



National Alliance for Media Arts and Culture

STRATEGIC PLAN 2004 - 2005

NAMAC is a national association of organizations and individuals committed to furthering diversity and participation in all forms of the media arts, including film, video, audio and digital production. NAMAC supports and strengthens leadership initiatives in the areas of advocacy, cultural policy, distribution, education, exhibition, preservation and production in order to increase public awareness and appreciation of the independent media arts.

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INTRODUCTION TO NAMAC

The National Alliance for Media Arts and Culture was founded in 1980 out of a shared impulse of the then young but burgeoning media arts field. It was created by an eclectic group of media arts organizations from different regions who realized that together they represented a stronger social and cultural force than alone. Their idea was as bold as it was simple: to create a national organization that would provide services to support the endeavors of its individual institutional members and advocate for the field as a whole.

NAMAC is an organization of remarkably diverse institutions and individuals unified in their dedication to encouraging the media arts – film, video, audio, intermedia and multimedia – and to promoting the cultural contributions of media artists. Central to our mission is a belief that in today's globally interconnected telecommunications culture, the individual media artist plays a critical role. For it is in the artist who has chosen to work outside the media industry and the commercial marketplace that we are most likely to find the personal and community visions that reflect the essential, if sometimes contradictory, "truths" of our times.

NAMAC's 350+ member organizations form a profile of today's media and digital arts fields. From storefront art spaces to major museums, our membership reflects America's ethnic and geographic diversity. The roster includes – but is not limited to – media arts and community technology centers, artist cooperatives, university-based programs, exhibitors and distributors, film archives, youth media educators, multimedia developers and community access TV stations. Many of our organizational members serve culturally specific, youth, senior and disabled communities. Although the public may not be aware of it, much of the independently-produced media they see on public television, in schools, festivals, churches or other community gathering places were supported by NAMAC's member organizations, whose combined membership numbers over 400,000 media artists, independent producers and other media professionals.

STAFF

Helen De Michiel, Co-Director
Jack Walsh, Co-Director
Daniel Schott, Program Director
Amanda Ault, Program and Membership Associate

NATIONAL ALLIANCE FOR MEDIA ARTS AND CULTURE

STRATEGIC PLAN for 2004- 2005

NAMAC's unique role in the media arts field is to develop and strengthen the media arts infrastructure while articulating its necessity in our culture. To this end, we are continually engaged in dynamic planning: our task is to take the long view, scanning an exceptionally fluid environment for trends and opportunities that will play a role in our field's future.

Our ongoing strategic planning process allows us to scout "boundary ideas," or immanent changes on the horizon. We seek to create and reinforce a national public media community through programs that connect our members in person and online, while facilitating dialogue and disseminating ideas throughout the field and to the public at large.

KEY AREAS OF SERVICE

As a result of a consistent and ongoing planning process that began in 1998, we now conceptualize our programs around four interrelated areas of service:

- **Research and Planning**
To conduct policy-related studies and other research projects that explore and analyze the role of media arts in a changing telecommunications world.
- **Leadership**
To help our members navigate a changing environment by sharing knowledge and information developed specifically to prepare them for leadership roles in their own organizations, towards partnering in alliances locally and regionally, and influencing the field nationally.
- **Interaction**
To foster human interaction in a young and technologically pioneering arts field whose collective survival depends upon sharing knowledge, exchanging ideas and passing on our histories and legacies as a field while launching into an increasingly digitally-based communications era.
- **Technology**
To use developing communication technologies to solidify and enhance our service areas and promote cross-disciplinary relationships; and to assist our member organizations in planning for technological change.

