

NEW MEDIA PARTNERSHIPS IN DEVELOPMENT AND POLICY MAKING

by Liss Jeffrey

The CCFPD has been working with outside partners to demonstrate the practical possibilities of using new media to convene brainstorming and policy sessions. In March, the byDesign E Lab at the McLuhan Program in Culture and Technology, University of Toronto, created a special web site as a launching pad for policy discussions on the Americas, and for dissemination of the contributions and conclusions of the Calgary Round Table on Civil Society and Human Security. During the event, the web site provided a visual backdrop for the discussions, and an information resource for those unable to be present at the meeting. With the cooperation of the Calgary Centre for the Performing Arts, and staff of the CCFPD, the byDesign E Lab successfully webcast the event live. The archive can now be found at <http://www.panam-bydesign.net/ccfpd/video.htm>.

One month earlier, the CCFPD, the McLuhan Program and E Lab joined forces to present a one day workshop and visionary speaker series event on New Media and Human Rights. This session is archived at <http://www.panam-bydesign.net/humanrights/index.html>.

These sections have received thousands of hits from visitors worldwide, and a complete review of these projects is in preparation for the byDesign Digital Democracy Report. Preliminary results will be presented by Dr Liss Jeffrey at the Harvard Infrastructure project Marshall McLuhan Lecture series in May, in Helsinki at the Council of Europe conference on public access and freedom of expression, in Sherbrooke at the Learned Societies meeting, and in Quebec City at the Canadian Internet Society meeting, all in June. All of these initiatives will also be featured in the coming weeks on our new web site [vitalspace.net](http://www.vitalspace.net), a site of sites for building civil society and democratic governance using new media and policy (<http://www.vitalspace.net>).

The CCFPD contracted the byDesign E Lab to participate in the Calgary Round Table, and invited its director (also director of the McLuhan Program Research Network) Dr Jeffrey to outline why it is necessary to include new digital media in all formulations of international policy. She illustrated her points by reference to the Visionary Speaker series and electronic commons web site project developed this year by the E Lab, and called "PanAm byDesign: Building Knowledge Networks Using New Media and Policy." In recognition of the fact that Canada heads the summit of the Americas, and that our foreign policy is in the process of taking greater account of our hemispheric neighbors, the PanAm series was organized to begin discussion of visions and pragmatic steps to achieve a hemispheric network of sustainable communities. In addition to reporting on what has been learned, the PanAm project (with a four language site and translation limited by reliance on volunteers) will now work with partners, notably from the Caribbean and various South American communities, who have indicated a willing interest in proceeding to a next stage. It appears that DFAIT may sponsor