

GIPI's Advocacy

Training Manual



GLOBAL INTERNET POLICY INITIATIVE

A PROJECT OF INTERNEWS AND THE CENTER FOR DEMOCRACY AND TECHNOLOGY
1634 EYE STREET NW, STE 1100 WASHINGTON, DC 20006 TEL: +1 202 637-9800 FAX: +1 202 637-0968

<http://www.internetpolicy.net>

Introduction

Internet advocacy poses unique challenges. Decisions about Internet policy are vested in a range of institutions, depending on the structure of government and commerce in a given country and on the allocation of authority over telecommunications and other regulated technologies. What is more, many decisions that impact the openness and democratic nature of the Internet are made not only by government bodies, but by the IT industry itself and by international governance and standards organizations.

At the same time the policy issues raised in the context of the Internet are generally complex, often new if not novel, and in some instances require an understanding of the technology at issue.

Finally, while the potential stakeholders for an open, democratic and user-controlled Internet are broad, many people feel ill equipped to become involved in Internet policy questions, particularly in developing countries where the benefits of the Information Age remain largely unrealized.

To be a successful advocate in the Internet policy arena, one must have a diverse set of strategic skills beyond knowledge of the substantive and technical issues raised by a policy proposal. It is those skills that make up the art of advocacy.

This program is designed to teach advocates how to create and implement an effective advocacy plan. Specific topics to be covered include:

Goals & Objectives
Developing Arguments to Support Goals
The Public Policy Process
Networks, Working Groups, and Coalitions
Targeting Audiences
Message Development
Creating a Media Plan

This advocacy training is intended to provide participants a first overview of the core skills they need to turn policy objectives into active and participatory issue campaigns. This training should be viewed as Advocacy 1.0, with the understanding that it is Advocacy 2.0 – experience – that is the greatest teacher.

This training manual was prepared for the Global Internet Policy Initiative <http://www.internetpolicy.net> by Leslie Harris and Liza Kessler of Harris and Associates, Washington, DC, <http://www.lharris.com/> .

What Is Advocacy?

Advocacy is the act of influencing and shaping public policy, that is, the laws, regulations, and policies relating to a particular set of issues, in this case the Internet. This training guide focuses on advocacy before governmental institutions, especially at a national level, but the principles can be applied to other levels of government as well as intergovernmental and international bodies.

There are many ways of defining advocacy – but several of the most useful definitions we have found include:

Advocacy is *speaking up*, drawing a community's attention to an important issue, and directing decision makers toward a solution.

Advocacy is an action or set of *actions directed at changing policies* or positions of an institution – such as a government agency – in support of a specific policy goal.

Advocacy is putting a problem on the agenda, providing a solution to that problem, and *building support for acting on both the problem and the solution*.

Advocacy is the process of *people participating in the decision making processes* that affect their lives.

Exercise: Defining Advocacy

Trainer Notes: Elicit responses and put them up for the group to review. Estimated time, 20 minutes.

What are other possible definitions of advocacy?

What are the components of an advocacy campaign?

What skills are needed to be a successful advocate or to create a successful advocacy campaign?

Elements of a Strategic Advocacy Plan (*Briefly*)

Over the course of this training manual, we will cover each of the following issues in depth. Each of these elements is present, to a greater or lesser extent, in most effective advocacy plans. As we review the list, think about which of these strategic elements you have incorporated into your work in the past. Which have been most helpful in accomplishing your advocacy goals?

1. Setting Goals & Objectives:
What is the broad goal of your advocacy effort? What are the measurable objectives that you seek to accomplish in furtherance of that goal?
2. Developing the Arguments Supporting Your Goals & Objectives:
What information do you have in support of your goals or objectives? Is there research available that would help make your case? Is additional research or data collection needed? Do you need additional research to refute arguments against your goals or objectives in order to persuade policy makers to support them? Are there compelling stories that illustrate why the policies matter?
3. Understanding the Policy Process:
In order to devise an effective advocacy campaign, you must understand the process by which policy decisions are made. A strategic advocacy plan must be directly responsive to the relevant public policy process.
4. Working Together: Networks, Working Groups & Coalitions
How can you strengthen your advocacy by working with others? What are the advantages and disadvantages of working in coalitions? How can you identify potential coalition partners and develop effective working relationships?
5. Identifying Audiences:
Your primary target audiences are the decision makers who have the authority to act on your public policy proposals. However, it is also important to communicate with secondary target audiences – the people and institutions that influence your primary audience. This may include other policy makers, voters, members of your organization and coalition organizations, users of the Internet, specific constituencies affected by the policy change, and of course, the media.

Identifying and developing a strategic plan to influence these decision makers is the heart of your policy advocacy plan.

6. Message
How you shape and communicate your message is as important as with whom you communicate. Your message must resonate with key audiences and the media. It should tell the policy maker what action you would like them to

take, and why. Messages may be different depending on the audience, but should always be concise and persuasive. Additionally, they should anticipate, and if possible neutralize the opposition. It is important to test messages to make sure they are effective.

7. Media Plan

Getting the message out is critical. Becoming a trusted source for reporters and developing a spokesperson that the media turns to when issues arise can provide tremendous opportunities to educate policy makers and constituents alike.

Trainer Notes: Briefly review these areas with the group. This will be the basis of the first section of the training program. The trainer notes do not have built in breaks, but remember to take them every hour and a half or two hours, depending on how the exercises are going.

Unless otherwise noted, these exercises should be done by the whole group. However, if the training group is very large, includes participants from several countries, or with substantially different advocacy goals, the exercises can be done in smaller groups. If an exercise is done in multiple small groups, each group should report back to the whole group at the end of the exercise.

Advocacy Plan - Step 1:

Defining Goals & Objectives

Developing broad advocacy goals and concrete policy objectives are the first major challenge most advocates face in their work. A successful advocate must be able to define and analyze a complex issue or problem, imagine a policy solution that will effectively address the problem, envision a long-term result, and articulate a short-term objective.

An **advocacy goal** is the long term result – over the next several years, or even decades, how will your country be different if the advocacy efforts are successful? Your advocacy goal is your broad vision.

The broadest articulation of an Internet policy advocacy goal is the mission of the GIPI project, “to promote the principles of a decentralized, accessible, user-controlled, market-driven Internet.” Your advocacy goals may be narrower, for example, equitable and affordable deployment of broadband Internet access throughout your country, stopping government censorship of the Internet, or ensuring the privacy of citizens’ online activities. Without clear goals, an advocacy organization may find itself pulled in all directions, unable to set a course for itself.

An **advocacy objective** is a shorter-term policy change (one to two years) that promotes the long-term goal. A good advocacy objective is specific, measurable, realistic, and time-bound.

An organization can work on multiple advocacy objectives simultaneously – working on two or even three objectives that further the long-term goal in different ways may be a more effective approach than one at a time. It depends on organizational capacity, the funding available to support the work, and the information and other resources available. One important thing to keep in mind is that when selecting an advocacy objective: it is critical to identify both the specific policy decision or action and the institution or institutions that have the power to act on the objective. Examples of specific advocacy objectives could include providing tax credits for broadband Internet providers who deploy in rural areas; eliminating per minute charges for Internet access; or persuading the government to provide unfiltered access to online International news sites.

Criteria for Setting Objectives

S-specific
M-measurable
A-achievable
R-realistic
T-time bound

Exercise: Setting Goals & Objectives

Part 1

What is your vision of the future of the Internet? Based on that vision, what is the broad goal of your organization?

Trainer Notes: Take about 15 minutes to answer this question. When the group settles on a clear statement, write it up so that everyone can see it. Put it somewhere that will be visible for the entire training. Earlier drafts of the vision/goal statement should be taken down. Take no more than half an hour for the rest of the exercise.

Part 2

What are some shorter-term policy objectives that would support that goal? Develop a list of possible objectives that could be achieved in the next two years or less. For this exercise, don't worry about which ones are the most feasible – generate a list of all the possibilities you can imagine. Sometimes, particularly if the government takes an action you oppose, your policy objective (reversing the bad decision) may be set for you. But you need to articulate your affirmative agenda, even if at times your posture is defensive.

