and reporting the effectiveness of each site, network and central service are being developed.
>
> Sustainability & Funding: Sourcing of public& private sector funding, sponsorships and In-kind donations are continually sought for both the central services and the networks of sites.

Within this architecture, the SmartSites program and its services evolved a "Hub & Spoke" model with its Central Services (the Hub) delivered through OCRI to each of the Networks of sites (represented as a Spoke).

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[1] CAP referring to the federally funded Community Access Program

Yet as the SmartSites program evolved and matured, it became evident that not all the networks required the same level of service originally envisioned; in particular the school and library networks needed only minimal marketing and impact analysis. Eventually, the resources for the delivery of central services were redirected and concentrated toward the 80 community level SmartSites that truly needed them the most.

After the City of Ottawa's amalgamation in 2001, three original SmartSites networks, representing 63 sites in recreation centres, libraries, extended care facilities and numerous other city service centres, came under one municipal umbrella. In addition, all the original municipal project champions left or retired around the same time resulting in the management of the City's public access sites falling to a central IT Department that viewed them as technical kiosks without a need for customer support. As a result, the roll out of the City's SmartSites was delayed, with most municipal SmartSites sites finally opening their doors during the summer of 2002.

While two community based networks of sites were open by 2001, one of those networks needed intensive capacity building and technical assistance in order to enable the 30 disparate sites to function as a network and to make public access services available to some of the City's most disenfranchised populations.

While early encouragement from federal and municipal funders suggested ongoing support for this important Digital Divide initiative, … the fact is that both levels of government have been preoccupied with other priorities and SmartSites has struggled with chronic under funding issues since its inception. The economic downturn in the telecommunications industry has had a significant effect on SmartSites ability to secure private sector sponsorship or in-kind donations in Ottawa. On the other hand, the resulting number of unemployed knowledge workers in Ottawa has been a rich source of volunteers available to staff the SmartSites.

With the reorganization of OCRI after its merger with OED in 2001 SmartSites has been repositioned within its new expanded organization. Rather than being a stand-alone initiative, SmartSites is now viewed as the public access pillar of one of OCRI's major technology programs, SmartCapital. This ambitious smart community project is designed *to make Ottawa one of the most connected cities in the world"*.

Changes in the structure and membership of the original consortium have resulted in a lack of participation by key decision-makers and champions committed to advancing SmartSites in Ottawa. The SmartSites coordinating group at OCRI has focused on developing a "core" structure to support the original mission and needs, primarily by working with the reconstituted networks individually, rather than the partnership as a whole.

In spite of the changes and challenges the SmartSites program has faced over the past two years, public access is now available to Ottawa's estimated 200,000[2] or more individuals who lack enabling skills and/or basic technology. While site usage measurement systems are still crude and incomplete, there are over 5000 recorded visits per month in the prime community sites – where low income, high needs users are most in need of public access. In addition, over 350 knowledgeable, experienced volunteers have been recruited and processed to staff SmartSite locations for minimum 3-month periods and over 400 individuals (site staff & volunteers) have been trained to assist novice users with resources developed specifically for this purpose. Finally, an innovative, on-line Impact Analysis project has been initiated.

Of paramount importance to the SmartSites Program's future direction, will be the outcome of current renegotiations with the consortium member networks and its funding sources. The strength of this collaboration lies in strong individual networks, lead by champions who recognize its central value and willing to work together to create a second iteration of the original concept. While recent announcements regarding public funding opportunities look more optimistic, SmartSites must secure a more diversified funding base that includes fundraising, the private sector and foundations.

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[2] A (low) rough estimate based on current studies that suggest about 70% of Ottawa's populations has access to computing and Internet technologies. Ottawa's population is 750,000.

Governance Model or Metastable State?

Like the bicyclist who avoids crashing by continually moving, "self-organizing non-equilibrium systems…may be unstable and yet exist – by evolving"[12]. Civic collaboratives are such systems. They are in fact vehicles for the evolution of their larger community systems and institutions. In a system such as a community, self-organization and evolution takes place when the system is open to its surroundings, when the nature of innovation that emerges is far from the status quo, and when that innovation internally reverberates in the community amplifying the scope and energy of the change. In such situations, innovations far from the status quo may produce a new state of stability if they represent a more efficient and effective state for the community. The value of civic collaboratives is that their collaborative networks help provide mechanisms for both the generation of new non-incremental ideas and relationships and the rapid dissemination of innovation throughout the various sectors of the community.

One might argue that such communities are systems where evolution will emerge regardless or not of the presence of civic collaboratives. However, the institutional nature of the 'relational armistices' that are at play in a community among business, educational, civic and governmental leaders dampen the tendency to move away from the status quo. For instance, in academe we can simply recall the ways in which Canadian colleges and universities tend not to effectively work together, even to the most limited degree in recognizing each other's courses. Without some mechanism to bring stakeholders out of their silos and understand each other, real reorganization of community governance relationships is unlikely to take place. However, the social learning and bottom up process of building collective intelligence afforded by civic collaboratives permit the enhancement of the current institutional system and provide drivers for ongoing evolution of the community.

