



# **SUMMARY**

REGIONAL CONSULTATIONS

**NANAIMO**

FEBRUARY 9, 2004

**PREMIER'S TECHNOLOGY COUNCIL**

This document is a summary only of presentations made during the regional consultations in Nanaimo on February 9, 2004 and written submissions provided to the Premier's Technology Council. Every effort has been made to consider all input presented and be as accurate as possible. However, errors or omissions may have occurred. Please notify the PTC of any significant inaccuracies at

[Premiers.TechnologyCouncil@gems8.gov.bc.ca](mailto:Premiers.TechnologyCouncil@gems8.gov.bc.ca).

## NANAIMO CONSULTATIONS

<p>Date : Monday, February 9, 2004</p> <p>Time : 09:00 - 16:30</p> <p>Location : Mid-Island Science, Technology &amp; Innovation Council Harbourfront Plaza 260 - 59 Wharf Street, Nanaimo</p>	<p>In attendance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Jim Mutter, PTC President</li> <li>- Ian McBeath, PTC Council Member</li> <li>- Len Juteau, PTC - Director of Operations</li> <li>- Pratibha Sharma, PTC - Analyst</li> </ul>
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### AGENDA

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09:00-10:00	Mid Island Science & Technology Council	Marilyn Hutchinson Dave Mannix Don Reimer David Drakeford Dan Cvitanovich Terry Knight	1
10:00-11:00	Malaspina University College	Dennis Silvestrone Sheila Cooper Judy Southwell David Drakeford	2
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	Health Bytes	Valerie Houghton Mel Petreman	5
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General Observers:			
	Nanaimo Constituency Office	Mike Hunter Soina Rounis	
	TELUS	Gary Wilson	
	Industry Canada	Gary Paugh	

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**MID ISLAND SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY COUNCIL (MISTIC)**

**Marilyn Hutchinson, Dave Mannix, Don Reimer, David Drakeford, Dan Cvitanovich, Terry Knight**

- Board members are business owners with background in the technology sector, bringing forward the concerns in their sectors
- Nanaimo is the robotics capital of North America, and it is also part of technology sector, it should be recognized
- Nanaimo has potential in other areas as well; it is home to POEA (Pacific Offshore Energy Association), which plays a strong role in economic development.
- Regional councils like MISTIC are very important for local economic development

**Procurement**

- Would like to overcome the obstacles in obtaining contracts from government, it is the perception that anyone outside of Vancouver, Victoria will not be considered
- Would like to compete fairly, without dependence on location, this issue has not changed since the Council was in Nanaimo the last time.
- Feedback is usually not clear, typically something like 'your scoring does not match the requirements'
- Partnering with a larger corporation means losing employees, losing the location, and potentially becoming an employee oneself. Reliance on the larger corporations does not help build local expertise
- Alternative technologies from local sources can build up local knowledge base and increase skill-base, these solutions are often innovative
- Local companies and employees become a resource for future projects and are typically loyal to the community
- Smaller projects (50-100k) could be treated differently, as there may not be that much risk, and it may work for everyone
- The situation seems to be worse in resource sector where there was, recently, an expression of interest from government to license government software
  - Trend seems to be to license internal software through vendors
  - Therefore the government is now competing with local companies
- Another issue is that of support. BC Trade was of immense help, it was a great booster. Loss of that capability is seen as a major blow
- Leading Edge BC's mandate does not seem to do anything similar

**University Research Capability**

- University colleges have an ability to engage in economic development
- Research has been cut out of the mandate of university colleges. Local industry approaches us for research help, but we cannot help them
- A certain level of research activity can be supported
  - We are very entrepreneurial
  - There is some middle ground and possibility of niche research
  - We need research to be mandated

**Message to the PTC:**

- Preserve the regional council structure

- Overcome the obstacles in obtaining contracts from government, it is the perception that anyone outside of Vancouver, Victoria will not be considered. This issue has not changed since the Council was in Nanaimo the last time.
- Government should recognize alternate solutions for smaller projects, and should not continue to rely on previous providers; alternate solutions can be innovative and more economical
- The loss of BC Trade means that support for small, regional companies is gone
- The role that university colleges like Malaspina play in economic development needs to be recognized. Research needs to be part of the mandate