Part 3

When you have a list of possible objectives, check them against the following criteria, and modify if necessary.

Advocacy Objective Checklist

Below is a checklist to inform your selection and refinement of an advocacy objective. While an objective should meet many of these criteria, it is unlikely to meet them all. However, it is fair to say that the fewer criteria that your objective meets, the more challenging your effort to achieve it will be.

Trainer Notes: Select 2-3 objectives to examine with the group from those identified above. Do they meet the following checklist?

- The goal and objective are easy to understand and explain to others.
- There is data showing that achieving this objective will further the broad goal.
- The objective is achievable, even though some people will oppose it.
- Many people care about this goal or objective. Many people will support our efforts and take action to help.
- Money is available to support work towards this goal or objective.
- The target decision makers are well defined.
- The time frame for achieving this objective is clear and realistic.
- It is possible to develop coalitions and alliances with key individuals and organizations to help reach this objective, and to build new relationships to develop additional support.

Trainer Notes: Ask the participants to map out their goals and objectives on the following chart. If possible, you should adapt the chart so that the entire group can see the mapping process.

Criteria	Goal	Objective 1	Objective 2
Is the goal/objective easy to understand?			
What data is out there supporting this goal or objective? Where is it from? Is it credible?			
What makes this objective achievable? What kind of opposition will it face? How will we answer the opposition?			
Who cares about this issue? Who will take action to support the goal or objective?			
Is there funding available to support this work?			
Can we clearly identify the target decision makers? What are their names or positions?			
What is the time frame? Is it realistic?			
What other organizations and people <i>are</i> we working with? Who else <i>should</i> we be working with?			

Advocacy Plan - Step 2:

Research to Support Goals & Objectives

Identifying Research Needs

Research needs will vary widely depending on the goals and objectives of an advocacy campaign and the complexity of the issue.

Creating Community “Microradio” in the United States: Research on Spectrum and Engineering

Low Power Radio, also known as Microradio, is a new radio service adopted by the US Federal Communications Commission in January 2000. This service was designed to be intensely local. A low power radio license would allow small community groups to reach out via ordinary radio signals over a three-to-seven mile diameter. The service can provide community health information, local news, arts, foreign language programming, literacy programming, anything a local community organization would like to provide. Moreover, the start-up cost for a low power radio station can be as low as \$10,000.

Supporters of Low Power Radio knew that commercial radio broadcasters would claim that the signals from low power stations would interfere with existing broadcast signals. Consequently, a coalition of supporters of Low Power Radio, including consumer, civil rights, library, media organizations, and churches, hired a broadcast engineering technology professor from a major university to determine exactly how much interference would be generated by Low Power Radio broadcast signals.

The broadcast engineering expert found that there would be virtually no interference under the FCC’s Low Power Radio proposal. Of the tens of millions of potential recipients of Low Power Radio service, only about one tenth of one percent (.001%) would experience any interference, much of which could be avoided by moving the location of the radio within a given room. More dramatically, he also found that the National Broadcaster’s Association engineering report was conducted in an extremely biased manner, for example eliminating the entire category of car radios from the study.

While the broadcasters were still able to get Congress to scale back the microradio plan, the first Low Power Radio stations began broadcasting in various communities around the United States in October 2001.

Sometimes existing research supports your policy position. If not, it may be necessary to engage in either qualitative or quantitative research on key issues raised in the policy debate. That research may range from polling to demonstrate public support for a change in policy, the collection of compelling stories illustrating the need for such a change, to

academic studies demonstrating the technical feasibility or economic benefit. Possibilities for research include:

Research Methods

<u>Qualitative</u>	<u>Quantitative</u>
Powerful Stories Focus Groups Polling Interviews Observation	Demographic, Economic, and Technical Data Surveys Questionnaires Baseline Studies Usage Statistics Government Program Information

Research can also be used strategically to frame a message on an issue in a manner favorable to your position. For example, industry groups opposed to consumer online privacy legislation in the United States released several “studies” which concluded that privacy legislation would lead to increased costs for online consumers. The release of these studies was widely reported by the press and cited by legislators.

Various factors also affect whether available research will be useful in an advocacy campaign. Consider the following questions related to the use of research:

- Are information needs of the policy maker taken into account when designing the study?
- Is the research is conducted by an organization that policy makers perceive as credible and reliable?
- Is the research focused on a few questions that can be answered?
- Can the findings are presented in multiple formats, tailored to each audience?
- Will the presentations of findings to policy makers emphasize the important lessons learned, rather than the need for more research?

Be wary of using research or data if:

- Research questions (and findings) are not *clearly* relevant to policy decisions.
- The timing is off: the research answered yesterday’s questions or assessed yesterday’s program.
- The research is conducted or presented by an organization or individual that is not credible to policy makers.
- Findings are inconclusive or subject significantly differing interpretations.
- Findings are unwelcome because they are negative and/or not presented with policy relevant solutions.
- Finding are not generalizable.
- Findings are presented in lengthy, technical or jargon-laden reports.

Exercise: Developing a Research Plan

Trainer Notes: This exercise should take about 20 minutes.

Part 1

Using an advocacy objective identified earlier, consider whether or not additional data collection or research would strengthen your position. Is there existing research available on the subject? Use the factors listed above to identify research needs for your advocacy objective.

Part 2

Select the one or two most compelling research needs that would support your plan. Think of possibilities for finding existing research, or developing new research. What types of research would be most effective for your purposes? If new research is needed, who is capable of doing it? Are resources available to support it?

Research with a Human Face: Developing Powerful Stories

We have already discussed research – but how do you make that research speak powerfully to people? An effective advocacy campaign needs to be backed by facts and figures, but presented with a human face. ***Memorable, powerful stories bring the statistics alive and make them meaningful to the audience.*** What will happen to people if the advocacy objective is achieved? What has happened already because the wrong policy was in place?

These stories are not fiction. They are real examples of how policy choices impact people. Stories or anecdotes often make it easier to explain complex policy positions to decision makers and the public. They also help people to understand their stake in an issue. Powerful stories can also bring media attention to your objectives.

There are two key ways to develop powerful stories. First, using a grassroots network of individuals who care about your advocacy goal or objective, and second, working in coalition with a wide range of groups. Both of these strategies provide many more opportunities for you to ask for stories that relate to your issue and to specifically solicit timely stories.

Powerful Stories Save Educational Spectrum in the United States

Instructional Television Fixed Service (ITFS) is a protected segment of spectrum bandwidth, licensed for television and broadband Internet based educational usage across the United States. In March 2001, ITFS licensees' spectrum was nearly given over to the wireless industry, after thirty-five years of providing distance education services to teachers and students. To stop the spectrum grab, educational institutions joined forces to form a grassroots campaign called Wireless Education Broadband NOW or "WEB NOW."

At the time, nearly 1300 ITFS licensees served thousands of public and private schools, colleges, and universities. WEB NOW's task was to convince the government that ITFS was an indispensable service to these licensees' present and future educational efforts. WEB NOW decided that the best way to do this was by telling the powerful stories of how this technology has enhanced education. WEB NOW compiled a list of licensees and sent out petitions asking them to write out a brief story describing the impact of ITFS in their community. The stories were compiled into an FCC filing and were sent to the Members of Congress who represented the "storytellers."

WEB NOW received dozens of stories, including:

Using ITFS, EDNET, Mississippi's educational network has expanded its reach and can now provide specialized educational programs for children in rural areas. The "Jason Project," for example, brings scientific expeditions into the classroom and gets students engaged in the world of science and technology as they explore, in real time, volcanoes, coral reefs, and rainforests.

WHRO, a public broadcasting and public radio affiliate in Norfolk, Virginia, operates an extensive telemedicine network using the ITFS spectrum, serving Maryland, Virginia, and North Carolina. The network allows medical residents to practice in relatively rural and isolated areas, but still talk to and interact with physicians at the medical school.

Financial constraints forced the Denver Public Schools to eliminate their elementary school art program. Thanks to ITFS, art classes are now available to the district's 89 elementary schools using just one teacher. Using a document camera in the teacher's studio, students in the classroom are able to see procedures for the day's lesson and participate in their own classrooms in real-time. Over two hundred young artists participate in each class.

