# NPAC Technology Task Force Report
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## The Challenge

Emerging technologies are never evenly distributed, and it can take decades for technological efficiencies to gain common usage. In times of economic and social distress, the national performing arts community cannot afford to idly rely on aging systems of audience and professional development. Yet the global economy has never before seen such a proliferation of competing technological models, and it is incredibly difficult to find accurate, timely, affordable, and accessible information on technology in the performing arts sector. While it is possible to enumerate specific technologies or technological sets that performing arts organizations could or should pay attention to, the underlying issue is a lack of centralized information.

The absence of a platform and architecture to facilitate the national performing arts community's communication with and within itself slows the distribution of technological possibilities. Our communities do not have the luxury of a slow response to trying times, yet lack a means to collectively understand new methods to build audiences, foster institutional and organizational collaboration, and most urgently, share strategies for survival.

This committee suggests the creation of a centralized, authoritative, online resource to enable organizations across the country to make informed, strategic, and timely decisions in a volatile technological and economic environment. We envision a national performing arts community that can nimbly adjust to changes in technological usage, rapidly iterate and modulate technological methodologies, and share success and failures so that the national community may benefit.

## The Resource

This committee envisions an online, freely-available resource that collects information on technology in the performing arts, centralizes and organizes that knowledge, and pushes it back out to the online community at large. This resource would ideally serve to engender a national and multilateral dialogue, where topics and content can emerge organically from users, alongside curated content provided by experts in the field. Information, definitions, case studies and ancillary content geared for beginning-, intermediate-, and advanced-users would be organized by topic, and easily searched by terms and metadata to facilitate cross-disciplinary learning. Content could vary widely, and include user-generated comments, wiki-style community compositions on particular subjects, content "certified" by a panel of editorial advisers, and commissioned, authoritative knowledge on particular subjects. This platform could also serve as an index of arts and technology, linking to and re-syndicating content from around the internet. Further, it could function as a shared distance learning and professional development infrastructure, delivering specialized content across the performing arts community, and working to unify the fractured advocacy / arts services sector.

# The Planning

While detailed planning and staging of this platform will fall to a later iteration of this task force, the creation of this resource will likely follow along these lines:

**Phase 1- The Common Language:** Create a second-generation NPAC technology task force with representatives from across the performing arts, including the NPAC consortia. This group would chart the syntax of a performing arts collaborative, and specifically enumerate the technological terms, content, and categories broadly applicable for use in this online resource. This group would also make specific recommendations regarding the individuals to manage later phases of this project's development.

**Phase 2- Architecture and Design**: A team of representatives from the performing arts sector, user interface designers, web programmers and media consultants, working with the project-management assistance of a third party, would create detailed timelines, design schematics, functionality, navigation, and possible monetization paths for the resource.

**Phase 3- Partnerships:** Broker agreements with existing producers of content relating to the performing arts and technology regarding the ongoing re-syndication of externally created materials. These partners could potentially include NPAC consortia members, bloggers, consultants, and other interested persons.

**Phase 4- Funding:** Using the resources generated from Phases 1-3, a team would procure seed funding to create, populate, and manage the online resource.

**Phase 5- Defining the Terms:** With funding procured, a team of managers, technologists, practitioners, and artists from across the performing arts will use a wiki-style application to collaboratively define and outline the terms from Phase 1 with beginner-, intermediate-, and advanced-user levels. At this time, select NPAC constituents could be strategically brought onto the platform to contribute additional content, and initiate larger-scale community involvement and feedback into the process.

**Phase 6- The Platform:** With initial content procured and a regular user group, the resource would be built online and content migrated from the wiki to its final (still editable) location. The oversight for the project and ongoing content management will be at this time centralized, and beta testing for the resource will begin.

**Phase 7- Launch:** After extensive community feedback, testing, and planning for long-term development the resource will publicly launch.