MARKLE FOUNDATION

USING INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY TO

ADDRESS CRITICAL PUBLIC NEEDS

ZOË BAIRD, PRESIDENT

JULY 2002

In July 1999, I wrote to tell you about the Markle Foundation's new mission and program focus. At that time, I felt strongly that the information revolution represented a tremendous opportunity to improve people's lives and to meet the pressing needs of society at large. I announced in my letter that we were going to focus our entire program on pursuing this important opportunity.

I said then that we were entering a critical period in our society's history, during which we had a special chance to shape expectations for how these new tools could best be deployed. In formulating our program, therefore, the board of directors and I agreed that we must also be prepared to accelerate our rate of spending and commit up to $100 million, approximately half the Foundation's assets, over a five-year period. Thus we launched a major effort to foster the use of information technologies in areas such as health care and childhood development, and to promote good and fair public policy on important technology-related issues.

More than three years into this effort, with a heightened sense of potential for the Foundation's mission, projects, and goals, I write you again. I have much to tell you about the work we are doing, the dynamic organizations with whom we are partnering, and our

own approach to philanthropy that we are developing. Within the context of dramatic and grave changes in the world, and great volatility within the information sector itself, I also want to share some thoughts on where we are headed as an information society, where we see public need emerging, and where we plan to focus our energies in the future.

Together with our partners, and functioning increasingly as an operating entity to create models for long-term change, we believe we are making a substantial contribution in key areas of need. This includes working to bring developing nations into the global information society, improving health care through consumer technology, deploying information and communications technology to enhance national security and protect liberty, developing sound policies that promote innovation in the networked society, and creating new interactive learning experiences for children.

HEIGHTENED FOCUS IN A CHANGED WORLD

Three years ago, I wrote in an atmosphere of excitement and boundless possibility stemming from a booming domestic digital economy that was rapidly transforming economic, social and political life around the world. I wrote you that at Markle we felt a sense of urgency to act before the new became mainstream, and expectations became fixed. The economic decline in the technology marketplace has altered significantly the environment in which we initially sought to have an impact, rendering more challenging our opportunity to formulate models for the future of technology in the public interest. At the same time, the bursting of the bubble, and the impact on the worldwide economic

slump that followed, demonstrated clearly that global interdependence carries liabilities as well as benefits.

This reality was born out even more starkly on September 11, 2001. The events of that day showed the world that the transnational, networked structure of the Internet had found its evil counterpart in fluid, stateless terrorist organizations that could successfully exploit the openness of our liberal society as a point of vulnerability.

At Markle, we have been deeply committed to a peaceful transition from a geographically bordered order of things to a new, networked and borderless global society. Current international affairs have underscored the urgent, difficult and broad-based work that is required for us to live in a peaceful, prosperous global society. Indeed, amid great uncertainty about the future, one thing is certain: we are living in an increasingly interdependent world, in which the economic, social, environmental and political well being of individual nations and regions is dependent upon that of other nations and regions around the globe. Conversely, individual governments alone lack the ability to address many of the issues before us, including flows of trade and investment, protection of public values in decisions about the Internet, terrorism and cybercriminals, and infectious disease that can spread silently across borders.

Much of this interdependence is driven by the borderless interconnection of information technology. This technology -- the way it is developed, adopted, deployed, accessed and controlled -- can play a profound role in realizing our hopes for the future. People in the United States and the world over face challenges and opportunities that can be met and realized through innovative, broad minded use of such technologies -- and equally innovative, broadminded policy.

And so, for us at Markle, changes in the environment underscore the importance of our basic mission, both at home and abroad, to try to accelerate the use of information and communications technologies to address critical public needs.   World events have converged in a way that, I believe, makes this mission more vital then ever.