PROGRAMS

Our programs include:

- *Publications.* Organizational case studies, white paper reports, the MAIN print newsletter and the bi-weekly email BULLETIN.
- *The Knowledge Network for the Media Arts.* Through our web site (www.namac.org) visitors can access our online directory of over 300 media arts organizations and services nationwide. The site also holds a deep and growing repository of data and articles that focus on issues specific to the field, as well as a consultant database and other useful tools for organizational management.
- *The Peer Leadership Initiative.* A core NAMAC program that includes our annual Leadership Institutes – one for emerging leaders and executive directors alike; topic-based online salons; management and project-based technical assistance for organizations; and a consultants network developed for the needs of the media arts field.
- *The National Conference.* A biennial convention of public media professionals which focuses on sharing new information, networking across generations, identifying issues of common concern and planning for the future.
- *Regional Workshops.* With regional and local partners, we host four regional workshops per year on organizational topics of interest to members in that area, as well as convening regional NAMAC focus groups to describe and interpret issues that members are working on.

NAMAC'S STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

Every 18 months, NAMAC's board and staff conduct a strategic planning process within the framework of a day-long retreat. Guided by our facilitator, we review the previous plan and its implementation, identify current organizational strengths and weaknesses, examine key factors in the external environment and update NAMAC's strategic directions.

A Strategic Planning Task Force, which includes members of the board, staff and consultants, continues throughout the year to gather input from NAMAC members nationwide to refine our goals and implementation plans. NAMAC's board and staff monitor the Strategic Plan, including evaluating NAMAC's progress at each of the two biannual board of directors meetings. The directions established in the Plan guide NAMAC's annual scope of work and budget priorities.

NAMAC'S EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT

NAMAC's Strategic Plan is built from our collective knowledge of the national media arts environment and its dynamic nature. A variety of cultural, socio-economic, technological and philanthropic factors make up our highly diverse membership and the fluid nonprofit landscape they now inhabit and thrive in.

External factors facing NAMAC and its membership include:

- Organizational smart-structuring in a volatile economy. While traditional foundation and government funding remains sporadically available, arts nonprofits must demonstrate tangible and quantifiable results while increasing their revenues through other kinds of innovative enterprises. Organizations must be ready to transform internal structures as membership and user base is inevitably changing.
- Continuous technological retooling. Production, distribution, exhibition, education and preservation continue to be reshaped by new and more sophisticated communications tools. Digital technologies are creating multiple opportunities and challenges for the media arts field. "Media Culture" is being reinvented continuously by stakeholders across multiple generations. In order to thrive and remain at the forefront, organizations must compete purposefully and creatively for members' and the public's attention and loyalty.
- Changing national cultural and telecommunications policy. Policy goals are now being reshaped by digital systems and their impact on producers and audiences — from intellectual property issues to delivery and aggregation of content. National policy will be influenced by digital advances and the media arts' leadership role in defining their applications.
- The need for 21st century media literacies. This area includes updating K - University education in: media literacy (including digital, information and visual); histories of the media (including independent and media art); and articulation of the necessity for state-mandated curriculum in media education.

STATEMENT OF MISSION AND VALUES

NAMAC represents the collective expression of the field's commitment to the media arts as a common language of a democratic society.

Our mission is to:

- strengthen media arts organizations as an integral part of the community;
- facilitate the support of independent media artists from all cultural communities and regions;
- integrate media into all levels of education and advocate for media literacy as an educational goal;
- promote humane uses of and individual access to current and future media technologies;
- encourage media arts that are rooted in communities, as well as those which are global in outlook.

- The next generation of leaders. As the field matures and widens its identity, the challenge is to encourage and provide resources and opportunities for youth to enter the media arts as the next wave of producers, educators and institution builders.

PRACTICAL VISION

Based on the current environment, NAMAC's 2004-2005 Strategic Plan retains these six core visions we want in place as a result of our collective efforts.

- *Create a significant national social, cultural and political impact.*

Make public media policy and advocacy a priority, and increase awareness of the importance of a robust independent media environment in citizen's daily lives. Increase partnerships with advocacy and media reform organizations; and move to the forefront of influencing national cultural and telecommunications policy. Educate funders and investors about the importance of capitalizing field-wide capacity-building initiatives.

