Image Bank and Western Front; building a network

The Image Bank started with my colleague Vincent Trasov in the late sixties. We'd both been involved with intermedia, which was an experimental society that was set up in 1968 in Vancouver to bring artists from various disciplines together to discuss the potential of art and technologies. That, I think, was a very important time in Vancouver. It did bring one into play with poets, writers, choreographers, and filmmakers. That cross-fertilization was very important and very interesting. The time was right for networking and the Image Bank was basically a networking idea that we had; there wasn't the Internet and all of those things, of course, at that time. We started using the postal system to have a newsletter out in the country and abroad, to act as a little service of what artists were interested in, involved in and what they were interested in collaborating in. They would send us whatever their project was and we would write it up in a couple of sentences and do a mailing to all the people that we knew and had contacted. The idea, it just took off, it snowballed. This is like '68, '69, '70 that the Image Bank, well we started using the name in 1969. The activity sort of predates that and it goes to about the time when we began the Western Front Society, which grew out of those concerns, and out of the intermedia concerns. When intermedia ended in about 1971, myself and seven other artists, we'd all worked quite closely together in different disciplines, purchased a large old lodge hall in the city to create a centre for the production and presentation of new art activity. The Image Bank concern kind of developed into our involvement with the early days of the Western Front Society, which was one of the first artist run centres.