The Federal Communications Commission, an independent United States government agency responsible for telecommunication regulation, released an Order in September 2001, retaining current use and licensing of the ITFS spectrum.

Exercise: Finding Powerful Stories

Trainer Notes: This exercise should take about 20 minutes.

Part 1

What kinds of stories would support your policy objectives? Create a list of the *kinds of stories* you think would be persuasive to policy makers thinking about your objective. Know what kind of stories you are looking for – that makes it much easier for others to help you find it.

A story about how a women's cooperative in a developing country used the Internet to create economic opportunities and financial stability can be used to argue for policies that

fund micro loans to e-businesses in distressed areas. A story about how high speed access brought educational opportunities to a child in a remote area is a powerful way to argue for subsidized deployment to underserved communities.

In early 2000, a 13 year old Navajo girl named Myra entered a contest online at school, and won a new iMac computer. Myra lived on a Navajo Indian reservation in rural Arizona. When the company sponsoring the contest tried to notify Myra that she won, they tried to reach her first by e-mail, and then by phone, but wound up having to call her school and have her pulled out of class to get the news. Myra’s family lived ten miles from the nearest pay phone, and her classroom had only one computer. *“Getting iMac to Girl on Reservation Tough,” The Arizona Republic, p. A1, March 1, 2000*

Part 2

Trainer Notes: Select an example from the kinds of stories participants generated above. This exercise should take about 15 minutes.

Now that you know what type of story you are seeking, discuss where you might find relevant stories. Be as specific as possible. Would members of your organization have relevant experience? What about coalition partners or other groups? Is there a listserv where participants are likely to be able to contribute powerful stories for your advocacy efforts?

Part 3

Have the group share examples of powerful stories that support specific public policy objectives.

Outcomes for Step 2 – Research and Powerful Stories in Support of Advocacy Objectives:

List research needs, if any:

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____

List the kinds powerful stories needed or available:

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____

Advocacy Plan - Step 3:

The Policy Process & Lobbying

A critical element of a successful advocacy campaign is mastery of the policy process, and the opportunities that exist for influencing it.

No two countries in the world have the exact same structure for public policy development. Where policy decision making is highly centralized and controlled by a ruling elite, participation from citizens and non-governmental organizations is likely to be more difficult than in a less centralized, more democratic process. However, regardless of a country's political system, successful advocates will target different parts of the government and will identify opportunities to influence the policy process, both formally and informally.

Exercise: The Formal Policy Process

Trainer Notes: Consider partnering with an expert for this exercise – ideally a local advocacy organization leader or possibly an academic. Invite that person to explain how the formal policy process works. If you cannot partner with an expert, use either the host country's formal process, the formal process of the country where most participants live, or your own country. Once you have selected a country as a working example, select a policy objective from one of the earlier exercises.

Part 1

Take at least an hour to go through the formal policy making process.

Part 2

Discuss how that policy objective would be put on the public policy agenda in the working example country. What are the steps to move the policy objective through the policy process?

Trainer Notes: Review the formal policy making process using an example objective from the group. Take up to half an hour. Use the example below to structure this exercise.

For example, if the objective is to deploy broadband Internet access to all of the schools in the country, questions to consider include the following. (Modify these questions to reflect the policy objective under discussion.)

- How would a proposal to deploy broadband Internet access to all of the schools in your country be introduced into the formal policy making process? Is it a legislative matter? Will a regulatory body be the ultimate decision maker? If there

are different possible approaches, what are the benefits and disadvantages of each?

- What is the formal process for discussing, debating, and modifying a proposal? What are the steps involved and how long does each step take?
- Which steps are open to outside participation and influence?
- Are there any bodies that should or could hold hearings and invite witnesses who could testify about the need for deployment of broadband Internet access in schools?
- Which government officials are involved in the decision to deploy broadband access to schools?
- What happens “behind the scenes?” Do legislators influence regulatory action? Do regulators influence legislative action? What strategies can be employed to influence these activities?
- If the policy proposal is adopted, then who is responsible for implementing it? What other officials or regulators are involved in that process?
- Are there other elements that influence these processes informally?

The Alternative Process

Sometimes all or part of a policy objective can be achieved outside of the formal policy making process. For example, if your goal is to protect Internet users’ privacy, you can develop an advocacy campaign aimed at businesses, urging adoption of privacy-protecting “best practices” without any involvement of the government policy making process. The key question is: Does your advocacy objective require a government policy or program change in order to succeed?

If not, is the policy process still preferable? Can the advocacy campaign support multiple strategies?

If the advocacy objective can be achieved in significant part outside of the formal policy process, complete the following exercise.

Exercise: The Alternative Advocacy Process

Trainer Notes: Take about 15 minutes to do this exercise.

The Alternative Advocacy Process	
Can this policy proposal be effectively implemented without official action?	
Who has the power to implement the proposal?	
What would be the impact if some implemented the proposal and others did not?	
What actions can be taken to “reward” good actors?	

Distortions of the Policy Process: Corruption and Failure to Implement Policies

In some countries, activists may encounter distortions of the policy process such as corruption and intimidation. This might take place at a political level, meaning that the public policy decision maker asks for some favor or bribe before agreeing to your advocacy proposal. If the proposal somehow threatens existing power or value of something, you may also face intimidation tactics designed to convince you to drop or limit your goal. Corruption or intimidation might also take place at an implementation level, where officials may seek favors or bribes in order to implement a change in policy. However, failure of the government to implement a policy may also be the result of disfunctional government bureaucracy.

These are challenging situations, and there is no one “best response” for every country. According to the international anti-corruption organization Transparency International (www.transparency.org), many of the same principles involved in a successful advocacy plan are effective in fighting corruption: working in coalition with other non-profit and non-governmental organizations, informing the public about key issues through (independent) mass media, and the building of political will against corruption from a wide range of grassroots and influential constituencies.

Exercise: Responding to Corruption

Trainer Notes: Discuss each example for about 10 minutes.

Scenario 1: Your meeting with the minister of communications was apparently a success: He invited you to coordinate the process of developing a national strategy for “informatization” which the prime minister requested. But a week later, his assistant invites you out for coffee and announces that the minister has decided that your role in the strategy process depends on your hiring a specific consulting firm (which you have never heard of) and paying them \$25,000. A few days later you learn that this consulting firm is owned by the minister’s brother-in-law, who owns a popular TV station in the capital.

Scenario 2: The national phone company, which has a monopoly on fixed dial-up numbers and leased lines, also has a wholly owned subsidiary which operates as an ISP. In fact, they have more subscribers than anyone else, because they have the cheapest prices and more dial-up lines than anyone else. The president of the telco’s ISP was recently elected head of the ISP association. He knows that the GIPI Advocate wants the telecom regulatory agency to adopt new rules requiring the phone company to treat all ISPs equally, even the subsidiary. The telco ISP’s president tells the other members of the ISP association that if they have anything to do with GIPI, their dial-up lines will be put out of service.

Scenario 3: Foreign donors have given the Ministry of Education millions of dollars to computerize high schools. But only a few hundred PCs have been installed at “showcase”

schools, where the donors are taken to see the results of their investment. The rest of the money has simply disappeared, and no one knows how, or who was responsible. This has been going on for years, without any investigation by parliament, so someone powerful must be protecting the ministry.

Scenario 4: Congratulations! Your effort to create a national online job databank was successful. Unfortunately, most of the local job and workforce training centers are not adding new job listings to the databank, or not adding them in a timely manner. They continue listing jobs locally on paper first (or exclusively) although they have been trained on how to use the new databank.

If your advocacy efforts run into problems based on corruption or dysfunctional bureaucracy, consider consulting organization such as Transparency International (www.transparency.org), which has a number of country-specific projects and resources available online, and affiliate organizations in many countries. TI also includes a number of examples of successful corruption-fighting projects from all over the world, including details such as scope, time, budget, and contact information on many projects. You may also find it valuable to discuss these kinds of difficulties with your allies, working together to develop strategies to effectively support your goals.

Outcomes for Step 3 – The Policy Process:

Using the formal process exercise, answer the following questions.