- *Broaden organizational capacity and financial sustainability.*

Implement new revenue streams around services, programs and publications; partner with other intermediary organizations to broaden re-granting programs and leadership institutes. Consider the available resources and collaborate whenever possible with other peer organizations to deliver strategic programming.

- *Reinterpret and offer new definitions of the "media arts."*

From both within and outside the field, stimulate an ongoing public dialogue that seeks to redefine and refresh the language about media as an art form and communications system that is cross-disciplinary in nature. Promote the organization and the values of the field through an effective national publicity and marketing campaign.

- *Continue to be a leader in convening and disseminating vital information and knowledge to the arts community.*

Partner with other national organizations to host gatherings on new telecommunications developments that impact our cultural communities. Provide leadership in media preservation and digital intellectual property policy as it connects other art forms. Continue to develop the web site as a media arts portal. Broaden the scope of NAMAC leadership and policy institutes.

- *Cultivate an active and interactive membership.*

Reinforce and deepen relationships between NAMAC and the membership in these areas: evaluation and input, membership value, and participation in NAMAC programs and activities. Increase NAMAC membership by reaching new kinds of members: in digital fields, other media-related disciplines, individuals and internationally. Offer new opportunities for members to participate as national leaders and spokespeople. Provide opportunities to mentor youth and emerging leaders.

- *Expand the range of gatherings that celebrate and elevate.*

Enhance the biennial national conferences to include exhibition/ festivals, a broader range of topics in a longer conference time period, and sustained focus on dealing with critical core issues of the public media and media arts sphere. Increase attendance to include international participants. Publish conference findings in reports distributed to constituents and policymakers.

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

The NAMAC board and staff have developed three overall strategic directions, each with specific action arenas.

EXPAND AND NURTURE THE BASE

- Solidify relations with NAMAC members
- Work to ensure future vitality of the field
- Measure, develop and educate the field and our supporting funders
- Engage and energize the membership around 'big picture' issues

INCREASE VISIBILITY AND OUTREACH

- Develop a policy task force
- Galvanize our networks to work on behalf of independent media
- Create a marketing and public engagement strategy for NAMAC and the field

STRENGTHEN DYNAMIC INFRASTRUCTURE

- Strengthen and deepen NAMAC's organizational core capacities
- Cultivate and activate the board of directors

Strategic Direction

1

Expand and Nurture the Base

NAMAC is committed to building the networks that draw together and support our members

Solidify Relations with Members and Supporters

- ▶ Survey current membership about NAMAC services and their value
- ▶ Identify areas (geographic and subject-based) where membership can be cultivated and improved
- ▶ Research and report on member demographics: who are "we" and why join?
- ▶ Research successful "promising practices" in other advocacy organizations; emulate when appropriate and/or useful

Work to ensure the future vitality of the field

- ▶ Develop future media arts leaders
- ▶ Define and explore youth board representation
- ▶ Broaden intergenerational mentorship/knowledge exchange program

Strategic Direction

2

Increase Visibility and Outreach

NAMAC is focusing on amplifying the voice and public presence of the media arts field

Develop a policy task force

- ▶ NAMAC presents regularly at national cultural and telecommunications policy forums
- ▶ Frame media and cultural policy questions for national political candidates
- ▶ Establish an ongoing policy advisory group
- ▶ Develop action plan towards creation of a NAMAC Policy Institute

Strategic Direction

3

Strengthen Dynamic Infrastructure

NAMAC is committed to having a sustainable and diversified funding base in place

Activating the Board of Directors

- ▶ Invite board members to attend funder meetings, policy forums and regional events
- ▶ Include board members as available experts in consultants bureau

Measure, develop and educate the field and our supporting funders

- ▶ Work with partners to conduct funder workshops on how to fund media
- ▶ Create a major "mapping project" to collect data about the media arts field
- ▶ Offer "scenario planning toolkit" to our members on how to prepare for the future
- ▶ Create a dialogue with the membership on redefining the "media arts"

