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ABSTRACT

In 1995 Australia and the United States made "in theory" commitments to connect their schools and classrooms to the Internet by the year 2000. Over the next few years, each country used methods of private-public sector collaboration to enact this educational goal including NetDay. To explore this policy and process scenario, case studies in each country were examined through the lens of NetDay. NetDay is an American-based strategy that incorporates community voluntarism, corporate philanthropy and existing education policy structures to connect classrooms and schools to the Internet. NetDay, among other things, is a combination of corporate, political, community, and media sector efforts combined with technology-driven rhetoric about what is demanded from education at the turn of the millennium. The case studies showed from a comparative perspective that schools using private-public sector collaboration to fund school expenditures need various pillars of support. These supports can include a strong personal and professional philanthropic community, an established or emerging concern about social capital, or a commitment to self-funded models of educational institutions. The research suggests that schools should develop a systemic policy on private-public sector collaboration that reflects its educational goals, managerial ethos and community values. This sense of mission may promote more successful and long-term partnerships. Likewise, larger systems (be they states or districts) may need to create an environment where schools are allowed the capacity to build these relationships not merely induced to change through mandates.

Various technologies -- from the chalkboard to the satellite television -- have been seen as instructional panaceas for schools. Over the last two decades, micro and personal computers emerged as the new learning machines. Most recently, networked computer technology seemed to offer solutions to concerns about educational administration, instruction and relevance. When Internet usage moved out of strictly defence and academic realms into personal and commercial arenas in the early 1990's, it became apparent that networked technology might offer benefits to schools. As early as 1992, American politicians advocated that all schools should "go on-line". By 1995 President Clinton reiterated this goal by proclaiming that all American schools should be on-line by the year 2000. The Australian Government of the time answered this challenge by stating that Australian classrooms would be on-line by that date.

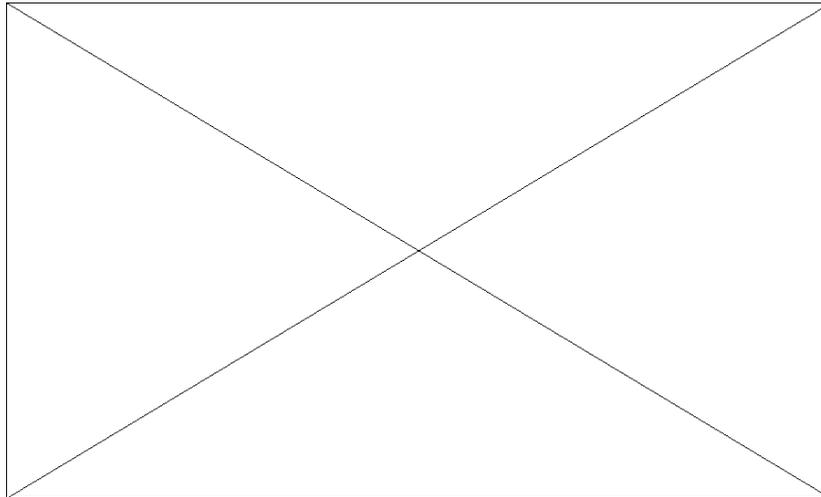
This research explores how these countries came to share a similar educational goal and, more crucially, how they proceeded to fulfil this goal. What emerges throughout this exploration is that forces external to educational institutions and traditional educational policy makers created much of the desire and process to obtain this goal. While it is important to understand the context from which this shared goal emerged, the actions, campaigns and policies that resulted offer far greater territory to explore and map out. This cartography may offer schools a more comprehensive understanding of what external, and often non-educational, factors impact upon what goals are seen as important for schools. By canvassing the policies and implementation strategies that emerged to connect schools to the Internet in Australia and the United States, it may become apparent how schools can respond to externally imposed mandates, policies and actors. Specifically, this research seeks to explore what factors support or hinder schools that sought to use cross-sector

collaboration to network schools to the Internet, as well as explain why it was the attempted or chosen method of policy implementation.

While it is important and intriguing to outline *how* NetDay occurred, the thesis also explores *why* it occurred. The comparative element of the research offers some explanations of why it may have succeeded in some contexts and failed in others. NetDay was a response to larger rhetorical debates that included -- but were not limited to -- issues of jobs for the next millennium, an increased notion of more equitable access to information, a greater demand for community involvement from the information technology sector and a push from government for more private-public sector projects with a community voluntarism component. When NetDay organisers set out to recruit company employees, parents and educators, they described NetDay as means of community building that would attain the goal of better educational and occupational opportunities for students. Prior research outlined below demonstrates the various sources of this explanation.