#### **MALASPINA UNIVERSITY COLLEGE**

**Dennis Silvestrone, Sheila Cooper, Judy Southwell, David Drakeford**

- Started a strategic plan last year to determine how to utilize technology to enhance learning. Came to the realization that we cannot provide primarily online education. Our strength is in face to face.
- Currently see 4 roles
  - Expansion of web enhanced courses – webCT etc.
  - Shift away from access issues via wireless infrastructure
  - Increase capacity with specialist education technologists – help faculty enable technology
  - Recognize priority of face to face courses – moved to BC Campus
- Technology is expensive. Wireless access means students should have laptops but many cannot afford them. A solution could be student loans for buying laptops

#### Course delivery

- Mainly three areas of concern in e-learning
  1. Need of increased budget for coursework development
  2. Funding for hardware/software and training
  3. Quality Control/Intellectual Property
- 1. Coursework Development
  - a. using a team approach, would like to provide a one-stop shop for faculty which is expensive to maintain
  - b. technology centre 24/7 online resources
  - c. need funding to allow for proactive planning and cutting edge technology-assisted coursework so faculty can focus on the art of teaching
- 2. Hardware/software and training
  - a. coursework, software support, students need more assistance
  - b. technology center supports them
  - c. computer literacy training opportunity. Students need necessary technical skills to maintain their PCs, offsite access
- 3. Quality control of e-learning systems, e.g. IP (Intellectual Property)
  - a. Need someone to address the new age questions such as IP of course material
- There is need for a body that:
  - Coordinates/manages best-practices training, provides support and develops standards (including those for IP issues).
  - Develops best practices for e-learning coursework development (private and public) that promotes excellence at all levels of coursework production.

- Implements quality control so that employers can be assured that online delivery is meeting the same high standards of the traditional classroom

#### BCCampus

- Provide students with awareness of online learning and provide access to tools
- Consider demand and pedagogy for determining what courses are offered
- Expansion issues
  - Web enhanced courses, more and more instructors and students want their course notes, links and web discussions
  - Increasing demand for training, skills and infrastructure from faculty and students
- We have cross-jurisdiction issues with BCCampus. For e.g. University College of the Fraser valley (UCFV) offers a Bachelors in General Studies, and a lot of courses can be plugged into that
- Currently there are student registration issues, for each course, students have to apply for admission at each institution, the onus is on the student to get this done

#### Human Resource Issues

- Barriers
  - Finding skilled people is hard, most of the skilled works are working in the industry
  - Wages are not competitive
  - Recently discussed at the Association of Canadian Community Colleges (ACCC) conference in Victoria that industry and post secondary institutes do not work together and need to find models for partnering
- Industry and students are demanding technology in education
- Students expect the technology to be used and online courses to be provided, or else they will go to institutes such as University of Phoenix that provide them

#### Alternative Energy

- Our community is based on a resource industry. We have the opportunity to serve niche markets, and can do certain things very well.
- We would like to concentrate on what we do well, one such area is renewable energy
  - Canada is a little behind in alternative energy sector, the people are not trained, the equipment is brought in from Denmark, Germany, Britain etc. the technologies are also developed there
  - We need to develop training, raise awareness, provide continued learning for CFOs, CEOs to think about renewable energy as alternative, economically viable
  - Ultimately there would be a 2 year diploma in this area
- We're looking for support from Provincial government to move this forward

#### Message to the PTC:

- There is a lack of coordination among different institutions
- There is a lack of trained educational technologists
- There is a need for increased funding to ensure e-learning technologies can be developed and delivered to meet the needs of students and teachers
- There is need for a body that:
  - Coordinates/manages best-practices training, provides support and develops standards (including those for IP issues).
  - Develops best practices for e-learning coursework development (private and public) that promotes excellence at all levels of coursework production.