What legislators could you work with to introduce legislation in support of your advocacy objectives?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

What regulatory body officials could you work with to introduce change regulations or interpret them in support of your advocacy objectives?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Is there a body that needs to or could helpfully hold a hearing on a proposal in support of your advocacy objectives?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Are there private parties, such as businesses, which can implement significant elements of your policy proposal or objectives outside of the formal policy process?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Direct Lobbying: Rules & Tools

Direct lobbying is when a representative of an organization communicates a view on a specific public policy proposal, to a governmental or elected official, on behalf of the organization. Not all political systems permit direct lobbying, and those that do may regulate it quite differently. It is important to know the law before engaging in this activity. Effective “lobbying” requires much more than a communication with a government official advocating a policy position. It requires substantive knowledge about an issue and the political process and relationships with policy makers.

Knowledge

Good lobbyists are armed with a solid understanding of the issue and the rules and procedures of the policy making process. They also understand the political implications of supporting a particular position. Good lobbyists are credible, straightforward, and reliable, so policy makers trust their knowledge and judgment. Every action aimed at influencing government officials should be measured by this standard. While misleading information or tactics may bring victory once, it will damage long term credibility, and ultimately harm your efforts.

Relationships

Over time, advocates and public policy decision makers (and their staff) in a particular area develop valuable relationships. If an advocate understands the policy process and substantive issues, provides reliable research, shares or gives credit to other participants, or otherwise demonstrates that their work is consistently valuable, trust develops. Giving credit to decision makers and staff for supportive efforts is particularly important. Expressing disappointment in a negative vote or for negative comments is also acceptable, but should be done with respect and with an eye towards the future. The relationship should (probably) not be sacrificed on the basis of a single negative action.

Targeting

Advocates cannot expect to develop relationships, or even to directly speak to, every member of a legislative body. It is important to remember that when it comes to direct lobbying, not all legislators are created equal. While all may vote on a given proposal, before the entire group votes, all the members specialize in areas they find interesting. Only some will influence the shape of the proposal along the way. Depending on the public policy goals and objectives, Internet policy advocates should target officials and committees whose jurisdiction, expertise, or interest is related to the issue in question. If particular legislators are **always** important, they should be the focus of relationship-building efforts as well as legislative strategy.

It is also important to develop targets in the full legislative body for key votes. Are there influential members whose vote will influence others in their party? Are there legislators who are perceived to “speak for” a key constituency? Who will strongly support or oppose the initiative? A good target list based on carefully collected information will not only inform your strategy, it will inform the strategy of legislators supporting your positions.

Persuasive Communication

Whether you are speaking to a government official, a reporter, or a potential ally from a group that shares your objectives, an advocate’s ability to communicate persuasively is critical. Ineffective communication styles can alienate potential supporters, making it unnecessarily difficult to achieve shared goals.

Exercise: Effective Communication

Trainer Notes: Ask for a couple of volunteers to do this exercise. Repeat it two or three times so the group can see different examples of communication styles. You may want to do this exercise yourself, either effectively, or with exaggerated problems, if the volunteers do not provide much contrast from one another. Take at least half an hour for this exercise, and be sure to contribute constructive suggestions to each volunteer.

A participant should volunteer to stand up and explain, in 3-5 minutes one of the goals or objectives to the rest of the group. The rest of the group should listen as if they were policy makers who do not know much about the issue and whose views are fairly neutral. The speaker should use examples, powerful stories, research, or other known information to support points. Members of the group may ask questions.

After each presentation, discuss what each participant did that was particularly persuasive or unpersuasive, and why. If the person was unpersuasive, offer suggestions for how they might make a point more effectively.

Possible discussion questions and answers:

- What specific arguments or points did you find persuasive?
 - *Specific facts*
 - *Powerful stories*
 - *Listening carefully*
 - *Answering concerns*
 - *Eye contact*
- Did speakers use any techniques that you found especially unpersuasive?
 - *Loud*
 - *Condescending*
 - *Not listening*
 - *Exaggeration*
 - *Nervous behaviors*

Protecting Internet Privacy and Television Broadcasting in Kazakhstan

In Kazakhstan, the government Ministry of Information drafted a proposed law that would have, among other things, required all web sites to register as “mass media outlets” and banned retransmission of foreign television programs. One of the suspected motivations was a dramatic increase in the number of web sites originating in Kazakhstan, especially the increase in web sites critical of the government.

The activists in Kazakhstan learned about this proposed law almost accidentally near the end of 2000. They submitted a formal inquiry to the Ministry of Information and were able to acquire a copy of the unpublished draft law, which they immediately put up on web sites, distributed to traditional media outlets, and mailed to allied NGOs. They also analyzed the proposed law, and distributed their comments and analysis online, to traditional media, and to their allies.

The fact that the activists were able to get information out quickly and with humor was very important. Media outlets were quickly aware of the threat to their programming, and responded to that threat—the ban on retransmission would have effectively shut down 7 independently owned television stations. Activists also effectively communicated the ridiculousness of the Internet regulations, and how impossible the law would be to enforce. They successfully linked the attacks on Internet and traditional media in their analysis, and the traditional media spread both messages.

In fact, the 7 independent television stations agreed to suspend programming for one day. Instead, they broadcast black screens with only a message explaining that this would happen again if the proposed law was passed, and asking viewers to call the Ministry of Information and Parliament to oppose it. They included the relevant telephone numbers on the screen, and thousands of viewers called, and independent newspapers and media outlets covered the organizing effort as well as the substantive issue. This advocacy was so effective that the Ministry of Information met with the independent television channel owners for the first time ever.

Recognizing the effectiveness of working together, the independent television broadcasters also joined with radio broadcasters to create “NAT of Kazakhstan,” an association that would represent their collective interests in freedom of information, freedom to broadcast, and their right to conduct business. The NAT of Kazakhstan approved a special address on these topics, which was sent to the President, Ministry, and Parliament. A number of print media publications reprinted the address.

Activists and broadcasters also worked together to educate other NGOs throughout Kazakhstan, both on the substantive issues and on lobbying and organizing techniques. These newly trained activists and members of the media visited almost all the members of the Kazakhstan parliament within a few days of this story breaking, and explained their concerns with the proposed changes to the law.

When the NGO representatives returned to their communities, they conducted town meetings, wrote letters to the local newspapers, and circulated petitions opposing the proposed law. There were ten such meetings around Kazakhstan, and tens of thousands of signatures were collected within a month of this issue first breaking. At the end of the month, the NGO representatives returned to the capital to present the petitions to parliament.

As a result the parliament organized several hearings, and included journalists, mass media outlet owners and executives, and representatives of the Ministry of Information. Activists continued to work with the media to keep public attention on the issue.

In spite of developing good relationships with a number of members of parliament, the Kazakhstan activists were only partly successful. The law was changed in May 2001 to classify web sites as “mass media” but did not require sites to register with the Ministry of Information.

Advocacy Plan - Step 4:

Networks and Coalitions

Effective advocacy requires collaboration. The groups you work with may vary depending on the specific objective, and you may find yourself working with people or organizations you rarely agree with. But collaboration, whether through informal networks or more organized coalitions strengthen advocacy campaigns¹. Bringing different groups together to work towards a common objective creates many advantages, including the opportunity to test elements of your message with different audiences, a wider range of potential sources of powerful stories, and greater access to target audiences than any one group alone would have.

Defending Access to BBS & Educational Technology in India

In 1994, “Internet” access in India was limited to Ernet, an electronic network for educational and government institutions. However, as in other parts of the world, a core group of computer enthusiasts operated Bulletin Board Services (BBS), an Internet-like series of electronic notice boards run by volunteers.

In 1994, the Indian government imposed an annual license fee of Rupees 1.5 million (\$31,250 at the present exchange rate) on these largely non-commercial BBS’s – which was tantamount to shutting them down.

In response to the new fee, Indian BBS users created the Forum for Rights to Electronic Expression (FREE). This electronically mediated group has never convened in the physical sense. They existed only in the electronic network of a BBS. FREE successfully fought the Indian government’s licensing fee, and managed to capture media interest. A few months later, the government withdrew the license fee.

