HANDS ON!!!
CREATING AN INDEPENDENT MEDIA CENTER IN YOUR COMMUNITY
The Independent Media Center is a network of collectively run media outlets for the creation of radical, objective, and passionate tellings of the truth. We work out of a love and inspiration for people who continue to work for a better world, despite corporate media's distortions and unwillingness to cover the efforts to free humanity.
        -manifesto of the Boston IMC, March 2000

"Let's make a network of communication among all our struggles and resistances. An intercontinental network of alternative communication against neoliberalism...(and) for humanity. This intercontinental network of alternative communication will search to weave the channels so that words
may travel all the roads that resist...(it) will be the medium by which distinct resistances communicate with one another. This intercontinental network of alternative communication is not an organizing structure, nor has a central head or decision maker, nor does it have a central command or hierarchies. We are the network, all of us who speak and listen."
                        -statement from the 1996 Encuentro in Chiapas

FOREWARD

In Seattle and Davos, DC and Prague, in Calgary and Windsor, media activists and environmentalists, labor rank and file and tree huggers coalesced into a formidable force that has had an impact not only on the international money lenders, but has caused major disruptions for agri-giant Monsanto and fashion outlets at the Mall like Gap and Nike. On the lam, Monsanto is changing its name and trying to spin off agriculture.

One of the notable aspects of the recent activism has been the powerful integration of the movement with the alternative media. Media activists have constructed their own public information spaces by integrating various media formats and technologies: camcorders, web radio, streaming video, microradio, digital photography, community cable access, DBS transponders and laptop journalism. This revolution is not only televised, but digitized and streamed. This is not an attempt to "get on TV" but a committment to create new forms of information sharing by using new spaces and technologies, and new ways of collaboration. This media movement has coalesced with the creation of Independent Media Centers (IMC's).

Behind the strategic blockades by the radical environmentalists and the lively and passionate video tapes and web sites produced by the camcorder commandos and data dancers, the IMCs represent an authentic revolution: a revolution in the forms of public action and its documentation. The most radical aspect of this new movement is its non-hierarchical nature. The decision making is by consensus. All participants are themselves empowered.

The global movement for justice and accountability that has blossomed in the struggle against the WTO and corporate globalization is also a reaction to the passive consumer culture that has empowered these corporations and institutions of oppression. But this struggle desperately needs to get beyond critique to propose alternative structures for life and work. The Independent Media Center emerged as a model not for new ways of media making but as a practical example of collective production, a necessary step in creating a democratic, just and equitable society.

The movement for an alternative media, with its flexible and open structure, its democratic rendering of the use-values of new technologies, and its continual involvement in interconnecting people in a transnational movement, provides an example of the evolution of a radical opposition, from the spontaneous appearance of individual creative practice, to the collective gathering of small co-operatives, to the continual enhancement of practical and technical skill, and to the growth of national and international collectives whose identities increasingly cluster around the negation of capital. This "web," both unbounded and differentiated, is unified by an increasingly clear anti-capitalist vision. Thus the same force that binds together the movement for democratic media also keeps it democratically communitarian. This movement increasingly refuses to compromise with the powers that be. One hears the word, "revolution," more frequently these days among those whose engagement in such struggles enhances their own power and radically separates them from the power of capital. At first this is a vague slogan to express radical discontent; however, the logic of things demands also that revolution be given a goal, a content, and an agent. In this way, a spontaneously developing collective evolves into a community of resistance.

by DeeDee Halleck and Joel Kovel, with additions by Shane Korytko

INTRODUCTION
The IMC Movement: Reclaiming Public Knowledge

The creators of Independent Media Centers are reconfiguring new technologies and reclaiming public knowledge in the service of democratic media, shaping a participatory model that promotes freedom on all fronts. News has never looked this way before. We are currently in the midst of a presidential election. As corporations pour money into the coffers of two dominant political parties, a democratic debate about economic justice, corporate subsidies, sweat shops, and environmental degradation is shunted to the margins. The 30-second spots created by Bush and Gore won't touch these issues. Mainstream media will not take up the slack. Indeed, there is now a wealth of documentation demonstrating that corporate media is unable and unwilling to criticize corporate malfeasance. So steeped have the media become in their business perspectives, they are incapable of speaking, or even reporting, a language critical of the corporate giants now in control of their news organizations. Journalists appear curiously unaware that those corporations do not always act in the interests of their viewers. They have forgotten what democracy looks like.

Rising from the ashes of cynical corporate culture, Independent Media Centers are creating new models for information. IMCs stand to witness and document evidence, testimony, and even fun, in the face of the excesses of global capital. If this doesn't sound like 'old journalism,' it isn't. But it is in the best traditions of freedom of expression, public participation, and the free flow of information in a democratic society. IMCs have blossomed in over twenty five cities around the world. Independent videographers, photographers and radio producers have provided images and sound that would never have aired on mainstream media. Discrepancies between official news and the reports of independent media makers are exposed in those cities. In Philadelphia, for example, local news stations were repeating law enforcement perspectives that "demonstrators were taunting police" and that the police were "taking it", even as their own footage showed non-aggressive, peaceful demonstrators sitting in the street chanting. In fact, police themselves had been caught by IMC videographers taunting, clubbing and shocking demonstrators. In live programming uplinked by the IMC, local news allegations of "protester violence" was juxtaposed with the confrontation and the effect was stunning. The IMC footage included images of police beating demonstrators with batons, and a violent attack on one protester from behind, as it happened on the streets of Philadelphia.