THE SHIFTING DOMESTIC ENVIRONMENT

The terrorist acts of last year came on the heels of dramatic changes in the markets that had been fueling unprecedented technological and economic growth. In my last letter, I referred to those markets and to the emerging media environment as something of a Wild West and to the boom in Internet-related business activity as a Gold Rush. Things are of course different today, and economic changes have had a real impact on our work. There are fewer funds for innovative experiments with businesses that can serve public needs, and there is less openness to new commercial models for the deployment of technologies.

As I suggested back in 1999, consolidation within the information industry was inevitable, and the deflation of the dot com bubble has of course only accelerated the process. The pace of consolidation means that commercial models for digital technology and expectations for its use are becoming ever more entrenched and that decisions about its applications are in fewer and fewer hands.

Nevertheless, the new economic climate does not spell an end to the digital revolution -- just as the stock market crashes of prior decades did not represent the end of the industrial revolution. We are still living in a period with great potential for innovation, creativity and change. New technological, commercial and philanthropic opportunities

still exist. Perhaps most importantly, there is growing interest and excitement in the possibility of new approaches to public interest issues -- within both the nonprofit and for-profit sectors, and within governmental and academic arenas.

GLOBAL OPPORTUNITY AND RISK

The international picture is complex. One of the central notions behind the idea of globalization is the way that digital networks eliminate geographical borders. Markets and marketplaces, ideas and information, and in some senses, even people, are said to exist and function in a cyberspace that is free of physical limitations. We cannot have any true form of globalization, however, without returning to certain realities on the ground.

On the global front, technology is spreading rapidly in countries where improved connectivity, information, the free flow of ideas, and access to people and markets can be a great social and economic boon. The use of the wireless technology that will be so important to a networked society is actually higher in many other developed countries than in the United States. Cell phone users have increased worldwide from 11 million in 1990 to an estimated 1 billion in 2002. And since the introduction of the Internet, 530 million people around the world have gone online.

But the numbers have another side: billions of people worldwide who are potential users do not have access to network technology. In 2001, there were 62.25 personal computers for every 100 people in the United States. Worldwide, that figure was 8.4. In Africa, it was 1.06.

Indeed, for many developing countries, networked technology represents a serious risk. If these countries are left behind on the other side of a global digital divide, preexisting economic and social divides between the developing and developed world will only widen. On the other hand, the smart deployment of technology can help address some of the pressing social, medical, educational, environmental and economic needs that have long hindered participation in the developed community. This is a critical opportunity that must be seized.

I believe the most pressing challenge of the 21st century is to assure that the enormous potential benefits of our increasingly global world are shared with all of the world's inhabitants, not just a privileged few. We all -- governments, the private sector, and civil society -- should commit to make the expertise and resources necessary to allow developing countries to harness these technologies to meet their development needs.

STRATEGY, OPERATIONS AND TRANSITIONS AT MARKLE

Working in such a rapidly changing external environment, we ourselves have necessarily embraced change. Indeed, three years ago in my letter to you, I placed a high premium on experimentation and flexibility -- and since then we have evolved greatly according to evolving needs.

When we set out on our new mission, we sought to invest wisely and to leverage our resources through influencing ideas, collaborating across sectors, and supporting projects that could serve as examples and as catalysts for change. To implement this approach, the Foundation began to operate many of its own programs and projects --

making fewer traditional grants, but making major investments and commitments with partners to pursue specific goals within our program areas. We employ a combination of tools that include research, incubation of ideas and public education. We invest in and develop valuable technology solutions and applications, both commercial and nonprofit, which cannot easily succeed in the market unaided.

Markle's method of philanthropy is typified in our activities by the attempt to create catalytic models for change. These are targeted, strategic initiatives intended to identify and demonstrate new approaches to critical issues, and thereby have an influence on solutions to problems, the parties involved, and relevant behavior on an expanding and sustainable basis.

Sometimes Markle acts as the initiator of these catalytic efforts, sometimes as a partner, and sometimes as a facilitator for activities undertaken by others. Our goal, before we approve participation and funding in a given project, is to articulate the model, identify the impact we hope to have, and establish measurable objectives for outcomes -- outcomes that we expect will expand understanding of a problem and help generate sustainable solutions.

