

## Using Technology to Improve Service Delivery

Here are some examples of areas in which technology improves the delivery of services.<sup>1</sup>

- a) Track essential data accurately, easier, faster and more consistently  
Computers can count and tally information much quicker and more accurately than a person  
Data could be information such as financial, client demographics, or volunteer hours
- b) Create reports quicker; new reporting needs can be quickly answered
- c) Outreach to clients, volunteers, donors and the community
- d) Assess needs of clients and programs<sup>2</sup>
- e) Increase staff knowledge; through access to and research on the World Wide Web, by subscribing to appropriate mailing lists, etc.
- f) Improve collaborations: via email, websites, fax machines, conference calling, video conferencing, intra-office networks that allow file/calendar/print sharing, wide area networks, etc.<sup>3</sup>

You must always keep in mind that the technology is not the end goal of your services. **Technology is a tool** to help you improve your services, provide services more efficiently, and collect data more accurately. It will support the organization's overall mission and goals, but by itself, technology can't feed someone or make them self-sufficient.<sup>4</sup>

Technology can become essential to your work, but then fail at the worst possible moment. For this and other reasons, it is important to consider how your organization would cope when some or all technology components are unavailable. For example, in addition to storing the mailing list in a database, the list would be printed periodically. Or, paper forms would always be available to do intake, just in case.

<sup>1</sup> Community Food Security Evaluation Handbook. National Research Center, Inc., 2003

<sup>2</sup> Chang, Barbara. (March 29, 2002). Information Management: The cornerstone of nonprofit effectiveness. Retrieved November 10, 2003 from the TechSoup web site: <http://techsoup.org/howto/articlepage.cfm?ArticleId=369>.

<sup>3</sup> Teaming for Technology Burlington. (2002) Guide to Technology Planning. Retrieved November 14, 2003 from

<http://www.unitedwaycc.org/teamtech/techplanguide.htm>

<sup>4</sup> Podolsky, Joni. (2003) Wired for Good: Strategic Technology Planning for Nonprofits San Francisco: John Wiley & Sons, Inc. (US). Retrieved November 14, 2003 from netLibrary.com:

[http://www.netlibrary.com/ebook\\_info.asp?product\\_id=91882](http://www.netlibrary.com/ebook_info.asp?product_id=91882).