- Implements quality control so that employers can be assured that online delivery is meeting the same high standards of the traditional classroom
- Universities Colleges like Malaspina are strategically placed to conduct research in niche areas such as renewable energy, and to provide a skilled workforce in this emerging sector
- Need support from Provincial government to move forward in training and research of renewable energy

## VANCOUVER ISLAND HEALTH AUTHORITY (VIHA)

### Chuck Rowe

- Technology in health care applies across a whole range of areas such as systems, broadband, technology for providing patient health care, all of these systems are inter-related
- VIHA caters to a geographically diverse area, driving to certain locations such as Tofino takes an entire day, and being able to use technologies such as videoconferencing could potentially save a lot of time, but these areas do not have broadband.
- PACS (Picture Archival System) is being used successfully
  - Have done experiments with 60 physicians, providing lab results and x-rays on desktop, with ability to communicate with the labs through this system
  - The systems in doctors offices are usually low-end and therefore not capable of using these systems properly
- Currently medical records are dictated and patient information is transcribed
  - Currently if you have an emergency within a few days or even few weeks of seeing a doctor, your record may not be available, but EHR(Electronic Health Record) will solve this problem, much better patient care can be provided through digital records
- Computer systems that track patient care are expensive, various components are at different stages of evolution
  - Different health authorities use different systems and they do not link together well.
  - It would take \$80-100 million to make them work well together
  - A lot of data that is collected cannot be analyzed
- Currently replacement of PCs (Personal Computers) is a big issue. They were bought with a grant, and are currently deteriorating. Currently there is no capital depreciation for equipment and no replacement system
- Technology typically does not save money in medical arena, it is not cost justified. We can look at new problems, treat people, but the cost of the system is going up
- There is no real noticeable time saved through increased use of technology, since there is a pent-up demand for health care and huge waitlists, even if 5-10 people are taken off the list, the list is still quite big
- New drugs can help reduce bed usage. There is a dramatic impact in some areas such as laparoscopic surgery, it would take 2 weeks prior to this technique to release patients
- Immigration issues – access to skilled doctors will be a problem. Qualified immigrant doctors cannot do residency to meet license requirements, they end up working in laboratories or work as technicians
- Promotion and prevention
  - as part of contingency planning, patients were told not to come into hospital emergency rooms and to use clinics instead. Due to this request the number of level 1 & 2 patients was half the usual numbers
  - If such a prevention system is linked to Vancouver Island Health Authority, pressure on hospitals may be reduced.



- Current equipment is not sufficient for the operations that are required, X-Rays, CT scans and manipulations such as obtaining multiple views are graphically intensive.

**Message to the PTC:**

- Videoconferencing is very useful due to geographic limitations, but lack of broadband access in certain areas makes it harder to use it
- PACS (Picture Archival System) is being used successfully, but many health practitioners have outdated equipment and therefore cannot use it properly
- Immigration issues, there is a need for skilled workforce from outside, but qualified doctors cannot practice
- Replacement and purchase of equipment is an issue, currently only half of the necessary purchases can be made

**HEALTH BYTES**

**Valerie Houghton, Mel Petreman**

- Company is a health information service provider, distributing health and lifestyle information to specific groups of people via the Internet
- Collecting health information is one of the most popular uses of the internet, surpassed only by email, general browsing and educational research
- Telehealth is breaking down geographic barriers improving access to quality health care.
  - A good example of telehealth application is the BC Nurseline, provides 24/7 support, answers are based on a database (BC Health Guide)
  - Resources like BC Health Guide are useful - patients only remember 10% of the information given during a consultation, and they can look up information later
  - E-health is an important tool to educate, it's efficient and cost effective
- HealthBytes provides health and lifestyle information, which is concise, easy and entertaining, it is written by experts specifically catering to a particular group
  - A program called Health Bytes for Workplaces, was launched in June 2002. Health Bytes for Workplaces are written specifically for employees in office environments and delivered weekly by email.
  - Workplace is a valuable venue to promote health since 2/3 of the time is spent at work
  - Employers consider workplace wellness programs to be an effective strategy for managing costs, by reducing illness, decreasing medical claims etc.
  - Currently researching programs to cater to other audiences – schools, universities, seniors, parents etc.