In 1999, Markle was prepared to invest $100 million over a period of five years in support of our new program initiatives. I can report now that in the first three years of our plan we have committed more than $40 million of those funds. Far more than I expected when we began, we have been joined by enthusiastic private and public sector partners whose financial and in-kind efforts have moderated the need to depend solely on our own resources for the work we set out to do. In addition, our outflow of funds has

been somewhat slowed by market conditions and the care we have taken in forging

strategies.

As I have already mentioned, we have taken on new initiatives in international

development and in national security. We have also refocused some of our existing

efforts. A strategic review of our initial funding activities and incoming proposals, for

instance, led us to incorporate our stand-alone Public Engagement program into the

Opportunity Fund.

We now manage an expanding and complex portfolio of projects that we believe

will have a positive impact on people's lives. We know that these projects will not always

succeed, but we also know that experimentation is the hallmark of innovation and success.

I am very proud of our work to date and gratified that, with each new day, more people

join with us in this work. Let me report on some of it.

POLICY FOR A NETWORKED SOCIETY

Through initiatives in our Policy for a Networked Society program, Markle works to

increase public understanding of key information and communication technology policy

issues, to enhance the public's voice in such policy arenas, and to achieve technology-

related policy outcomes that benefit society.

Why is technology policy so important to us? Policy making can seem rarefied, but

the issues being debated today will have a direct impact on our lives, our civil liberties, our

businesses, our culture and the fairness of our society. New information and

communications technologies are fostering profound change within the world's social,

political, legal and economic systems. Policy, as much as technology, provides the platform upon which the digital society is built. I believe strongly that in order to create legitimate and sustainable answers to policy questions, the policy arenas, processes and debates must be democratic and inclusive.

Our policy work focuses on four main areas of need: supporting legitimate and sustainable Internet governance; finding solutions to foundational technology policy issues, including preserving innovation, and providing for national security; creating global opportunities to benefit from digital technology; and establishing a public interest infrastructure.

Supporting Legitimate and Sustainable Internet Governance
Policymakers worldwide are recognizing the need for new modes of governance to address the global challenges posed by networked and digital technology. The ultimate design and structure of these governance systems -- local or global, private or public -- has a profound impact on the public because they partially determine the social and economic impact of new technology. Markle is actively spearheading efforts to develop governance bodies that are inclusive and transparent, accountable and legitimate.

Our work in this area began with an effort to increase public interest and public accountability within the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN), a leading example of the type of new governing institutions now emerging in the international policy arena. At the request of ICANN and with a coalition of nonprofit organizations including the Center for Democracy and Technology, the Carter Center and Common Cause, Markle supported the direct, democratic election of at-large ICANN

directors by Internet users. We also actively promoted research and public debate on critical governance issues facing ICANN.

We now believe that although at-large elections were an important experimental step, they are not the answer to turn ICANN into an effective policy making organization. Amid calls by ICANN's own president to replace at-large board members with government representatives, Markle believes that it is now time to grapple with the complex issues that have emerged from the ICANN experiment and gain a clearer understanding of how to establish more legitimate global policy making bodies. We believe that to make ICANN and other global governance organizations truly effective, multisector representation is key – multisector representation from the developed and developing world, and including not just governments but also nonprofit organizations and the business sector.

In July 2001, our own study, "Toward a Framework for Internet Accountability," showed that the American public shares our belief in multisector involvement in governance bodies such as ICANN. Our future work in this area will be aimed at crafting precisely these kinds of inclusive solutions. We have begun taking a leadership role to create processes at new and traditional policy making venues that model the kinds of inclusive, accountable processes that will be critical to protecting the public interest in the years ahead.