In our view, the question is not whether these collaboratives should be encouraged but how? The three examples cited in this paper are all young organizations, they emerged in response to different conditions, taking different forms and evolved along differing trajectories. All have demonstrated a remarkable ability to effect significant ongoing change in their communities within a relatively short time period. They bring sustainable organizational and civic capacity to complex challenge/issues and at the same time, they are able to help the community adapt, realign and profoundly redirect their resources as new demands warrant. Given the contribution by civic collaboratives to self-organization in the community, is there a model that can be followed by other municipalities or are they simply temporary fluctuations within isolated communities?

While each of the examples cited exists in demonstrably different environments, they appear to share a common approach that enables them to maintain credibility and support from their community even if their institutional direction or sources of support alter course. They have used the activities of discreetly defined projects to focus their multilogue in ways that engender frame resolution and trust building. For this reason, it is important to give them serious consideration as a new and effective community governance models. Despite the fact that each of these organizations is not the same institution it was even five years ago, their accomplishments continue. GEBP is now part of a Scottish 'super agency', Careers Scotland; Joint Venture has become more civic and educational than business association, OCRI is more economic developer than advanced technology association or research cooperative and SmartSites is more program administrator than program deliverer. What appears to be important and sustainable is not the institutional form of the organization, rather it is the richness of its networks and the relationships they generate over time.

So what is it that a community can encourage if not the organization itself? The obvious answer seems to be the networks. But they exist because each of these civic collaboratives was successful in generating value for stakeholders. And that success is attributable to their ability to generate a kind of "institutionalized process" rather than institutionalized structures. That process permits experimentation at the fringe in a way that allows community leaders to be conscious of both emerging issues and possible solutions. While all have developed what appear to be conventional organizational structures to meet their goals, the goals keep changing, requiring a continual readjustment process that prevents them from becoming entrenched bureaucracies. OCRI for instance has undergone vision and mission renewals almost every year since 1998.

How can this institutionalized process be supported? Principally in three ways – by resourcing of core activities, ensuring the right kind of leadership and avoiding prescriptive and paternalistic funding. Firstly, The big difficulty within these organizations is that their core activities remain unrecognised costs, unrecognised at least by their funders. Aside from the resourcing of specific project activities that lead to specific outputs, the core activities of collaborative organizations – catalyzing and maintaining collaboration, brokering, networking -- tend to be grossly under funded. Funders tend to want to pay for results not the indirect process of getting the results. The funding of projects never has a line item for the indirect costs associated with networking or brokering but without resourcing these functions a critical success factor in cooperative projects fails to materialize. The growing tendency by increasingly cost conscious organizations, both private and public, to fund only specific projects and outputs, jeopardises the capacity of collaborative organizations to sustain that "institutionalized process", especially as the projects get larger and more complex.

Secondly, these organizations are essentially adhocracies and contrary to more conventional organizations, their leadership style requires a more service orientation rather than command and control authority. These leaders "set the stage" for this adhocracy model, permitting the natural tensions between stakeholders to provide a system of checks and balances that keep the organization fresh. These leaders are civic entrepreneurs - risk takers, boundary crossers and partnership builders -- who can live within the uncertain environment inherit in these initiatives. Civic collaboratives are driven by these often powerful, influential and most importantly - well intending individuals who truly care about their community and are able to put a collective "good" above that of their own specific organization or personal interest. What kind of leader runs such an organization? Not the heroic leader with a bold vision and the courage to see it through, but a listener, a negotiator, a teacher, an *animateur*. In fact, these people tend to do their job so well that many people in their communities begin to feel it natural that business and government leaders as well as educators and community activists can work easily together. It's as if the plethora of partnerships we have observed in our research emerged from some form of "immaculate conception." It is a leadership style that has everyone thinking they've done it all themselves.

Lastly, funding of the projects undertaken by collaboratives can tend towards specific outputs. But funding of outputs presumes no new learning, whereas the funding of outcomes leaves room for learning and the implementation of that learning in the hands of those most directly affected by change. While funders have every right to expect accountability and the good use of their resources, stakeholders are more interested in outcomes than outputs[13]. In the SmartSites program, for instance, stakeholders are interested in moving people away from the Digital Divide. Funders take that to mean more bodies into a site, rather than focussing on the qualitative impacts on the people who use the sites. Government, in particular, has a tendency to smother partners, wanting in an almost paternalistic way to shepherd the collaborative process forward to ensure that no mistakes are made. Yet in the kind of experimental environments that civic collaboratives foster, mistakes are all part of the process of social learning.

Conclusion

Do the emerging civic collaboratives really represent a new governance structure, or are they just another blip in the evolution of our communities? Our sense is that these organizations will continue to morph and change and as such they have only cursory interest. But as clusters of processes in a self-organizing system that help guide and steer our communities they are immensely important as a governance phenomena. The dynamics of the global knowledge economy require innovation and coherence at a local level to sustain innovativeness and competitiveness of business and governmental organizations. Social learning and collective intelligence will remain at the centre of any community's adaptiveness. Therefore the activities of civic collaboratives are to be valued highly because they promote both. Support for these organizations should not to focused on their institutional form but on their ever-urgent needs for resourcing of core activities, on identifying an appropriate form of leadership and on accountable but not prescriptive funding.

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