If NetDay and its goals were the rallying cry for this educational cause celebre, what components needed to be in place to make the call be heard and an effective campaign to be mounted? A major component of this research seeks to connect what motivated people to participate in NetDay with a theoretical understanding of how schools interact with their local communities. This connection then links to a larger national perspective regarding the role of technology in schooling. Rhetoric can only be responded to if there is a reasonable base of sympathy for the perspective on offer. Some available explanations considered include varied cultures of philanthropy -- both corporate and personal -- as well as voluntarism, acceptance of private solutions to public problems, demystification of networked technology and a growing global understanding of changing employment and educational arenas.

What emerges when these issues are examined for commonalities, is a growing acceptance and indeed reliance on cross-sector collaborations to support education. Although NetDay was only one example and one moment in time for each school, it provides a spectrum of business involvement in education. From this particular perspective, a framework to understand other examples can be conceptualised. Ranging from commercial to philanthropic, the NetDay case studies can offer a glimpse at the range of strategies and motivations -- expressed as well as implied -- that contribute to cross-sector collaboration. More importantly, however, issues of community involvement that bolster this connection must be explored. And finally, these crucial personal and professional connections must be set in a context of a more formal and systematic network of organisations that support partnerships in education, as well as the infusion of technology into schools and teaching practice. These shifts will be set in a context of evolving understandings of the changing delineations between sectors. Alongside the development of NetDay in the 1990's, these changes appeared in Australia through concepts promoted by mutual obligation, the so-called "Third Way" and the Prime Minister's Corporate Philanthropy Roundtable. In the United States, the blurring of sectors appeared in President Clinton's advocacy of voluntarism and private-public sector partnership as well as Republican calls for charitable rather than government-based provision of welfare. The figure below demonstrates how business-education partnerships can be range from the philanthropic to the commercial.



With these issues explored in the literature, it may or may not be apparent why two countries would choose to set similar goals and policy strategies. To pursue this question, the research is comprised of a four-state, two-country case study. To introduce the cases, the first step outlines the evolution of NetDay from its conceptualisation in 1995-1996 to implementation,

including the major players (corporate, political and educational). To view policy implementation, the case study schools serve as the base to understand how policy can be altered from conception to implementation through national, state-wide and local experiences. Ideally, the examination of these cases reveals *motivations* for policy development as well as *method*. The motivation may be intertwined with the method if private-public sector collaboration is chosen as the method for change. In the case of networked technology, a new method for policy implementation might signal that new styles of teaching and learning should follow. In order to gain a better understanding of each case, the research will draw upon policy documents, media reports, interviews, and observation. The research will explore these primary sources to develop each case profile on both the federal and state level.

The research is located in four sites: California, Massachusetts, Victoria and New South Wales. These four sites provide an interstate and international level exploration of NetDay. The research, however, reveals intrastate differences as well. Although each school experienced their NetDay at a different time, the on-site case study research occurred one year after the school experienced NetDay. This retrospective view allowed for the examination of the NetDay experience without the taint of initial euphoria or disappointment in the process. Ideally, it was planned that none of the schools would have been part of pilot programs since these schools often receive more NetDay attention, resources and funding, but there were exceptional circumstances in one of the cases. An additional research decision was to examine only primary schools since they are often physically smaller and require less complex LANs. Primary schools often have significantly more parental involvement than secondary schools within the same community as well.

A close examination of these NetDay sites and the factors that affected their NetDay encounter, may reveal a conflict between NetDay intentions, and actual attainments. Likewise, the cases might affirm that the methods on offer were entirely suited to the intended goal. These different states will allow a view of NetDay cases with robust intermediary organisations like California's Smart Valley and Massachusetts's MassNetworks or the government-based NetDay Victoria '97 as well as the less effective NetDayOz.

Although there is ample research on sections of this study, there is a clear lack of established synthesis about how sections of this study combine to impact schools. Copious reports on networked technology have emerged over the last ten years from academics, foundations, research centres and computer companies. When establishing an understanding of networked technology, it is often quite difficult to separate the potential of the technology from its connection to education reform. Many descriptions of the

technologies potential are intimately connected to fear or fascination with a learning style ostensibly conducive to the Information Age , while others dismiss its potential, suspect it of harm, or worry that the existing school system cannot accommodate technology's potential . Increasingly, realistic approaches to networked educational technology include an understanding of equity and access, as well as the complex professional development issues attached to the introduction of new technologies into the classroom . The technology literature will briefly explore past introductions of educational technology into classrooms, the potential of the newer networked technology, and the risks to students that the new technologies bring. It will also examine the supports needed to implement the technology including curricular integration, professional development and infrastructure. While some of these the research studies focus solely on the technology, there is a concern with what has at times nebulously been labelled "job skills for the 21st century". Many of these opinions are drawn from non-academic sources such as political speeches, policy documents and newspaper editorials. However, they must be reviewed and analysed to understand the context from which parental, student and teacher demand for networked technology arose .