Finding Solutions to Foundational Technology Policy Issues

In addition to focusing on policy making bodies and processes, Markle policy projects address key public policy issues that we consider to lay the foundation for fulfillment of the public interest. These include preserving innovation and an open networked society,

balancing national security and civil liberties in the information age, and enabling the adoption of technologies to improve health and health care. Through this work, we also hope to educate and stimulate public debate on critical policy questions—such as intellectual property for both the applications and content layers of the Internet, digital identity, wireless access, consumer protection, illegal and harmful content, privacy issues, domain name disputes -- which will determine how and by whom new technologies are owned, disseminated, regulated and used.

Creating Global Opportunities to Benefit from Digital Technology

Markle is working to help developing countries participate fully and share in the benefits of the networked economy and society. There is increasing evidence that information and communications technologies, if used effectively and appropriately to local contexts, can help address some of the most important development challenges faced by societies around the world.

Over the past two years, Markle has been honored to be the nonprofit member of the United States delegation to the Digital Opportunities Task Force (DOT Force), a body created by the leaders of the G-8 nations, and a nonprofit member of the United Nations Information and Communications Technology Task Force. In so doing, Markle has led an effort to ensure that nonprofit organizations and developing countries have a strong voice in these bodies alongside developed country governments and business representatives, a precedent setting result that can inform future global policy making across issues for some time to come.   These unique bodies have made important contributions in advancing understanding of the potential role for information and communication technologies in

helping developing countries meet social and economic goals. They have identified key priorities for each sector, and important collaboration between sectors.

The Markle Foundation cochaired the Dot Force and UN working groups on the participation of developing countries in global technology policy making, and the Dot Force group on national strategies for deployment of technologies towards development goals. In February, the Foundation launched a global public/private partnership with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and a wide set of commercial and nonprofit partners to assist developing countries in the prioritization and implementation of national e-strategies that can advance their development goals. Based on a policy framework we developed with Accenture and UNDP, this Global Digital Opportunity Initiative is mobilizing expertise and resources into a target set of countries. The Initiative aims ultimately to harness digital technology's power to improve health care and education, address social equity issues, reduce poverty and create enhanced economic opportunity.

Finally, we aim to contribute to education and research on these issues, and to supporting a key group of innovators who, we feel, are expanding the potential for this work.

Establishing a Public Interest Infrastructure

Markle is working to enhance the participation of public interest groups and the public at large in public policy debates. The Foundation seeks to create an overall public interest infrastructure that supports the pursuit of democratically informed decisions. Our work

includes public education and advocacy, training and research, and public outreach, as well as other tools.

In the spring of 2000, Markle started its Internet Clinical Advocacy Project, designed to encourage legal education within the technology sector and to increase the number of public advocates who work in this area. To date, we have supported such efforts by Professor Pam Samuelson at Boalt Hall School of Law at the University of California, Berkeley, Professor Lawrence Lessig at Stanford Law School, and Professor Peter Jaszi, Professor of Law at American University's Washington College of Law. Expect to see us further our commitment in this area. Among their other work, these clinics are leaders in a case recently accepted for review by the Supreme Court of the United States involving access to public domain material on the Internet -- a case that could have ramifications for the recent congressional extension of copyright law terms.

Finally, broad public debate can be as important as debate within courts and committee rooms, and on this front we joined forces with the New America Foundation to create a Markle Fellowship program designed to help seed a new generation of public intellectuals who can contribute to the global dialogue about information technology and society. We also created the Markle Fellowship program at Oxford University, United Kingdom, to teach students from all over the world how to translate academic research on communications law and policy into public policy initiatives and public awareness.

National Security in the Information Age

After the terrorist attacks of September 11, we felt a need to examine the role played by information and technology in our national security. This is an area I have been engaged

in for many years. A number of critical issues have quickly become well known, from the existing agencies' failure to share information to the absence of a comprehensive policy for balancing civil liberties against increasing information needs. Further, although modern technologies offer enormous human benefits, they also hold the potential for great danger in the hands of those who would do harm.