Corporate media portrayals were determined to deny and ignore the political content of the demonstrations. Protesters appeared out of nowhere with the sole intent of inconveniencing motorists and annoying law enforcement. Their passionate analysis, information and documentation of the structures of global injustice and exploitation were not available on the network affiliates news reports.

But the IMCs have not allowed that to happen. In Philadelphia, the IMC program **Crashing the Party,** broadcast live over satellite gave voice to a movement determined not to let corporate exploitation bulldoze the globe. Organizers spoke of a "beautiful and broad coalition of groups." One event presented an award to Citigroup. From redlining in poor communities to the destruction of the California Redwoods, from investing in the prison industry, to polluting industries around the world, Citigroup was deemed the world's most destructive bank. Balloons and a gospel choir provided the backdrop for expressing opposition to the excesses of global finance. The economy was labeled a "doomsday machine."

IMCs are shining a bright light on information the corporate media would like to keep buried. They give voice to the communities they serve by taking hold of the means of media production. Information is passionate and meaningful, not detached and cynical. It can't be part of the marketplace, because it has to enlighten, inspire and unite us. Can someone wearing a tee shirt proclaiming "Mean Corporations Suck "be a journalist? Given the present state of the media, and the mega-corporate mergers of the last 15 years, it should be a requirement. The famous journalist, I.F. Stone said, never have lunch with the powerful. Nobody at the IMC is in danger of being invited to dine at Citibank for a corporate power lunch. Indeed, strong organizational ties between independent media and community groups

redress what has become a total blackout of a radicalized public demanding structural change. The IMCs have changed the media landscape. They have marked out a new territory on the frontier of freedom.

by Robin Andersen, Professor, Fordham University

HANDS ON!!!
CREATING AN INDEPENDENT MEDIA CENTER IN YOUR COMMUNITY

The following text is intended to serve as a "blueprint" for the formation of new Independent Media Center (IMC) sites. It is based on the accumulated wisdom of a number of IMC staff, including those who helped to create the first IMC in Seattle, in the fall of 1999, and those who initiated subsequent sites nationally, including the D.C. World Bank protests, Philadelphia and Los Angeles supporting coverage of the Republican and Democratic National Conventions actions in the summer of 2000. Although most of the IMCs have been organized around specific events, it is the hope that we can develop a network of permanent, community-based centers to provide on-going information and activism.

Our goal in producing this document is to put into writing those things learned through our collective experience, so that others will not have to utilize precious time and resources by struggling through the same issues, but can focus more clearly on the tasks at hand. In highly charged and challenging times, precisely when an IMC is likely to come into being, it is easy to forget to put some of the basic operational pieces in place, thereby creating on-going problems for the site and those who are working there. Through the careful building of a simple, solid infrastructure--which includes agreements about the way everyone will be working together--your IMC will be able to fulfill its role as a true resource for the independent and alternative media community, and continue to maintain both its staff and the facility! We want you to have the ability to plan proactively for problems which are likely to arise, and perhaps avoid them altogether.

Please use this text to guide you in the creation of an IMC in your city; we hope you will find it useful. We want you to have the best possible chance for success in achieving your community's goals as well as our larger, shared goals. What you are doing will connect you with a growing network of IMCs around the world. Because each new IMC becomes the model for the next, we urge you to share what you learn during this process with us and with each other as we continue to lead the way to a new vision of what media can be, and do.

HISTORY
The IMC movement started with coverage of the N30 WTO protests in Seattle. Since then IMCs have been set up in Boston to cover Bio Devastation 2000, the A16 IMF World Bank protests in DC, and the May Day 2000 Global Day of Action, Resistance & Carnival Against Capitalism. There have been IMCs at the political conventions in Los Angeles and Philadelphia and at the World Economic Forum in Melbourne, Australia. The movement continues to expand across the world. This handbook is a guide for those who wish to set up IMCs in their own communities.

List of current IMC web sites:
Atlanta, US
Belgium, Europe
Boston, US

Buffalo, US
Calgary, Canada
Congo, Africa
France, Europe
Hamilton, Canada
Italy, Europe
Los Angeles, US
Madison, US
Melbourne, Australia
Minneapolis, US
New York City, USA
Ontario, Canada
Philadelphia, US
Portland, US
Prague, Europe
Rocky Mountain, US
San Francisco, US
Seattle, US
Sydney, Australia
United Kingdom, Europe
Vancouver, Canada
Washington DC, US
Windsor, Canada

SET-UP
Money Matters
Before starting an IMC, it is important to realize how little money it will have (especially in comparison to the competition), therefore plan to spend as little as possible. Arrange to have some things donated, and share equipment and/or facilities with other, like-minded, organizations. An IMC will have to pay for some (if not all) of its equipment and facilities however. For this reason, it will be imperative to have a transparent, accountable budget manager.