Members of FREE worked together again later in 1994, when the government attempted to close Ernet down. This time FREE worked with Ernet employees to create an action-oriented email list. Group members used their connections with journalists who started making phone calls to senior government officials. The government reversed its decision to close down Ernet in a matter of days.

¹ There are a number of ways that working together in networks and coalitions can take place, and terms like “coalition” may mean something highly structured in one country, and very informal in another country. For example, in Romania, “coalitions” are highly structured and “networks” are more informal. But in Bolivia, “networks” are highly structured. If your community uses these terms differently than this manual, please substitute your word for ours.

1: Advocacy Networks

To build an advocacy network takes time. It is important to pay attention to and *get to know other people* and organizations that have similar or related agendas. Which organizations have a policy stake in your work? Which constituencies benefit from your work? Who represents those constituencies? Are there professional associations or academics with an interest in Internet policy?

You probably already have many of these relationships. However, it can be helpful to articulate them and the various strengths and weaknesses of your networks as you focus on new specific advocacy objectives. In doing so, you may also be able to think of new possibilities and creative ways to work with long term allies.

Advocacy networks may never meet formally, or they might meet at activities of shared interest, such as conferences. But in an time-sensitive situation in which it is critical to demonstrate interest or support for your issue, your advocacy network represents a resource that can be mobilized.

Building Relationships

As you get to know other people and organizations, or the work that they do, *look for ways to build relationships*. This could include:

- Draw attention to work by other organizations that supports your goals or objectives, for example, by linking to it from your web site or highlighting it in your publications;
- Share information that seems relevant to common concerns;
- Attend meetings and events hosted by network members, and include network members in your organization's activities;
- Offer to assist other organizations with projects that relate to your work;
- Seek opportunities to collaborate on projects of mutual benefit.

As these relationships develop, objectives become concrete, and timely opportunities arise, *ask for help within the network*. Requests for assistance should be as specific as possible. For example, asking people to call their elected officials and support a specific piece of legislation, to write or sign on to a joint letter about a piece of legislation or a regulation, or to set up a meeting with others to explain why the objective is so important.

Exercise: Identifying Advocacy Networks

Trainer Notes: This is a quick exercise, but the next several exercises will build upon it.

Create a list of people and organizations with a stake in your policy objectives. Find some way to visually indicate the 2-5 most important allies, if you know.

2: Working Groups

A working group is generally more structured and defined than an advocacy network. It is an informal set of organizations, companies, trade associations, and occasionally individual advocates or academics with a common interest in a specific issue or a set of related issues, which meets regularly to share information and discuss strategies for achieving common goals.

A working group:

- Focuses on a specific issue or set of related issues;
- Meets regularly so that members can share information and activity related to the group's common public policy interest; and
- Does not take joint action.

There may be a number of groups working on issues that are closely related. Not all participants in a working group need to be advocacy groups that “take action” in the policy process.

For example, a working group on Internet censorship may include civil liberties groups, news reporters, publishers, movie and television content providers, booksellers, libraries, ISPs and others sharing a common concern about Internet censorship. Similarly, a privacy working group may include consumer groups, safety advocates, banking and health care industry members, civil liberties groups, and academics.

Each organization or company may have different broad goals, but they intersect on specific topics or objectives. The regular exchange of information, expertise, and strategies strengthens the work of each participant.

Working groups are a particularly effective tool in circumstances where not all interested parties are in a position to take a public position or a public policy action on an issue, but armed with the right information, some parties may be able to work “behind the scenes” to influence the process.

For example, corporations may be unwilling to take unpopular or controversial positions publicly. However, a corporate executive may be willing to express support for an idea quietly to a government official with whom they have a prior relationship. Or a company may be willing to provide funding to a trade association to be the public face of “industry” on an issue, or for research supporting and advocacy objective that the company agrees with, but is unwilling to publicly support.

One of the simplest ways to transform an informal advocacy network into a working group is to hold a meeting in order to share information related to the public policy advocacy goals and objectives developed during this training.

The group will be more engaged if members are confident that participation is valued and the information is shared from current, reliable sources. Each member does not need to share information at each meeting, but should have the opportunity to do so.

Exercise: Developing a Working Group

Trainer Notes: This is a quick exercise.

Review the organizations and individuals listed in the Advocacy Network exercise. Are there additional organizations, individuals, or corporations that could be included as part of a working group? Are there others with information and news sources that may include items related to the goals and objectives developed? If so, list them.

Identify specific topics that different individuals or groups could be asked to address. For example, is there an organization working on provincial or local laws and regulations that relate to the objectives? What about international bodies? Are there current or recent court cases with implications for the objectives? Could the lawyers or organizations involved discuss the case with the working group? Are there recent articles or studies on the topic? Could the author participate in the working group?

3: Coalitions

Coalitions are more formal than networks or working groups. A coalition is a group of organizations and/or companies explicitly working together:

- Work is coordinated towards a specific common objective;
- Has a formal structure;
- Communicates regularly to ensure that joint actions are supported by the coalition; and
- Takes joint action.

When working in a coalition, objectives that are not realistic for one or two organizations may be achievable. The credibility of each group may be enhanced by being associated with the other members of the coalition, and may be able to reach a more politically diverse set of policy makers. Additionally, a large group of organizations and companies may be able to take a stronger stand on a controversial issue together than each could take alone. Complex projects can be shared by various members of a group based on experience, expertise, and resources. Expenses can be shared among the coalition members, allowing smaller organizations to participate in activities that would otherwise be beyond their capacity.

Coalitions are not without drawbacks. Coalition work often moves slowly because so many organization must “sign off” on each document or activity. Members of a coalition must also be willing to compromise in order to reach a consensus within the group. It is also more difficult for new organizations seeking to establish a unique identity to do so in

the context of a coalition. But, on balance, coalitions are a critical part of any advocacy strategy.

Advantages and Disadvantages of Working in Coalitions

Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enlarges base of support; coalitions can achieve policy goals together that organizations cannot accomplish alone. • Broadens contacts and relationships with policy makers. • Provides safety for advocacy efforts and protection for members who may not be able to take action alone. • Magnifies existing resources by pooling them together and by delegating work to others in the coalition. • Increases financial and programmatic resources for an advocacy campaign. • Enhances the credibility and influence of an advocacy campaign, as well as that of individual coalition members. • Helps develop new leadership. • Assists in individual and organizational networking. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distracts from other work; can take too much time away from regular organizational tasks. • May require compromising positions on issues or tactics. • May require members to give in to more powerful organizations. Power is not always distributed equally among coalition members; larger or richer organizations can have more say in decisions. • Organizations may not always get credit for work. Sometimes the coalition as a whole gets recognition rather than individual members. Well-run coalitions should strive to highlight their members as often as possible. • If the coalition process breaks down it can harm everyone's advocacy by damaging members' credibility.

In developing a coalition, it is important that everyone understand and agree upon a structure: how decisions will be made; how information will be shared; and how coalition activities will be paid for.

Before joining an existing coalition, it is important to understand the structure and the allocation of decision making authority within the group. Are the goals and objectives consistent with those of your advocacy campaign? Can the organization meet obligations of time and resources?

Exercise: Examining Elements of Successful Coalitions

Review and discuss the examples below. What elements of successful coalition work are reflected?

Trainer Notes: This exercise should take about 10 minutes.

Defeating the Communications Decency Act in the United States

When the U.S. Congress passed the Communications Decency Act in 1996, which criminalized “indecent” speech on the Internet, a large and diverse group of Internet users, businesses, non-profit groups, and civil liberties advocates, who shared the common goal of protecting the First Amendment and the viability of the Internet as a means of free expression, education, and commerce came together to challenge the law.

Calling themselves the Citizen’s Internet Empowerment Coalition (CIEC), they formally declared, “CIEC members believe that parents, not the United States Government, are the best and most appropriate judges of what material is appropriate for themselves and their children.”

CIEC included traditional supporters of free speech, such as the Center for Democracy and Technology, People for the American Way, the Freedom to Read Foundation, and Families Against Censorship, Internet content providers such as the Recording Industry Association of America, the American Library Association, and the American Publishers Association, as well as the biggest names in the Internet industry: America Online, Microsoft, Apple, Prodigy, CompuServe, Wired Ventures, and even Internet filtering software company Software Surfwatch.