To address these issues, we have created the Markle Task Force on National Security in the Information Age. It will contribute to design of a policy framework for managing information for national security while preserving the freedoms that make our country worth securing. We believe that this framework should emerge from the collaborative work of many sectors of society: government, business, public interest groups and ordinary citizens. The Task Force, formed in collaboration with the Miller Center at the University of Virginia, the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) and The Brookings Institution, has brought together leaders from a wide range of fields to address key issues collaboratively. Former Netscape Communications CEO James Barksdale and I cochair the task force.

In another national security related initiative, Markle and the Council on Foreign Relations have launched a unique online encyclopedia of terrorism, providing the public with an easy-to-read, authoritative primer on what the experts know -- and don't know -- about terrorism. The site, www.terrorismanswers.com, is written and maintained by a team of scholars and journalists at the Council who update the site daily and provide information within a question and answer format.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGIES FOR BETTER HEALTH

The goal of Markle's Information Technologies for Better Health program is to accelerate the use of information technology by patients and consumers to improve the quality of health and health care. It is no secret that the United States health care system faces growing challenges -- crises of stretched resources, an aging population, and the need to make the best use of an ever-burgeoning scientific knowledge base. We believe these challenges can only be met by significant changes in the way the health care system uses information.

Information technology represents a profound opportunity to enhance health care in this country. Uniform standards for electronic medical information can have a great impact on improving patient care and facilitating academic research. The Internet, the electronic medical record, and other tools increasingly enable patients to take greater responsibility for managing their health and acting as informed consumers of health care services. Emerging technologies have unprecedented ability to assist patients and their physicians in making decisions by providing medical information when and where it is most needed. Information can also support patients in maintaining wellness and preventing illness and injury, in addition to effectively evaluating and choosing treatments for problems when they arise.

We have launched an ambitious set of projects designed to yield data, experience, and working relationships that will deepen our understanding of the environment in which we operate and help us establish our point of view with others. The lessons we learn will inform the direction of our evolving strategy in the long term. Ultimately, we seek manageable interventions that have the potential to move the system in the right direction -- projects that allow us to be aggressive yet realistic.

Our strategic approach in the health arena consists of four closely related branches: incubating solutions; influencing policy; supporting research; and engaging the public.

Incubating Solutions

We are keenly interested in technologies and systems that have the potential to transform health care and consumers' relationship to it. The access to one's health information through an electronic medical record (EMR), in particular, could, if well designed and widely adopted, serve as a central -- and transformational -- element of the health care system. There are many arguments in favor of EMRs. Yet EMRs are used by fewer than 5 percent of health care institutions and the design of the vast majority of such systems limits their potential benefit to consumers and the health system. Markle has engaged researchers in several academic institutions to conduct exploratory work on the potential value in giving patients access to their own electronic medical information.

Influencing Policy

We have recently launched the Connecting for Health Collaborative, an ambitious public/private initiative designed to improve patient care by promoting the adoption of an initial set of standards for electronic medical information, in a way that protects patient privacy. Achievement of this goal could improve clinical decision-making, reduce medical errors, accelerate research on patient outcomes and increase the effectiveness of public health efforts. Most importantly, we hope this work will be an important first step toward ultimately enabling patients to gain access to secure medical information in order to become more informed partners in their own care.

Markle is convening the Collaborative, which includes practicing clinicians, hospitals, employers and other third-party payers, federal and state government organizations, health care information technology organizations, academic and research institutions, national standards groups, accrediting organizations, manufacturers, community organizations, and consumers.

Supporting Research

Despite a rapid proliferation of online health information, there is inadequate documented evidence that information technologies can transform consumer behavior or improve health outcomes. We believe that such documentation is essential to the acceptance of technologies within the field. Equally lacking is specific information about which characteristics of systems, tools, and content are most effective. We have therefore mounted two research projects that are bolstering the case for the integration of health care and information technology and also yielding knowledge that can be applied in a wide variety of situations and systems.