**Concerns**

- Developed a proposed Workplace Wellness initiative with the Ministry of Health. Have a memorandum of understanding that a contract would be signed by government to launch a Workplace Wellness program by May 2003
- We agreed to do this at far below our cost in return for credibility
- Project delayed due to the bureaucracy, and in spite of many meetings there has been no progress

**Message to the PTC:**

- E-health can be used as a valuable tool for educating the general public as well as health practitioners

## **PACIFIC COMMUNITY NETWORK ASSOCIATION (PCNA)**

**Bev Collins**

- PCNA is a registered, not-for-profit society, established in 1992. PCNA represents and assists regional community networks in British Columbia (BC) and Yukon territories, 29 regional networks and 1010 public access sites
- PCNA partners with various organizations to build capacity and share best practices
- Community Access Program (CAP) is an initiative of Industry Canada, it was started in 1995 and has 1010 public access sites in BC and Yukon. Sometimes CAP site is the only access point for communities, these sites provide printers, scanners and sponsor many youth initiatives
- CAP and BRAND (Broadband for Rural and Northern Development) programs are critical to e-government strategy, without access to these British Columbians cannot access e-services
- Recent Summit Report on National Innovation, Skills and Learning agenda clearly identified “Strengthening Communities” as a priority action for Canada – the way to empower communities at local level to be innovative could be through community networking
- PCNA would like to partner with government on e-health, e-education, e-social services, but needs support
- CAP initiative is ending this year, and many organizations supporting these initiatives have lost their core funding.
  - Maritime governments have MOUs with Industry Canada for matching funds
  - Would like to see a 3 way split between 3 levels of government (Municipal, Provincial and Federal governments), it could also involve Corporate participation – PCNA is developing a business plan for this partnership

### **Message to the PTC:**

- CAP and BRAND programs are critical to e-government strategy, without access to these many British Columbians cannot access e-services
- CAP initiative is ending this year, and many organizations supporting these initiatives have lost their core funding.
- Would like to see a 3 way split between 3 levels of government (Municipal, Provincial and Federal governments), it could also involve Corporate participation

## **BUXTON TECHNICAL SERVICES**

**Tom Buxton**

- Small IT company based in Campbell River, in operation since 1995, with areas of operation in e-learning, e-commerce, e-film and offering e-business consulting services
- Community has a relatively mature IT sector due to: internal marketing forces (forestry and tourism); good infrastructure (access to broadband through CRTV (Campbell River Television)); sector self development (through niTech – North Island Technology Network)
- niTech has helped form network and create synergies

### **Encouraging IT start-ups**

- Business incubators such as the Business Futures Program (federally funded program through community futures) are very useful – funding is an issue.

### **Training the local work force for the IT sector**

- IT companies need proficient local workforce to grow. This requires provincial financial support for IT programs in schools and particularly in post-secondary colleges

- Graduating students still have a significant experience deficit which makes them hard for small IT businesses to employ. Need provincial support for programs such as Student Summer Works. These incentives should not be dependent on the age of the students, as many are mature students engaged in retraining.

#### Infrastructure

- Access to Broadband influences the ability of outlying communities to attract and retain technology companies.
  - To support expansion provincial government should allow schools, libraries and other provincially funded offices to participate as suppliers or consumers in community initiatives such as the federal BRAND program.
  - These initiatives also need affordable access to hydro poles and other public telecom infrastructure.

#### Supporting IT business

- Most of the IT businesses within the Campbell River area are small 1-2 person owner-operated companies. These businesses have specific requirements if they are to grow to employ others
- Encouraging a business friendly environment for small business - regulations such as restricting the number of employees who can work in a home-based business to one per household are barriers to growth that are unnecessary in a knowledge-based small-footprint sector such as IT.
- Economic Development and Support needs to be made a core function of Municipal Government –requires initial financial support, especially in smaller communities.
- Encouraging industry organizations such as niTech - these types of organizations can provide professional development and networking forums, economic development support with set-up and office space.
- Access to college level courses - supporting the opening-up of college level courses to non-credit seeking business professionals at colleges
- Subsidized wage programs and/or tax incentives - the liability and wage impediments to taking on employees are significant for small businesses.
- Tax incentives for technology businesses that operate outside of the lower mainland, and for lower mainland businesses that outsource to smaller communities.
- Procurement:
  - process remains beyond the means of most small businesses it takes 1-2 weeks to put together a bid
  - Even when a bid is made, the selection process within the awarding organization appears to be strongly influenced by the “play it safe” mentality that encourages the use of lower mainland companies and international corporations such as IBM. Provincial Government should be prepared to lead by example when considering bids on these contracts.
  - The feedback received about the bids is not specific

#### Message to the PTC:

- Need provincial financial support for IT programs in schools and particularly in post-secondary education colleges
- Provincial government should allow schools, libraries and other provincially funded offices to participate as suppliers or consumers in community initiatives such as those being initiated under the federal BRAND program.
  - Need affordable access to hydro poles and other public telecom infrastructure.