Fundraising is a specialized task so look for experienced people who can help with this. You should try to identify a few key individuals in your communities who have been supportive of independent media as well as progressive causes in general to see if they would be willing to fund a significant portion of the budget. It's also critical to have a clear and specific budget with a narrative describing the scope and focus of the project and its importance to the overall event being covered or the community being served. Previous "strategic funding documents" can be obtained from past IMC projects.

Budgeting
If the IMC is an event oriented affair, it is best to operate as far under budget as is possible during the event to be covered, as new expenses, such as costs to make and distribute a video, will arise after the event. If the IMC is to be an on-going community facility, you need a plan for sustaining it. In the U.S. having a tax-exempt 503(c)

organization to accept donations for, and make them available as grants to an IMC will make it easier to organize fundraising efforts, as this mean that donors can deduct contributions from their taxes. If the IMC is to be a permanant fixture, you will need to eventually set up your own tax exempt organization.

Money Person
This person will need to keep track of bank information, credits and debits, receipts for purchases by members that need to be reimbursed or have already been reimbursed, checks received and written, etc. The budget manager will need to set up bank accounts as soon as possible, as paperwork and waits for checks to clear new accounts can pose problems. All IMC expenses should be cleared through the budget manager, either individually or, preferably, through the team coordinators. While the budget manager should be individually empowered to authorize general requests, turning down budget requests should be done after getting consensus from the team coordinators.

Real Estate and Hardware
Determine early on what equipment and workspace will be needed and is affordable. Requirements will be determined by budget (supply) as well as the media making goals (demand). Previous experience indicates that having some dedicated (editing, sleeping, etc.) spaces away from the main space are helpful. Space in which to work is the most necessary and one of the most expensive resources for an IMC, and many considerations must go into choosing it. Remember to consider:
•distance from locations to be covered and communities to be represented
•access to public transportation
•the amount and layout of space available for all required duties
•the availability of separate space for quiet activities (interviews, audio   recording, etc.)
•the existing facilities (e.g., wiring for communications and power, storage,   furniture, bathrooms)
•costs

Once a space (or spaces) has been chosen, decisions must be made as to how to equip it. Getting phone and data lines to a space has been one of the most troublesome aspects. Use as much lead time as you can to get lines in place, and have backup plans in case the phone company doesn't come through in time. Work with an electrician to insure that the wiring is safe and able to handle the capacity. The biggest users of electricity are TV lights and color printers. In Philadelphia we blew out a key circuit when someone started printing while the TV lights were on.

WHO DECIDES?? COORDINATION AND CONSENSUS
Current IMCs are collectively organized projects that run on principles of consensus. This organizing structure is inextricably bound to the successes of the IMCs. This non hierarchical process encourages media makers, facilitators, community representatives and others with skills in organizational development to contribute his or her best work, and to participate as much as s/he desires.

Meetings
One model that has worked well when an IMC is operating at full capacity is having two meetings a day:
•one general meeting each evening and
•one "spokes council" meeting each morning.

Each general meeting has been a consensus-based meeting with multiple facilitators for the sake of parity (gender, ethnic background, etc.). Each spokes council meeting has included team coordinators (video, radio, photo, etc) and/or empowered team representatives. Both meetings have had decision-making power. At the general meetings, consensus has been reached among everyone present, while at the spokes council meetings only the empowered reps participated in the consensus (though everyone else in the room has taken part in the discussion). At general meetings coordinators have introduced themselves so their team members would know to whom they should go if they had concerns. The coordinators brought those concerns to the spokes council meetings. This decision-making process has worked quite well, but it requires that both spokes council and general meetings be open to all.

In Seattle, a lot of work was required, including during the week of the WTO, before the spokes council was formalized. A core group of "coordinators" consisted of people who had the time, inclination and capacity to take a central role. They were not appointed in any official way but simply recognized each other as things unfolded. Since this process was not legitimized by the larger group, it generated hard feelings, though people generally supported the core group playing the roles they played.

In addition to these general meetings, work groups, such as video and audio, should have regularly scheduled meetings. Have a person responsible for taking notes to fill in those who can't make it.

Balance
There is a tricky trade-off to negotiate: on one hand, you want to let people with the ability to take action do so without too much hassle; on the other hand, you want checks and balances to make sure people's voices are heard and to keep decision-making power from centralizing beyond what is functionally necessary.

LISTSERVS
Set up communication systems as early as possible. Having a general listserv is essential, with separate lists for different working groups. You may also want an editorial list for making decisions about prioritizing material on the website. More information about setting up listservs is available in the Web section below.

STRATEGIC RELATIONSHIPS
Resource Sharing
Establishing an IMC is impossible and potentially not even desirable without collaboration with many individuals and groups in your community. There are many resources you can tap into. Make a list early on of everything you think you will need, including hardware, software, phone lists, supplies, etc. You need to

identify what organizations in the local community and beyond may have an interest in providing these resources for free or at a significantly discounted rate. The IMCs have been extremely fortunate to have developed relationships with a wide range of organizations who are supportive of the independent media movement, the free flow of information, and the many progressive issues and causes that the IMC's cover. Many of these organizations also want to be more involved with local activist groups and these projects give them an incredible opportunity to support a large number of people in a short period of time.

Keep your lines of communication open to the activist groups who are participating in the movement. Having someone specifically delegated to be a liaison to the activist community can be helpful.

PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS
SAFETY OF REPORTERS
This is a primary consideration once an IMC is up and running. Medical and legal information should be made available to all reporters who are going out into the field.
•Contact Numbers
Each reporter should have a copy of important IMC phone numbers, as well as a legal support number. Printed stickers with the important phone numbers work well, as people can put them on their clothes or equipment. It may be a good idea for reporters to write legal support and other important numbers on their arms in indelible ink.
•Check Out/In
Before reporters go into the field, it is advisable that they check in with the assignments/dispatch team so the dispatchers know, in general terms, where the reporters will be.
•First Aid
Have first aid equipment available in the IMC and perhaps some gas masks, vinegar, and saline solution to enable reporters to handle pepper spray or tear gas.

SECURITY
Physical security should be a major priority for future IMCs. In the past security has primarily consisted of untrained volunteers monitoring entrances, as well as front desk personnel checking passes and registering new members. If possible, a trained security coordinator should be on hand to train and manage personnel.

REGISTRATION
Any registration system should be as user-friendly and comprehensive as is possible. The process can begin well ahead of time if reporters are able to register online through a database asking for contact information and a list of equipment they are going to bring. The database may even serve to organize which reporter/team will be covering which story. It will be tremendously helpful if everyone who signs up receives a printed IMC press pass (with or without photo) that has a number on the back that corresponds to his/her number in the database.

Consider charging a $10 fee for the IMC pass to help defray the costs of making the passes. There are a lot of resources that media activists will be accessing at the space and this is a nominal amount and distributes the challenging responsibility of raising money to everyone in the project. Even those who have put in a lot of work should be required to pay the $10 (if you start creating exemptions from paying the fee, nobody would have to pay).

"Official" Press Passes

IMC passes have not been effective in getting reporters across police lines, so it may be advisable to devise a system to make photo passes for people who are going to cover in the streets as police may be more inclined to consider people with photo badges "official press." Photo IDs are the best kind and should be available behind the registration desk so reporters can get one as soon as they register. But the procedure for making them is complicated, especially in the heat of events when there can be a huge backlog of persons waiting to get credentialed. One suggestion is to have a database system for registering individuals on-site, making two kinds of passes available: one non-photo access pass, which most people would get so they could have access to the IMC space, and a photo pass for those who plan to do street coverage. Dedicating both a computer loaded with a blank pass template and a digital camera for pass-making, as well as familiarizing front-desk personnel with the procedure for printing passes, will facilitate this process.

WELCOME PACKET

As an IMC begins to form, either around an even or as a community-based center, the number of new faces in meetings, etc. will increase dramatically, and the same questions will have to be answered again and again unless a welcome packet is available from the first day people show up. Think of such a document as an IMC FAQ. It can include a wide range of information such as (but not limited to):
•A general intro to the IMC, its principles, its decision-making structure, etc.
•Information about each space, including sleeping spaces.
•Phone number of IMC, cell phone numbers of coordinators, legal team   phone number, medical phone numbers.
•If applicable, directions around the city from the IMC to the protest zone, from   the IMC to the sleeping spaces, from the IMC to the convergence space,   etc.
•Public transport and driving directions.
•Recommendations for cheap/veggie/24 hour food.
•Legal information: what to do if you're arrested, how to ask questions of   protesters without getting them in legal trouble.
•Medical information: what to do in case of tear gas, pepper spray, and other   hazards.
•A calendar of upcoming, relevant events.
•Background information about the overarching issues surrounding a particular   event or campaign.
•Specific information for each media team (i.e., audio, video, photo, and point):   each team's licensing/copyright agreement, each team's necessary info   (such as where to go for photo developing for the photo team), each team's particular editorial/publishing process, etc.

VOLUNTEERS

IMCs have found integrating new volunteers into the mix fairly difficult. People who want to be part of a particular media team were able to plug in fairly quickly. It has been more difficult to integrate people who want to volunteer, but are not journalists. As there are many places to volunteer--security, registration, couriers, etc., it may help to have a coordinator regularly available at the registration desk to introduce people to the IMC and figure out how to fit them into the system.

TRAINING

For those who want to gain media skills, schedule training sessions and try to pair more experienced people with those who want to learn for specific assignments and tasks. In previous IMC endeavors, there has been a good deal of informal training, but no formal training programs. If resources are available, it may be helpful to have a training coordinator who will organize on-going trainings before and during the event to assure that people are familiar with the available equipment and techniques. Because the question of who does and doesn't participate in the IMC remains urgent, consider setting up training workshops for under-represented populations. Whispered Media from San Francisco and Paper Tiger in New York have held workshops with inner-city youth who were able to participate in the Philadelphia and Los Angeles IMCs.

Media skills aren't the only things needed in an IMC. If there is time and available leaders, sessions dedicated to learning how to facilitate meetings, how to build consensus and how to combat oppression are useful. You may be able to take advantage of such trainings offered in the city by other organizations.

SUPPLIES
Office

An IMC will spend a lot of money on office supplies. Make a list of specific things you need and send this out to local and out-of-town activist lists requesting donations. We recommend you have one person in charge of office supplies, as this will prevent over- or under-purchasing items. One problem in the past has been the lack of key supplies at in opportune times. It is important, for example, that sufficient printer and fax cartridges and toner for copiers be on hand.