The first, a joint project with the National Cancer Institute, involves The Comprehensive Health Enhancement Support System (CHESS). CHESS is a computer-based system developed at the University of Wisconsin that gives individuals facing health crises access to information, decision-making tools, and professional support services from their homes. It also links them to a community of others with the same health condition. Markle is making CHESS available to approximately 300 underserved women with breast cancer in Detroit and rural Wisconsin. The project is designed to test, for the first time, the viability and efficacy of CHESS in a community-based setting. In our research, CHESS is

proving to improve patients' quality of life and promote more efficient use of health care services, with especially positive results among underserved populations.

In our second project, Markle is collaborating with Partners HealthCare and Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston to study the effects of increased patient access to their own medical information via a secure Internet portal. The project tracks patients' use of the portal and assesses the impact of such access on their health and health-related behavior. In parallel, the Foundation for Accountability (FACCT) is analyzing the potential value of patient-generated reports on the health care services they receive. This study will use FACCT's "Compare Your Care" Internet-based tool to collect patient-reported data, which will be linked to data from the patients' electronic medical records and evaluated for accuracy.

Engaging the Public

Among the significant barriers to the realization of our vision is the prevailing concept of the patient's role. We believe it is critical that patients and consumers of health care evolve from being passive participants into active partners with their physicians in navigating their health and health care. Although the Internet has played a key role in changing the traditional dynamic by taking medical knowledge from the doctor's bookshelf and putting it on the consumer's desktop, the historically prevalent relationship is still ingrained in the popular culture. To encourage the public to take on a more active role, it is important to provide models of a new dynamic.   We plan to use new media as well as old media, through relationships such as the one we have with Oxygen, to expose the public to new ideas and to encourage them to participate in shaping new norms.

INTERACTIVE MEDIA FOR CHILDREN

Markle established its Interactive Media for Children program to realize the benefits of interactive media to help children grow, learn and develop, and to promote an interactive media industry that recognizes and is responsive to children's learning and development needs. We believe that educational products can be exciting, popular and therefore commercially sustainable. Given rapid changes in children's media, in both technology and market forces, we find that our program must itself change, learn, and develop. First let me give you a report on our work to date and then I will tell you about the current reevaluation of program strategies and goals.

Beginning in 1999, we set the goal of seeing market forces tap into the power of digital technology to help children grow and learn. Put simply, our strategy has been to stimulate links between the best developmental and media research and excellent product development and distribution.

Over the past three years, we have worked in the following areas: promoting research on the potential and actual effects of interactive media on children's learning and development; identifying and promoting market-driven production models informed by such research; and influencing public and industry expectations about the role and potential of interactive media in children's lives.

Promoting Research

In 2000, Markle released a comprehensive analysis of what is known about children's interactive media, led by Professor Ellen Wartella, dean of the College of Communication at The University of Texas at Austin. This analysis of existing research on interactive media and its effects on children in out-of-school settings was published as "Growing up with Interactive Media: What We Know and What We Don't Know About the Impact of New Media on Children." We distributed this compendium to software, hardware, and toy designers, executives, educators, and academics. The study pointed to the need for new models in the development of interactive media and the need for new media policies that are grounded in developmental theory and research. It also called for improved research and analyses of the potential of these media.

In addition, we collaborated on a symposium with the American Psychological Association to explore the relationship between technology and childhood and address the need for developmental research.

Identifying and Promoting Production Models

In 2001, we created and presented Markle Media Forums, bringing together toy producers who had initiated seminal projects in children's media. At three forums, the producers of Leap Pad, Blue's Clues, and SimCity explained the development and the success of their products, demonstrating the connection between developmental research and marketplace viability. The Foundation also cosponsored a conference with the American Center for Children and Media to address the creative needs, challenges and opportunities of those developing digital media properties for children.

In addition, we have directly supported experimentation with new production models. Markle also created experimental partnerships with major media producers: with Discovery Channel to create interactive media that was based on developmental research, and with PBS, to identify a long-term strategy for educational programming across all media, old and new.