CIEC intended to educate the court on how the Internet functions and why the broad content regulations imposed by the CDA threaten the very existence of the Internet as a viable medium for free expression, education, and commerce. Among other things, the CIEC challenge argued that:

- 1) The Internet is a unique communications medium which deserves First Amendment protections at least as broad as those afforded to print media.
- 2) Individual users and parents, not the Federal Government, should determine for themselves and their children what material comes into their homes based on their own tastes and values.
- 3) The CDA will be ineffective at protecting children from "indecent" or "patently" offensive material online

At the time of the CDA challenge, most people had a very limited understanding of the Internet. This created a unique challenge and opportunity for CIEC to educate the court. In order to demonstrate the nature of the Internet and the effectiveness of user empowerment technologies, CIEC arranged to wire the court room directly to the Internet. The Center for Democracy and Technology, with the help of Bell Atlantic and Philadelphia law firm Schnader, Harrison, Segal & Lewis, installed a T-1 circuit and a small local area network in the Ceremonial Room of the Philadelphia court. That was the first time in history that a federal courtroom was wired to the Internet for the purposes of a trial.

Both the trial court and the United States Supreme Court found CIEC’s arguments persuasive, striking down the Communications Decency Act as unconstitutional.

Fighting for Online Organizing in Korea

In July 2000, the Korean government began requiring Internet content labeling and made online demonstrations illegal, including activities such as posting protest messages on internet bulletin boards, sending many protest messages to one server (like the Ministry's server), and "Virtual sit-ins," also known as, "DOS" - Denial of Service protests. It also required the installation of Internet content control software at all public PC centers, schools and libraries.

A wide array of organizations came together to form the Collaboration Action Group Against Information and Communication Censorship (CAG), launching a massive campaign that continues protesting these laws in 2002. CAG includes a wide range of political organizations, trade unions, and professional associations.

One particularly innovative element of the network's Internet campaign was an "online web site strike." CAG developed an informative web page containing information on the proposed content restrictions and why this was a danger to personal freedoms. Participating groups were encouraged to insert the web site strike page into their respective web sites so that it appears when people first enter the site.

This web site strike page could be downloaded from the CAG web site, which was a one-stop shop for information on the campaign containing newspaper articles and press releases pertaining to the issue, statements by influential organizations, and links to bulletin boards where people could discuss the issue. The site also encouraged people to send written protests via email to the Korean Government and the Korean Information Communication Ethics Committee. The campaign also used conventional organizing and advocacy tools such as writing press releases and organizing conferences. Some activists even initiated a 60-day sit-in hunger strike in front of the Ministry of Information and Communication.

CAG continues working to reverse these repressive laws.

Exercise: Coalition Partners – Asset Inventory

Trainer Notes: This exercise should take about half an hour.

Step 1

Create a list of possible coalition partners, starting with the advocacy network members already identified. Include organizations with similar goals, well known public figures, opinion leaders, key academics, and others who seem appropriate. Are there organizations with different political views from yours, which nevertheless share this policy goal? Are there industries or specific companies that would or might benefit if your public policy goal is achieved?

Step 2

Generate a coalition resource map by filling in the following chart. Add specific details that fit with your advocacy objectives. For example, you may want to note different areas of substantive expertise instead of listing only that a group or person has substantive expertise.

Coalition Member Asset Inventory

Member Skills													
Organization/Member	Substantive Expert	Grassroots Membership	Advocacy Experience	Research Resource	Media Expertise	Meeting Space	Press Event Experience	Primary Aud. Relation.	Secondary Aud. Relation.	Graphic/Web Design			
1													
2													
3													
4													
5													
6													
7													
8													
9													
10													
11													
12													
13													
14													
15													

Trainer Notes: Once participants have finished the exercise, have the group discuss whether the coalition has potential weaknesses, and discuss strategies for addressing them.

Advocacy Plan - Part 5:

Identifying Target Audiences

Targeting the right audience is critical to effective advocacy. Even the most compelling argument will fail if it isn't presented to the right audiences.

First, identify those with the power to act on your advocacy objective—the primary targets. Then, identify those who influence the key decision makers and have the power to shape public opinion—the secondary targets.

The primary audience will usually be key policy makers, elected officials and senior government officials with the authority to take specific action on the advocacy objective.

The secondary targets are individuals and groups that exert influence on the primary target audiences, or over other secondary target audiences. Reaching these “influentials” with your message may be as important in achieving the advocacy objective as reaching the primary decision maker. The media, for example, is a secondary target audience that can influence the opinions of both primary and secondary target audiences.

Members of a primary or secondary audience can include: government officials, business leaders, companies, the media, opinion leaders, non-profit groups or non-governmental organizations, academics and university communities, political parties, labor organizations, opposition leaders, and members of the public. In some cases, it may include the governments representing other countries or international bodies with some jurisdiction over or expertise on the issue.

Exercise: Power Map/Power Audit

Trainer Notes: This exercise should take about an hour to complete.

“Power Mapping” is a tool used to identify critical audiences. The first stage of power mapping is to list key decision makers and the individuals and groups that can influence them. Ranking the decision makers by importance is also extremely helpful in planning a strategy. It is not possible to conduct an effective advocacy campaign if you do not know your audience. If necessary, conduct further research to clarify who the decision makers are and their relationships with each other and the secondary audiences. Much of this information should have been identified during the policy process exercises.

Step 1

Develop a list of primary audience members. Be as specific as you can, and refer back to the work you did on the policy process earlier in the training. For example, in the United States, telecommunications policy is largely determined by the Federal Communications

Commission (FCC). Primary audience members for a telecommunications advocacy objective would include the FCC Commissioners, their staff, and members of Congress who are on the committee that has oversight authority for that agency.

Step 2

Prepare a list of secondary audience members. Be as specific as you can. Who does your primary audience listen to? Think of traditional as well as nontraditional “actors” in the policy process, including civic and opinion leaders, media celebrities, business leaders, Internet users, and constituents.

Who Are Your Audiences?

Advocacy Objective:	
Primary Audience “Targets”	Secondary Audience “Influentials”
1.	1. 2. 3. 4.
2.	1. 2. 3. 4.
3.	1. 2. 3. 4.
4.	1. 2. 3. 4.

Step 3

Write the group’s advocacy objective on the top of an extra-wide piece of paper and divide it into three sections. Label them support, neutral, and oppose.

Put the primary targets in the appropriate section first, and then do the same with the secondary targets. If a target is highly supportive of the issue/objective, they should be placed on the left side of the section. If a target represents strong opposition, they should be placed on the right side. The line of neutrality is in the center of the map being developed, and those targets who are undecided or whose opinion is unknown should be closer to the center. If any target is closely linked to another, that relationship should be reflected visually – either by drawing arrows between them, or circling them both in the same color.

Step 4

Discuss the following questions:

- Are there any additional allies that belong on the map? Who are they?
- Are there any additional opponents? Who are they?
- Does the map capture the relationships or connections between and among different targets?
- Where on the map does most of the power and influence reside?

Activating the Grassroots

Advocacy, even when focused on policy change at a national level, can be most effective when there is active participation at the “grassroots” or community level. Grassroots activity can be instrumental in influencing the decisions of key public policy decision makers. It increases the visibility of an issue or objective, helps decision makers understand what issues are important to constituents, which in turn helps them set public policy agendas. A legislator who may be pressured by industry at the national level to vote against a policy proposal, may be persuaded by local voters to support it. For example, many Members of the United States Congress backed away from opposition to the E-Rate program, which had been fueled by the telecommunications industry, when local school officials expressed support for the measure.

Exactly how grassroots organizing can be used best will depend on your issue, objectives, and primary target audiences. However, it is a key to democratic action. Communities – both geographic and constituency-based – influence their leaders and representatives. If the target decision maker is the Minister of Education, include constituencies like teachers, principals, educational publishers, and parent-teacher associations. If the decision maker is elected to represent a particular town or region, local voters, Internet users, newspaper editors, civic leaders, and business people are also influential.