General

Don't forget to stock up on toilet paper. Several of the IMC's were in places unaccustomed to the amount of people who come by. Septic systems are vulnerable. Make sure there is a toilet plunger ready.

Production

If you can buy batteries, tape and film in bulk ahead of time, keep a supply for purchase by IMC members. It will save their time in hunting the stuff down and also save them money.

COURIERS

It will be necessary to move film, tapes, data, reporters, etc. quickly for a number of reasons. The best solution is a combination of bike courier teams and IMC volunteers with cars to shuttle material and personnel back and forth between the field and the IMC. The suggestion is to have a courier team coordinator who will work with the dispatch/assignments team to be in constant communication with reporters. It will also be helpful if the couriers are in some way easily recognizable, at least to IMC reporters, while they are in the field.

FOOD

For the most part people will arrange their own food but it can really boost morale to bring in a large supply of food for everyone to share. Many organizations will donate food to a worthy cause - all you have to do is ask. Try local restaurants and food coops. Be creative. Failing that, there may be times when someone goes out to buy food for everyone. We suggest you collect donations before going out to purchase the food, or someone may be stuck with a food bill, despite asking for donations afterward.

ASSIGNMENTS/DISPATCH

This is one area in which most if not all IMCs have had difficulty. In the past, some media teams have connected with direct action affinity groups. Other attempts have been made to break reporters into issue-based teams. Clearly, IMCs in the future will need to develop an effective system for assigning coverage teams to areas or issues.

Two Way Radio

One suggestion is to use two-way radio dispatch, which has been used in the past with mixed results. Again, it is imperative to match resources with one another. In DC, for example, the rented equipment did not have the power to reach from the remote IMC to the protest location. When the radio communication system broke down, the IMC lost a substantial portion of its ability to dispatch media teams. The dispatch system was therefore incredibly confusing at first. In the spirit of collective initiative, those who volunteered to work on the dispatch system developed the mess into a viable system within a day.

Maps

The dispatch team copied large maps of the city so they could track the protesters. Once we were able to get a telephone line near the dispatch area we were able to get telephone calls from the field and mark the protesters' movements on the big maps with post-it notes. The recommendation is, of course, to assure a working walkie - talkie or cell phone communication system is in place before it is needed.

PRESS CONFERENCES

A press conference can be a powerful tool if the resources are available, but may be a hindrance if resources are squeezed and/or the space mismanaged. IMCs have held live-to-satellite press conferences attended by members of the mainstream media in both Washington, Philadelphia and L.A. On the afternoon of A16 in Washington, DC, during the IMF/World Bank meetings, the news conference had positive and negative

consequences. In addition to being an outlet for news about the weekend's events, a news conference promotes the IMC itself through video clips, allows IMC members to speak during the introduction, and provides space for a self-promotional backdrop on the wall behind the speakers. On the other hand, clearing out an IMC during peak production time can be difficult and in a sense counterproductive, allowing the mainstream media to have a head start when putting out their coverage.

DEALING WITH THE MAINSTREAM MEDIA
Coordination
An IMC is a story in and of itself, at least according to the mainstream media; any IMC will no doubt have mainstream media crawling all over it trying to spin the center into its total coverage. In the past, the mainstream media have been most interested in visiting an IMC before the event it was set up to cover. An Outreach Coordinator should be assigned as early as possible to deal with any issues that arise. Some suggestions:
•Try to get mainstream media to schedule times to come to the IMC so it is possible to let everyone know they were coming. If possible, clear a   scheduled mainstream media visit through a general meeting.
•All mainstream media doing articles on the IMC should register as mainstream
        media--it is even possible to give them special passes to wear while they   are in the IMC.
•Someone from the outreach team can accompany mainstream media at all times
        when they are in the IMC.
•Everyone, not just mainstream media, should ask permission of anyone who is
        going to be in the range of their cameras before taking a photo or   shooting video.

Main Stream Media Policy Issues
Other issues relating to the mainstream media are more complicated. Should the IMC try to feed coverage to the mainstream? Is getting some IMC coverage into the mainstream media a success? What happens if the mainstream media want to buy some coverage? How much from such a sale should go to the IMC? These are questions for each IMC to ask and answer on its own. The media teams should all discuss that though, before the actions begin. For example, the Seattle IMC did not sell media itself, but had media makers give back 50% of what they made in selling coverage. In DC each media team was allowed make its own policy--or at least each was allowed to; some did not.

PRIORITIZING RESOURCES
Problems come up around the use of limited, shared resources. The issue of press conference in DC, above, is an example. In Philadelphia, the space problem was addressed by having the press conference in a separate building, linked by cables to the IMC. This caused less disruption for the on-going IMC work, but split some of the energy and equipment by having to juggle between both spaces. In Los Angeles, the press conferences were help on a different floor of the IMC building. This seemed like a good solution.

We suggest a brainstorming session in a meeting before the event to foresee as many of these conflicts as possible and to decide how you will handle them in the heat of the moment when they come up and make decisions about how to resolve them effectively. These issues can be handled much more easily if people have hashed out at least some of the aspects ahead of time. A well-thought-out statement of goals and priorities for the organization can be indispensable in such cases.