- Regulations such as restricting the number of employees who can work in a home-based business to one per household are barriers to growth
- Economic development and support needs to be made a core function of municipal government - this requires initial financial support, especially in smaller communities.
- Need subsidized wage programs and/or tax incentives to help support small businesses that employ new graduates or employees who will need significant training
- Tax incentives for technology businesses that operate outside of the lower mainland, and for lower mainland businesses that outsource to smaller communities

### **CAMPBELL RIVER TELEVISION (CRTV)**

**Jim Forsyth**

- Community Owned Cable TV company, started in 1957, presently 12,600 cable customers who are also member of the non-profit association, provides free access to 31 non-profit communities/organizations
- CRTV was the first to provide access to 10Mbits, and has had a network partnership since 1995 with school District 72
- Internet access must become a utility, connectivity is required for homes and businesses
- Future of the region seems to be in Tourism, Retirement and High Tech Sector – all of these require access to high speed internet
- Government buys network services without looking at communities and their needs. Government should look at the whole picture and attempt to coordinate local rural connectivity through public and private partnerships
  - Digital Divide Task force – aggregating services, but big blanket solution is not good enough for everybody
  - working together can significantly reduce the cost
- Affordable access to BC Hydro and public telecom infrastructure is necessary
- Community Networks need financial/legal support of government to challenge the Telco policies at CRTC (Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission) level
  - Establishing a Community Networks 'legal defense fund' to intervene against Telcos is a partial solution
- Motivating and educating business to embrace the internet as marketing, sales and communication tool
  - Tax incentives & Tax credits can be used to motivate businesses to change and to locate in rural communities

### **Message to the PTC:**

- Government should look at the whole picture and attempt to coordinate local rural connectivity through public and private partnerships,
- BC Utilities Commission can help focus resources to reduce infrastructure costs
- Establishing a Community Networks 'legal defense fund' to intervene against Telcos is a partial solution to challenging Telco policies at CRTC level
- Tax incentives & Tax credits can be used to motivate businesses to change and to locate in rural communities

**PENELAKUT TRIBE**  
**Lisa Shaver**

**Current Priorities**

- The Band is focusing on culture and language revitalization
- Focusing on strategic plans for natural resource development , tourism, and setup prior to 2010. Strategically the band area is suited for tourism
- Will improve and enhance governance through heritage bylaw
- Would like to address employment issues, reflecting changes in welfare
- There is a growing youth population, would like to capitalize on technology
- Examining various projects for community development including Broadband
  - Applied for but did not get funding for the pilot project
  - Spent \$30,000 for developing business plan, split it half with the residents on the Island
  - Currently have access to dial-up, 56k

**Message to the PTC:**

- Currently looking at various initiatives including e-learning and e-health as to how they can benefit the Nation

**PRAXIS TECHNICAL GROUP INC.**  
**Alan Millbank**

- 19 year old company – with 12 employees, 4 in Nanaimo and rest in Vancouver
- Operates in the areas of knowledge management, distributed learning to provide customized e-learning solutions
- currently e-learning has peaked at technical level
- prior to internet it was primarily computer based training
- Currently there are 3 problems in e-learning sector – reliability, cost, and regulation –internet access is a part of all three
- Most companies rely on the internet, in some places there is only one service provider, when dealing with large companies cannot afford loss of connectivity
- cost is a barrier – taxation or increased cost of access through internet service providers
- Would like to move production to Nanaimo – some people want to live in urban centers – whereas for others it is a lifestyle choice, we are trying to form the knowledge base here

**Message to the PTC:**

- Access to internet is important for companies delivering e-learning
- Reliability of connection, regulations around business development and cost affect companies