Engage and energize the membership around 'big picture' issues

- ▶ Prepare for NAMAC's 25th anniversary Congress in 2005
- ▶ Increase regional meetings and regional activities

- Membership increases 15 - 25% annually
- Leadership Institutes become annual events
- Secure funding for the field-wide "data/assets mapping" project
- Youth media training track at Congress 2005
- Attend four funder outreach events annually
- Use information gathered from membership (regional meetings and online salons) to influence policy initiatives

Galvanize our networks to work on behalf of independent media

- ▶ Establish liaisons and partnerships with comparable intermediary arts organizations
- ▶ Form a working group with other advocacy organizations to formalize cross-dissemination of issues and tasks
- ▶ Partner with Stanford University's Center for Social Innovation to conduct organizational research on media arts field
- ▶ Partner with grantmaker associations to distribute results of the forthcoming GBN study on the future of independent media

Create a marketing and public engagement strategy

- ▶ Hire a public relations and marketing firm to develop a NAMAC "visibility campaign"
- ▶ Use the 25th anniversary Congress strategically to enhance the field's visibility
- ▶ Create an online and DVD program "What are the media arts?"

- Dissemination of policy research is broadened and noticed
- Policy Institute is funded
- Political candidates respond to policy questions
- NAMAC mentioned in press frequently; ads appear regularly
- DVD and online program gains wide attention
- Active liaisons and published recommendations with peer arts organizations (advocacy, policy)
- NAMAC studied by Center for Social Innovation and featured in their publication

Strengthening and deepening core capacities

- ▶ Create business plan for earned income
- ▶ Encourage NAMAC staff to develop peer mentoring relationships
- ▶ Consider expanding board for increased regional diversity
- ▶ Conduct biannual staff planning retreat
- ▶ Expand Leadership Institutes to include 2 per year
- ▶ Partner with other national organizations to deliver leadership training

- Increase earned income by 20% annually
- Retain staff; apply new skills to new activities
- Broaden knowledge exchange with peer intermediary organizations
- Members utilize board expertise through consultants bureau
- Board members attend two or more NAMAC events, funder meetings and policy forums annually

Definitions of Planning Sessions

conducted on October 10 - 11, 2003 by the NAMAC staff and Board of Directors

PRACTICAL VISION WORKSHOP

Asks the question: "What do we want to see in place 5-10 years from now?"

The vision of an organization is held in part by all of its members. This workshop seeks to bring these together to create the shared picture of the future. The practical vision is the responsive statement of hope within the given environment. It provides a sense of the destination of the effort. It tells us where we are going, what the accomplishments, outcomes, changes and results are that we are seeking by our efforts.

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS WORKSHOP

Asks the question: "What creative, practical actions can we take over the next year or two, to deal with the challenges and move us toward our vision?"

In the Strategic Directions workshop participants are asked to focus on practical actions that will deal with the blocks identified in the previous session. By planning strategically, that is, both in relation to its real situation and the underlying contradictions, and its practical vision, then it has a chance to realize its vision.

IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE WORKSHOP

Asks the question: "What will we actually do over the next 12-18 months?"

Action removes the doubt that theory and analysis cannot solve. In signing up to work on a direction and scheduling actions and accomplishments for the coming year, commitment and realism are brought into the planning effort. The journey of implementation is mapped out and steps are seen which will begin the realization of our vision.

Participants signed up to work on each of the three strategic directions, and in groups, they identified practical signs of success by the end of the year, plus 6-8 key accomplishments phased into 2004 and 2005. The teams reported to one another with special attention given to the planned activities in the coming 3 - 6 months. Detailed implementation briefs will be written for each of the accomplishments.

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SUPPORT

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ABOUT ICA

ICA is a unique facilitation, training and research organization providing effective participatory skills to thousands of people across the United States and in thirty other nations. With its twenty-five years of international experience, ICA continues to be on the leading edge of change in designing, delivering and training people to use simple, yet highly productive group leadership processes.

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