BACK UP
It is important to know what to do should the IMC be closed. Back-up computer and internet access is essential. Have an alternative video editing space ready and know where a scanner and internet access for photos can be moved to in an emergency. Keep your computer disks, CDs and video tapes organized and together in easy-to-access locations so they can be removed if there is a raid. If loaned equipment is logged in with serial and model numbers and listed in a data base that can be quickly removed, it will be easier to retrieve any seized equipment.

LEGAL DOCUMENTATION
The archive which is produced by the IMCs is a valuable source for the legal teams. To insure maximum use of this material, both for legal and publishing purposes, please date and time your records with a clear indication of the location/s of the actions. If you upload a photo or video to the web, make sure you post an accurate date and time at which the photo was made along with location information.

Obtain all local (and national) news spots of relevant events--in SP video if possible. The mainstream camera people sometime have better access than we do, and the cops feel more comfortable with them, so they sometimes say things that are more up front. For example, local news in D.C. caught some pretty ridiculous things that Chief Ramsey said. They also have a different angle on some of the same incidents and this can be crucial for legal.

Documenting the chain of commands can be invaluable. For example in DC at the seige of the convergence space, local detectives were taped talking with plain clothes commander who were either Secret Service or FBI. Law enforcement is pushing the boundaries of legal jurisdiction, so whatever we can document can be important in this regard.

Consider making a select reel of important legal evidence. Use of excessive force and other improper conduct by police should be carefully documented. If officers are covering their badges, get a close up! If you think someone is undercover, make a record of what they do.

OPERATIONS
PRINT GROUP
The print group has been responsible in the past for the production of a daily newspaper during the major events, as well as contributing stories to the websites and newswires. It is a good idea to recruit a coordinator for this group who has some

experience producing a publication on a regular timetable, such as someone who has worked for a school paper. It is important that members of this group be familiar with pagination software, such as PageMaker. It is also vital that at least some members of the group be intimately familiar with journalistic writing antedating, and the concepts of good layout and style sheet use. This group will require what may seem to be a disproportionately large budget, as printing costs are high. Keep in mind, however, that the media they make will be the first-used source of information for the people most directly involved by the events the IMC is covering. Almost everyone can read a newspaper article, but many activists and neighborhood residents will not have access to the internet or satellite TV.

External Services
In the weeks immediately leading up to the main events to be covered, in addition to recruiting the core of a capable team, clarify the equipment and services that will be needed. Printing services should be shopped for first. It is important to find a printer who is capable of working with the print group's deadlines, both for putting the paper to bed, and beginning distribution. In keeping with the spirit of the IMC and the groups we provide coverage for, it is a good idea to find a local publisher that can offer recycled paper, environmentally-friendly inks, and runs a union shop.

Computer Needs
In addition to printing facilities, some computer equipment in the IMC space must be dedicated to the print group's needs. At the bare minimum, this should include one machine for layout, and several for word processing. As is always the case, more would be better, but a newspaper can at least function with this level of equipment. The layout computer should be as up-to-date as possible, and be loaded with advanced layout and photo-editing software. It should also have a dedicated high-quality printer and scanner, and a monitor large enough for the pagination work to be seen easily. The word processing computers can be much more outdated, so long as they are capable of running software which can create and edit text files in a usable file format.

Distribution
When the time comes to begin production, many decisions will need to be made, not the least of which are those pertaining to scheduling and distribution. If the group desires to have newspapers ready each morning, for example, then the meetings should be scheduled as follows: one just after distribution to assign stories for the next day, and one in the evening to decide what stories will run and how the layout will be designed. The rest of the evening will be needed for editing and pagination, and the finished product must be delivered to the printer on time. Transportation becomes crucial at this point. Plans must be made for quickly getting the finished layout to the printer. It may be possible to do this electronically, depending on the capabilities of the chosen printer, but transportation for the finished product is still essential. Thousand of issues produced weigh a lot and take up a lot of space. Means must be available to get the entire press run to the IMC, and from there smaller numbers to each of the predetermined distribution points. These should include convergence spaces and local businesses such as coffee houses, restaurants, and small shops in areas where interested parties are likely to congregate. Speak with proprietors ahead of

time and obtain permission for the distribution. Finally, keep in mind that many areas have publications it may be profitable to partner with, such as the "Free Press" in Los Angeles, which worked closely with the IMC to produce the daily print coverage of the protests surrounding the Democratic National Convention in August 2000.

VIDEO GROUP

Video is difficult. The equipment is expensive, especially for editing. Encoding is time consuming. Many people do not have the equipment or internet connection to make video over the internet very useful. Despite all that, people connected with the IMCs seem quite drawn to this medium. To help things go well, spend some time thinking through the whole process and identifying potential bottlenecks and how you will handle them. Editing is an obvious one --you probably won't be able to afford lots of high-quality editing equipment, but lots of people will be out there shooting video and bringing it in. One suggestion is to push as much of the coordination and archiving work onto the videographers as possible - have them provide detailed information about each tape as they turn it in (e.g., videographer name, date and time, location, subject and action, approximate duration of each section, notes on points of interest).