Once the technological groundwork is set, it is important to move towards the corporate realm to understand some of the main proponents of NetDay and their rationales for involvement -- the corporate affairs departments, corporate foundations and individuals within the information technology sector. Although there have been extensive writings on business and its intersection with society , there is a more recent and growing literature on the role of "corporate citizenship". While many studies offer a relatively non-critical study of the means of corporate philanthropy , the research also treats works that critically analyse the structures and methods of corporate philanthropy .

Although corporate philanthropy is one means of supporting cross-sector collaboration with the education sector, three more invasive and detrimental approaches need consideration. Firstly, the negative corporate involvement in education through advertisement within the school context of teaching and learning will be explored . Next, a corporatisation of school management that can be connected to the language of corporate discussion of education through business roundtables and national studies will be analysed . This discussion includes the concept of the self-managing and self-funded school. And finally, taken to its (il)logical end, corporate influence and involvement in education that can result in for profit school systems such as EAI and the Edison Project, are also considered.

In addition to a critical examination of corporate involvement in education, the study also explores the benefits of corporate philanthropy as a component of civil society. There has been considerable interest in Australia regarding corporate citizenship and this debate provides an exploration of how American and Australian models of philanthropy differ . To understand corporate philanthropic cultures -- the reality as well as the perceived -- two areas of research must be explored. The first is how each country views philanthropy from a logistical, moral and historical perspective . The other area is how each country views voluntarism as a component of civil society . It is crucial to provide an overview of this current debate since it may clarify how politicians, corporations and local communities explained and promoted NetDay. Changing cultures of voluntarism and associations inform decisions at work and at home regarding donations of time and money, as well as community expectations of corporate commitment.

To support these voluntary efforts, there are emerging and declining networks that support partnerships and cross-sector collaboration between business and education. These organisations (or lack thereof) contribute to the success or failure of a program like NetDay to adhere to community agendas and missions. The growing presence and prominence of such organisations offer a synthesis of the sometimes conflicting desires of school and business to work together for commercial and philanthropic ends.

It remains unclear whether schools are currently equipped to best take advantage of interest in partnerships, be they intrinsically commercial or philanthropic. This study sets out to explore how four localities dealt with an goal whose successful implementation was reliant on external structures and strengths in the community, as well as the school, to succeed. By exploring how each community solved the basic dilemma of how to connect their classrooms to the Internet, four different stories emerge about business-education-community partnerships. A Victorian school may have the self-governing capability to quickly organise a NetDay taskforce while a Californian school may have extensive volunteer resources to draw upon from the corporate sector. A Massachusetts school may have a long history of community support that overrides a lack of corporate funds, while a New South Wales school may have the desire to use NetDay methods but operate in a climate that is hostile to corporate involvement in education.

The differences in each state are extensively explored in each case study and their subsequent analysis. The case studies are examples of various NetDay occurrences but do not seek to stand as representative of all NetDay methods or experiences. NetDays Europe may have more in common with NetDay Texas than NetDay New Zealand had with NetDay Victoria. The study seeks a comparative rather than comprehensive interstate and international overview of a specific policy to understand larger changes in education. Nonetheless, some attempt is made towards the end of the thesis to draw lessons from the four different contexts, about factors influencing partnerships to reform and support education.

The case studies demonstrate from a comparative perspective that schools using private-public sector collaboration to fund school expenditures need various pillars of support. These supports may include a strong corporate and individual philanthropic communities, an established or emerging concern about social capital, or a commitment to self-funded models of educational institutions. The research suggests that schools should develop a systemic policy on private-public sector collaboration that reflects their educational goals, managerial ethos and community values. This sense of mission may promote more successful and long-term partnerships. Likewise, larger systems (be they states or districts) may need to create an environment where schools are allowed the capacity to develop these relationships, not merely induced to change through mandates or unrealistic pressure from external players.

This study will be submitted as my PhD thesis in early January 2001. If you would like more information on this study please email me (c.cronin@edfac.usyd.edu.au).

BIBLIOGRAPHY