Grassroots Activities

Having identified grassroots constituencies with a stake in the goals and objectives identified, what can they do? It will depend on what stage the decision making process is in, how citizens can participate, and other local considerations. However, there are a number of broad ideas that can be adapted to local circumstances.

- *Action Alerts*: Many membership organizations that engage in advocacy work send fax or e-mail alerts to interested members when a public policy decision reaches a critical legislative point. Sending out a short document with key information and a request for specific, immediate action can be very effective. Taking such documents to working group or network meetings for circulation can also be effective.
- *Sign-On Statements*: Developing a letter that expresses the goals and objectives you hope to accomplish, and persuading a strategic core group of other

organizations, companies, and advocates to endorse it, can be extremely effective. It can also be used as a news hook, showing shared support for the goals and objectives.

The In Defense of Freedom Coalition came together in the United States to express concern with certain legislative and regulatory proposals put forth in the aftermath of the September 11 terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon.

The coalition developed a statement of ten principles, which were initially endorsed by a diverse group of civil liberties, civil rights, and conservative organizations and law professors. Later, the coalition invited additional endorsements from organizations, law professors, computer scientists, and members of the general public. More than 150 organizations, 300 law professors, 40 computer scientists, and untold numbers of individuals endorse this sign-on statement.

Ultimately, the laws passed by the United States Congress did not conform with a number of the In Defense of Freedom Coalition principles, however, their work created resources and awareness about potential abuses of the law, and generated a community of experts that may be mobilized in legal challenges.

- *Letters to the Editor:* Grassroots activity can include elements of the media plan, particularly for letters to the editor and opinion editorials, or guest commentators on radio or television programs. Making sure that members of an organization or coalition, and interested members of the public, have enough information to make intelligent, timely, and on-message points to write good letters to the editor can be extremely effective educational tools. This is especially valuable when the authors are constituents of the key decision makers in the target audience.
- *Media Events:* These can be fairly simple, low-key press conferences to announce the formation of a new coalition, the filing of a lawsuit, or the release of a study, or they can be more elaborate, visually dramatic demonstrations of key message points, opportunities for decision makers to highlight public policy decisions related to your goals and objectives. There are numerous specific resources designed to help plan media events that are available online. Make sure to tailor planned media events to the issue, resources, and local media news cycles.
- *Town Hall Meetings:* Inviting public policy decision makers to join constituents for a discussion of issues related to your goals and objectives can be an effective way to communicate key message points and show broad interest in and support for those goals and objectives. However, in many cases they will require considerable advance planning. Some government officials regularly hold these meetings or “listening sessions” in local communities – if that is the case, it may be easier to participate in an existing forum than to try to schedule a topic-specific forum.

Exercise: Grassroots Actions

Trainer Notes: This should be a brief activity.

Generate a list of ideas and targets for grassroots activities supporting your goals and objectives.

Are any of these short-term projects? Which offer opportunities for developing longer-term relationships? What additional information or resources are needed to accomplish them?

Advocacy Plan - Part 6:

Developing Your Message

Message

Successful advocacy depends on a successful message that resonates with multiple target audiences, including the media. This is a critical element of an effective advocacy plan.

What are the most important points supporting the advocacy objective? Develop a message that reflects those points, and is simple and easy to remember. The *three critical elements of any advocacy message* are:

- First, there should be a *limited number of points* communicated. The best advocacy plans develop one key message, but in any event, a good plan should never exceed two or three points.
- Second, *test the message*. Will your audience understand the point you're trying to make? Is it too technical? Too broad or too narrow? Too clever?
- Third, *ask for action*. The audience needs to know concisely the policy issue and the solution sought. Tell them what action to take, as concretely as possible.

Not only can effective messaging help achieve an advocacy objective, a confusing message can doom an otherwise compelling advocacy campaign.

Fighting for Public Access Channels in Hong Kong

The struggle for increased minority programming on television via Public Access Channels in Hong Kong illustrates the importance of creating a message that is easy to understand. Media Access, created in 1994, organized workshops to train activists who could help introduce Public Access Channels to the community. Unfortunately, they failed to articulate the value of Public Access Channels in a way that media scholars, much less the general public, found easy to understand.

When the government ordered a feasibility study and asked the public to voice opinions, few people even responded. In May 1995, the Hong Kong government rejected the idea of Public Access Channels.

Be Prepared: Countering the Opposition

In developing a message, it is very important to anticipate the arguments of your opponents, and if possible, to neutralize their points within your own message. While you should anticipate the opposition's argument in your message, you should **not** frame your message as a response to that argument. If you do, you've allowed the opposition to set the terms of the debate, and you will have trouble getting your message out. What is worse, every time you speak, you will deliver the *opposition's* message.

Exercise: Effective Messages

Trainer Notes: This is a brief exercise. Discuss which messages below are more effective, and why.

When the United States created the “E-Rate Program,” which subsidizes Internet access, networking costs, and telecommunications services for schools and libraries, especially in rural and low-income areas of the United States, organizers knew that some telecommunications service providers would oppose the program. Telecommunications service providers are required to provide financial support for the E-Rate. The opposition framed a powerful message which captured American disapproval of all new taxes.

Opposition Message	Wrong Supporter Message	Right Supporter Message
The E-Rate program is an illegal tax on telecommunications ratepayers.	The E-Rate is not an illegal tax. Congress specifically authorized it in the 1996 Telecommunications Act	The E-Rate is a valuable tool for bringing the power of new technologies to schoolchildren all over the country.

Another example of effectively neutralizing the opposition message is in the Internet censorship debate. Supporters of free speech are often cast as promoters of pornography. In the United States, some anti-censorship groups have effectively focused on the role of parents, rather than the government, to teach children values.

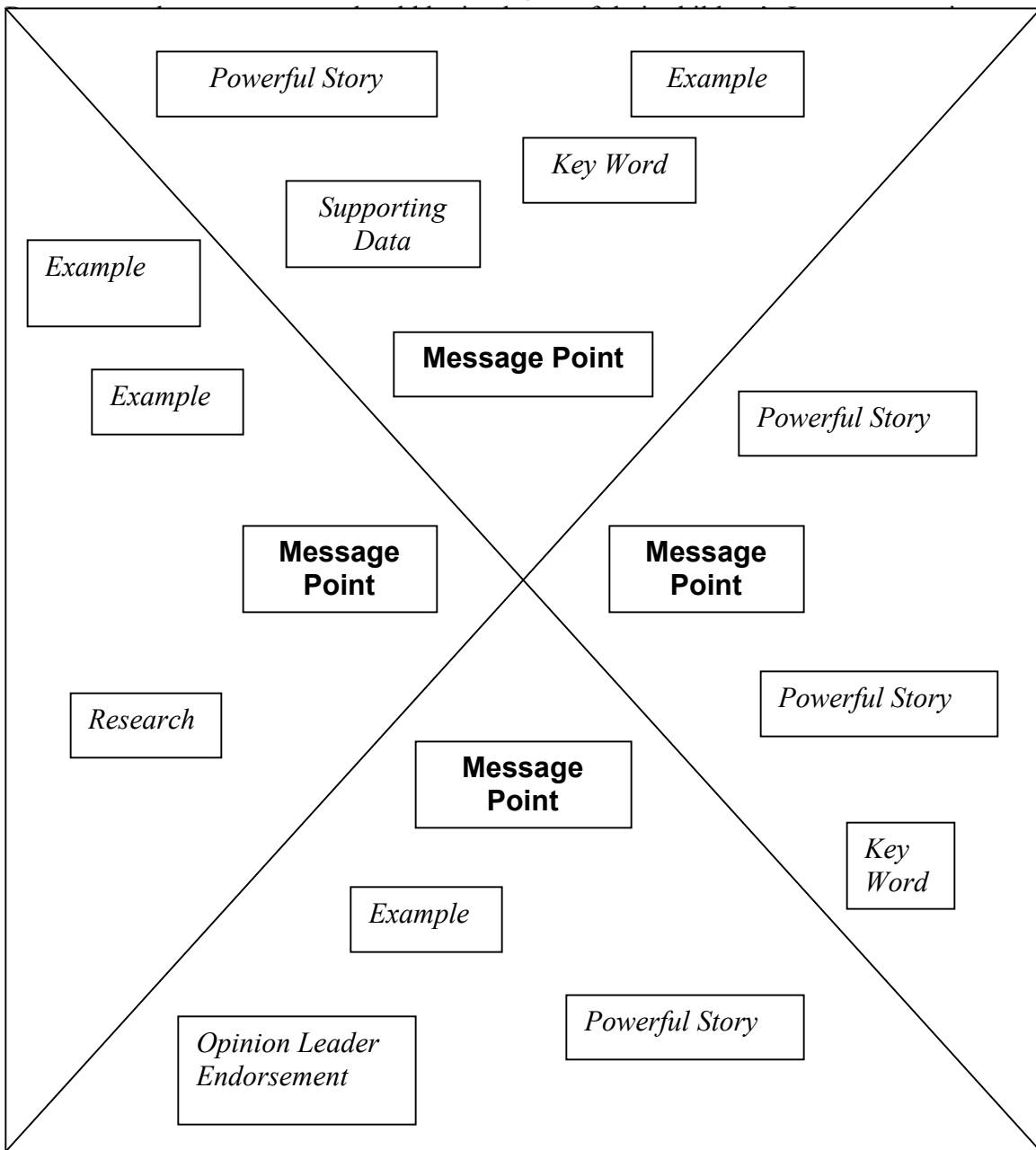
Opposition Message	Wrong Supporter Messages	Right Supporter Message
Pornography-mongers want your children to be exposed to dangerous and traumatic images and ideas.	We are not supporters of pornography.	Parents, not the government, should be in charge of their children’s Internet experiences.
	It is impossible to censor pornography without also censoring legitimate speech.	