Set people's expectations realistically about what you need from them in order for their tapes to be used and what you will do with their tapes. In the past, this group has done everything from editing video to be posted on the website, producing live daily satellite TV broadcasts, and post-production work on documentary videos such as **Showdown in Seattle** and **Breaking the Bank**. Each of these products requires different resources. For this reason, early organization of this group is vital, with individuals who have experience and understanding of the work to be done.

Editing

In general, the available equipment must facilitate videographers' being able to load their footage into editing stations from which it can be edited and posted to the website, or compiled with other footage for projects in other formats. It is important that the editing computers be compatible with any format a cameraperson is likely to use, and that they have sufficient resources to run the complex software required to digitally process video images. If compiled footage will be needed in a standard format (VHS, for example) it is important that the editing stations also be capable of making the necessary transfers. Transferring large video clips, to post them on the website, for example, requires a large amount of bandwidth, and this should also be taken into account when planning the types of projects to be undertaken, and equipment needs.

Coordination

The video group will need to work closely with other parts of the IMC if it is to produce comprehensive, timely coverage. Close connections to dispatch will be needed to ensure that breaking news is not missed. It is also important to work with the existing courier system so that footage from the field quickly reaches the editors, and thereby the audience. In addition, it may be helpful to work with other organizations. In the past, media groups such as Free Speech TV and Paper Tiger TV have worked closely with IMC video to produce outstanding coverage of events from Seattle to Philadelphia.

Intake

It is important to designate an intake team. This is important both for video edits but also for legal evidence. When tapes come in from the field, producers should log their tapes and dub off selects. Firewire miniDV to miniDV makes the best copies. Ideally, get the producer on the dub-off tape, stating their name, the location, the date and the events they documented. This tape is good as legal evidence and also for permission, though it should not substitute for permission slips. Someone or a team should be designated to be responsible for the dubbed select tapes after the events. This is a big job, especially if future legal actions will need footage. Write out clearly and with correct spelling any lower thirds information that should be included. It's a good idea to ask your subjects how they would prefer to be identified.

Permits and Uplink Site

Any type of video production that impinges on sidewalks or streets can require local premits. This can include setting up a tripod, using lights or stringing cable. Be sure to check with local authorities as to what permits are required if you intend to have adjacent locations for live feeds, or plan to light a scene at night. For satellite uplinks, be sure to check the line of sight to the satellite. In Philadelphia we made a big mistake and had to change satellites because of a high rise building blocking our view of the leased transponder. This was a costly mistake--$12,000!

AUDIO GROUP

In the past, audio groups have been responsible for producing audio clips for both IMC websites and radio broadcasts. Many of the same suggestions made above in relation to video groups apply here. It must first be determined what the goals of the audio group are. At a minimum, equipment and space should be available for both editing recordings made in the field and posting them to the website, and recording interviews, etc. in the IMC itself. More ambitiously, it is possible to set up a micropower FM radiostation and broadcast live reports from the IMC as well as from reporters calling in from the scenes of news events. For legal purposes, it is best to house any transmission equipment in external locations, as transmitting from the IMC puts everyone in jeopardy. However, good audio signals can be downloaded from the web, and the IMC station can stream on the web for pick-up by micro stations everywhere.

Editing

For audio editing, the equipment should include one or more dedicated computers with editing/mixing software and enough upstream bandwidth to facilitate easy uploading to the website, as well as any cables and connectors (RCA, quarter inch stereo, adapters, etc.) likely to be needed to digitize recordings in various formats. High quality microphones, headphones, and a quiet dedicated space will be needed for in-house production. Many community radio stations have down loaded audio feeds from the website, so maintain high standards for audio quality. There are specific requirements for official FM broadcasts and an engineer from a local community radio station can be consulted.

Local Resources
As with other groups, and the IMC in general, cooperation with other, like-minded groups can be invaluable to IMC journalists concentrating on audio. Some possible ideas include partnering with local public radio stations or independent professional recording facilities.

PHOTO GROUP
The photo group should receive special attention, as still photos are required to produce eye-catching results for both print publications and the website. Keep in mind that there are vastly different needs for photographers working in film and digital formats. The equipment and procedures for digital photographers will likely already exist in the specific group which will be using the photos, i.e. the web group or the print group. In these cases, the primary job of the photo group will be to facilitate the collection and exchange of the material. The case of film photography, is more difficult. In addition to the scarcity of developing equipment and space, a great deal of time will be required for setting up the space and processing film. For these reasons, it is likely that the most efficient arrangement will be to have the film processed outside the center. This requires careful planning and execution of the system of 'couriers' used to transport film from the field to a processor and prints from there to the IMC. A coordinated effort between the photo group, dispatch, and other groups (such as video) that utilize runners should produce a working system.

It's important to appoint a coordinator who can insure that photos get properly scanned. The best choise would be a local person who knows local labs and who can assist in archiving the photos when it is over.

WEB/TECH GROUP
The IMC web site is the core mechanism for the quick distribution of news. Its most important feature is a "newswire" that allows anyone with access to the Web to post articles containing text, photos, audio, and video. Think of an IMC site as having three parts: the home page, the newswire, and the auxiliary pages. The newswire pages are automatically updated as new articles are submitted to the collection. The newswire currently displays articles in reverse chronological order (newest articles on top). The home page typically has both manually and automatically updated sections. Each IMC edits its home page to give its site a distinctive look, though many sites have copied others and the sites have many things in common. Each site also updates its home page frequently to keep the hottest, most recent news in the most visible area. A new version of Active may include a dynamic file where the current static section (middle) of the home page is now, also enabling the newswire to be more dynamic so that the highest moderated content will be on linked auxiliary pages. The auxiliary pages are currently mainly static (manually edited), though these may vary with different IMCs. Some of these need to be edited for a new IMC (e.g., contact information).