Influencing Public and Industry Expectations

In the fall of 2001, we cosponsored a conference with the Cultural Policy Program of the University of Chicago to examine the impact of video games on American culture, and to better inform the creation of public policies. Furthermore, we have convened presentations of the Nickelodeon/Yankelovich Youth Monitor to provide our partners and stakeholders with insights about the ever-changing youth market.

We believe this work has contributed to a larger understanding of the kind of products that should be developed as well as the establishment of a framework for developing them. In September of 2001, however, we recognized that the children's media environment had been changing significantly since we initially developed our program strategy.

We therefore began a period of careful reexamination of program goals and objectives in this program area, working with the consulting firm of Just Kid, Inc. to gain an in-depth look at the industry environment. Two key changes are evident in the industry. First, products are getting more sophisticated, and in many cases already offering greater benefits to children; there is evidence that leading interactive media companies are looking to research-based knowledge of child development in their product development. Second,

the industry is heavily affected by the end of the dot com boom and is concentrating rapidly.

To continue having an impact in the children's arena, we need to reassess our activities to ensure that we are working effectively within it and continuing to act where we can fill an important need. Markle will be entering into an extended planning period for the children's program of at least six to eight months. We believe the result will be better strategies for promoting the development of interactive learning.

THE OPPORTUNITY FUND

We cannot properly serve the public interest in such a fast-changing new media environment if we are not open to changing ideas and opportunities. Markle's Opportunity Fund allows us to seize opportunities beyond our program areas and to focus on shifting priorities of social need.

Let me provide an example of how we employ the Opportunity Fund. In 1999, as we formulated our new program areas, we saw that it was not necessary to create a formal program aimed at narrowing the digital divide in the United States. Trends were positive and the field was populated with the good work of many others. However, while access was increasing among all groups, there was little content being developed for the specific needs of low-income and low-literacy populations.

We felt we should act fast to try to raise this issue, and made an allocation to understand the way in which information technology can serve these populations and to develop content and services for them. Our initial partners included The Children's

Partnership (TCP), The Leadership Conference on Civil Rights, and the Educational

Netcasting Foundation. The effort included support for TCP's study, "Online Content for

Low-Income and Under-served Americans: The Digital Divide's New Frontier." This

path-breaking study analyzed the needs of low income Americans and those with language

and geographic barriers -- and provided a practical road map for the private and public

sectors to work together to tackle this issue. We subsequently supported TCP's

development of a recently-launched online portal, Community Contentbank

(www.contentbank.org). This new web site is geared to community-based organizations

and provides information on neighborhood-specific health, education, housing and

employment resources to members of their communities.

Markle's election-related project, Web White & Blue, was run as an Opportunity

Fund effort in 2000. As part of this effort, 17 major news media and public information

web sites participated by sharing news information and featuring the Web White & Blue

site link. Visitors to the Web White & Blue site had access to rich political information

and interactive applications, and could participate in a rolling cyberdebate between

presidential candidates. Independent evaluation of this project shows that Web White &

Blue 2000 was considered a credible source of political information.

MOVING FORWARD

Markle is moving forward with a talented and dedicated team of people -- a staff the Foundation is lucky to have. They come from all manner of backgrounds and fields -- public interest professionals, academics, members of both the traditional and new media industries, former government officials and telecommunications experts. They are here because they recognize the importance of the issues that concern us. I want to thank them for being with us and for working so very hard.

And as we move forward, it will be even more important to collaborate with entities and individuals across all sectors. I know that people everywhere care about the issues I have discussed here. I hope more and more people will join us in our work -- as catalysts, as partners, as colleagues and as friends.

We have a great obligation to try to influence a rapidly approaching tomorrow. What we do now can have a huge impact on how the world's children live in the future. I urge us all to take on the important issues that we face as members of the coming global society.

Sincerely,

Zoë Baird