Exercise: Creating Messages Using a Message Box

Write one message point in each triangle. Under each point, you can put examples, evidence, key words or phrases, and other elements that help you deliver that point.

If there really is an order in which you need to make your points, number the sections of the message box. But if you are being interviewed, or talking with new potential coalition partners, and are asked questions that focus on different points related to your message, remember that you can make your advocacy campaign message points in many different ways – you need to be listening to how your audience is responding to them. One point may be the logical starting place most of the time, but it doesn’t have to be that way under all circumstances.

Message Box



Advocacy Plan - Part 7:

Creating a Media Plan

After developing clear public policy objectives, research and powerful stories in support of those objectives, and a clear and targeted message, *it is time to get the message out*. Creating a media plan is the final critical element of an effective advocacy plan.

Elements of a Media Plan

1. Identify key publications and journalists, editors, and columnists who influence key audiences or whose coverage will add credibility to the advocacy campaign. It may be necessary to start with smaller or niche publications.
2. Name a primary spokesperson for the advocacy campaign. Multiple spokespeople, particularly within an organization, can be confusing. With a coalition, it may be necessary to identify several spokespeople, but the number should always be limited.
3. Develop potential opportunities for delivering the message to the press, or “news hooks.” Is legislation being introduced? Has a study been published? Are new statistics or compelling stories available? Has an unusual coalition been formally created? Is an event going to take place?
4. Create “deliverables.” Press releases, executive summaries of studies or compelling stories, polls, scorecards comparing political records or successes and failures related to the objective. What documents can be provided to interested reporters?
5. Write opinion editorials or letters to the editor articulating the advocacy objective. Submit these to key publications. Are there well-known or highly credible opinion leaders that would jointly sign or write these?
6. Generate Internet based interest. If there is a web site related to the objectives, keep it current, and make sure it comes up in major search engines. Keep reporters and interested parties informed and up to date using concise, targeted e-mail messages. Enhance credibility by making sure that web pages and messages are dated and include contact information. However, *do not* send frequent, unsolicited messages, or post to unrelated newsgroups or listservs.
7. Track coverage. Make sure to get copies of stories, editorials, op-eds, letters to the editor, and any other media coverage generated by these efforts. This can also be valuable for demonstrating organizational work to funders and potential funders.

Effective Work with the Media

There are numerous resources online that can help develop these in detail – guidelines for writing press releases, effective strategies for being interviewed, including on television or the radio, suggestions for press conferences and effective media events, and more. If these activities are unfamiliar, it may be helpful to look online for such training documents. However, below are some general suggestions for developing good relationships with the media, and for communicating persuasively.

Reporters look for good stories, and rely on a variety of sources to help identify them. Directly talking with a reporter to let them know something newsworthy is going to happen provides your best chance that they will cover the event or topic—but even that may not succeed in getting the reporter’s attention. If something newsworthy happens related to your issue, or is about to happen, let the press know.

Newsworthy events include: launching a coalition, introducing legislation, appointment of a new policymaker, introduction of a new program or service, release of new research, announcement of a new celebrity spokesperson, and many other activities. If there is no news “hook” to the story, most reporters will not write about it. Remember, trade press, local papers, news web sites like slashdot.org and local Internet-news oriented sites, and other alternative publications are part of the media – and may be sources for subsequent stories in larger news publications.

Here are a number of suggestions for developing and managing good relationships with the news media so that they will see you as a resource and a person who can help them find and develop interesting stories related to your issue.

- Find out which reporters cover your issues. Develop a good relationship with these reporters by contacting them and sending them information regularly. For example, contact a reporter whenever you are launching a new initiative, issuing a new study, or hosting an important official at your program site. Be sure to know and follow the hierarchy of media organization.
- Become familiar with your local and national media offices before you contact them. Know the stories they follow and type of spokesperson you should send to capture their attention.
- If a reporter or editor is subject to government censorship, respect their limitations and work with them to find a way to tell your story.
- When talking to a reporter be sure to give the key points of your message first, then the background. The interview may not last as long as you expect.
- Always be polite. No matter how upset or angry you get, don’t lose your cool. If you get into an argument with a reporter, expect the story to be written or the tape to be edited in such a way that you look bad.

Threats to Political Dissent and Privacy in Bulgaria

On December 18, 1998, Bulgaria enacted a new telecommunication law allowing government officials access to every document belonging to an ISP licensed under it. This was an enormous invasion of individual privacy, giving the police access to private email and individual usernames and passwords.

The Internet Society of Bulgaria (ISOC-Bulgaria), a non governmental organization formed by Internet enthusiasts, reacted immediately by faxing a formal statement of protest to the Committee of Post and Telegraph (CPT), which did not respond. The lack of any response from the CPT prompted a coordinated media campaign by ISOC-Bulgaria. By December 30, less than two weeks after the ordinance was signed, newspaper articles opposing the law began appearing in Bulgarian newspapers.

ISOC-Bulgaria gained the support of other organizations working toward political reform, lawyers in Bulgaria and abroad, international organizations and eminent politicians including Germany's Chancellor and the Bulgarian Vice President. According to ISOC-Bulgaria, the ordinance was a means for the government to gain political control of information. By January 1999, ISOC began to hold regular press conferences and more than 300 articles were published over the course of the next ten months. ISOC members participated in TV and radio talk shows and gave live interviews that reached more than 60 percent of the nation's population. More media interest followed ISOC-Bulgaria's partnership with local conservative activists around this issue.

Strategic use of the media and the development of an easily understandable message – the threat to individual privacy, political dissent, and network security – were instrumental in bringing the issue to the attention of this wide array of supporters. In November 1999, the CPT agreed to change the law to protect Internet user privacy.

Acknowledgements

There are numerous valuable resources available both online and offline for training different communities of advocates. We found several especially useful and have borrowed some of the exercises, definitions, descriptions, or stories from them:

“An Introduction to Advocacy: Training Guide,” by Ritu R. Sharma, Support for Analysis and Research in Africa (SARA), Health and Human Resources Analysis for Africa (HHRAA), and the US Agency for International Development, Africa Bureau, Office for Sustainable Development (March 1997)

http://www.dec.org/pdf_docs/PNABZ919.pdf

Global Internet Liberty Campaign, <http://www.gilc.org/>

“Networking for Policy Change: An Advocacy Training Manual,” POLICY Project (January, 1999)

<http://www.policyproject.com/pubs/AdvocacyManual.html>