Software
The site is all built on open-source software. This means that anyone may, for free, use the software, modify it, and pass it on to others. There are no licensing issues.

The site runs on the Linux operating system and uses the mySQL database and the PHP server-side scripting language. (Note that the site used to use a different database - PostgreSQL - and is just now, mid-September of 2000, in the process of migrating to mySQL.) All these tools are available for free. The set of scripts that runs the site is called the Active software (also free, of course).

To set up a new IMC, you have three choices for your web site. Regardless of which way you go, you should read "So you want to be an IMC?" (http://process.indymedia.org/want_imc.php3).

The easiest approach is just to ask IMC tech group to set up a new site for you on the existing IMC servers. The possible issues are disk space (is there room for another set of articles?) and bandwidth (can we serve another site and still have good response time?). The tech group will discuss any issues with you after you make your request. The method of making your request is in transition. The old (and still current?) method is to send an email to the IMC tech group (imc-tech@indymedia.org). The new way is to fill out a form at http://turtle.indymedia.org/sandbox/mike/newimc.html (this URL will probably change soon) and wait for the person who handles new city requests to get back to you.

Servers
Another option is to get your own server and load Linux, the tools, and the Active software on it. You'll want a fast internet connection and you'll need a permanent IP address. The server need not be a powerhouse, though lots of memory (RAM) is a good thing. There are advantages to having your own server. One is that it will help your IMC develop its in-house technical resources (techies learn more and are more interested when they have their own hardware to play with). In addition, if your IMC is distant from the existing IMC servers, your local audience will get better response times if you have your own server. To get started with this option, check out the Active web site (http://active.org.au/sydney/about/#source).

A long-term goal of the global tech team is to get as many of our satellite IMCs who have their own servers and net connections to agree to share some space and network connection with the global group so that we can distribute and decentralize our load across many machines, on many networks, in many countries. This would enhance our redundancy (if one machine goes down, the others can take up the slack without any downtime seen), as well as our overall resources. It also makes us less centralized in case of problems in a particular area. When IMCs contact us indicating that they want to go this route they are asked if they can be a part of thisnew scheme.

The third option is to get your own server and use some other software (or develop your own). If you are interested in this, you'll want to look at Slashdot (http://www.slashdot.com/). Their web site lets readers rate articles, and ratings affect where articles appear in the newswire. This is a feature that should be in

the Active software soon, but if you want it now, Slashdot has it. Their code (named "Slash") is available for free -- see http://slashcode.com/. The Philadelphia IMC used some of the Slashcode to develop http://www.phillyimc.org.

Bandwidth
Regardless of which software you use and where your server is, you may want to have help for the big, bandwidth-hungry files (video and audio). Loudeye (http://www.loudeye.com) has generously donated server space and bandwidth for our audio and video files. This means we can get away with smaller disk drives and slower internet connections on the IMC servers.

Content
If you have the IMC techies set up a web site for you, there is not much you will have to do in this department. You will have to edit your home page and a couple of other pages. Make sure that the different groups have someone delegated to do and encourage web posting. Also, you will have to give some help to people who want to submit articles. While it is really very easy, it's not obvious to everyone, and encoding audio and video is not simple. Of course, the easiest submissions are just text, but the photos, audio and video make the site rich and lively.

For all web issues and questions, your main source of support is the tech mail list (imc-tech@indymedia.org). People on this list are quite responsive and can give you the latest information.

IT'S UP TO YOU
Any "blueprint" for setting up a new IMC must of course evolve, just as the indymedia network and already existing IMCs will continue to evolve in response to new political challenges and the innovations of social movements and their efforts towards self-representation. Please, therefore, regard this document as an ongoing work-in-progress. This will be posted on the website and updated there. Check www.indymedia.org/blueprint.html for the latest version. Let's continue to democratize and build upon the great successes we have had in redefining popular media.

This version of the IMC handbook was initially written by Joshua C. Robinson with additions and editing by Vik Bahl, Janet Berkow, DeeDee Halleck, Sheri Herndon, Shane Korytko, Dan Merkle, Devin Theriot-Orr, Bruce Welti. Thanks to all the IMC producers and list servers who have contributed their ideas and comments. It was prepared as a catalogue for use with the Hands On: Youth, Media and Activism Exhibit at the Berkeley Art Museum, August 20-October 15, 2000, organized by DeeDee Halleck, Jennifer Whitburn, Linda Iannacone, Jay. Curator: Kathy Geritz

The exhibit included a wall of photographs from the indymedia.org website. The photo wall will be continue to add photos as new IMCs come on line and will travel and be reproduced in various sites around the world. The photowall is made up entirely of photographs from the website, posted by the many photographers who have contributed to the IMCs.

Send comments and suggestions for subsequent editions and/or information about the traveling photo exhibit contact DeeDee Halleck dhalleck@weber.ucsd.edu.