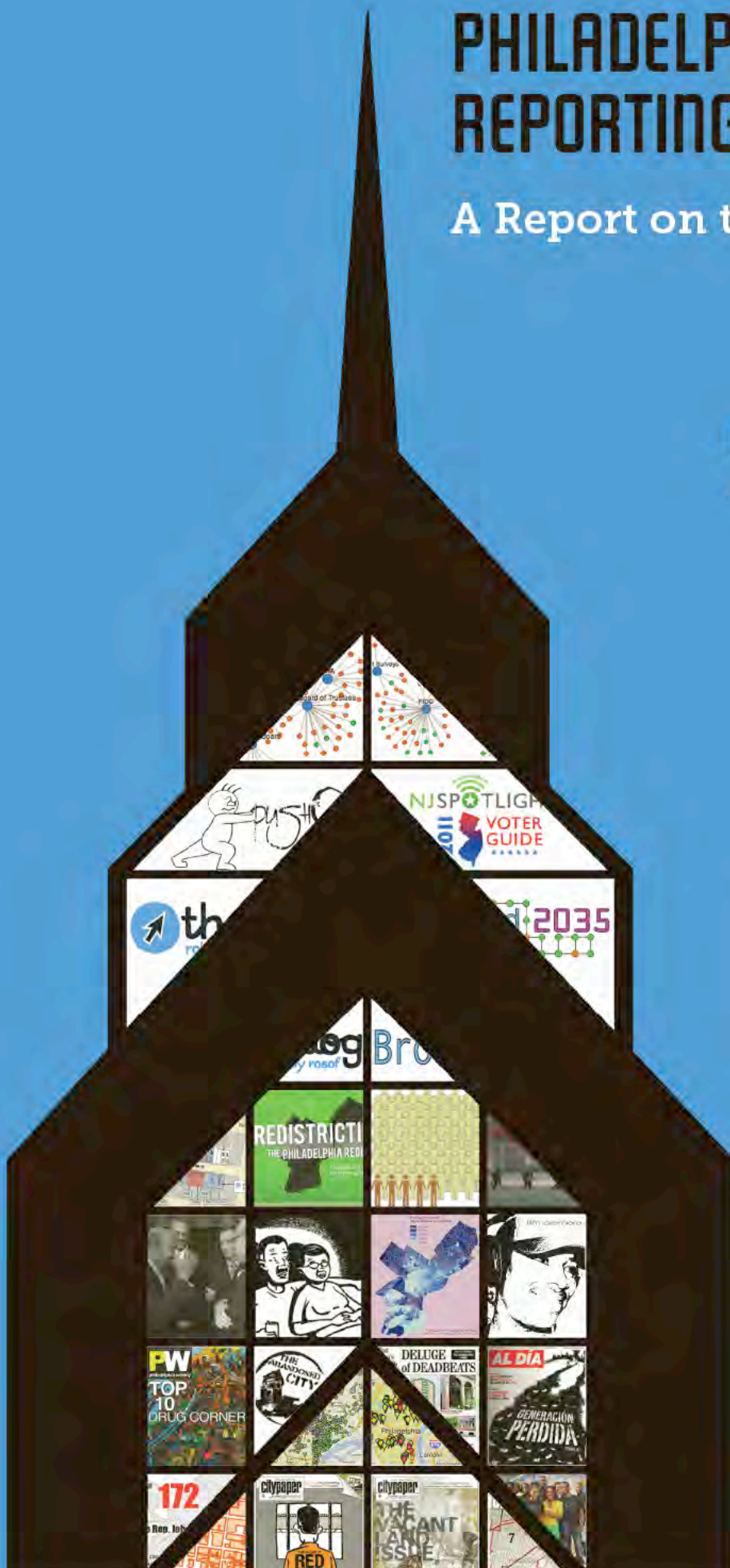


# PHILADELPHIA ENTERPRISE REPORTING AWARDS

A Report on the First Year

By Jan Schaffer

J-Lab Executive Director



A J-Lab Report

Funded by



The William Penn Foundation

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many people contributed their time to this report, including the 14 Enterprise Reporting awardees and their partners.

George Miller, Assistant Professor, Temple University helped track the progress of the awardees in Philadelphia and prepared an initial report.

Emily Harwood, Sally Okine and Zoe Sullivan, J-Lab student workers, gathered data, images and updates for interim reports.

Jan Schaffer, J-Lab executive director, quantified the projects' outcomes, drafted the key findings and reported on project updates.

Lori Milani, J-Lab's web editor, designed this report.

Ari Pinkus, J-Lab's project manager, and Caitlin Friess, J-Lab student worker, copy edited the report.

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**By Jan Schaffer**

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With additional reporting and research by George Miller and Emily Harwood

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In August 2011, 111,000 Philadelphia properties – one in every five properties in the city – were identified as tax delinquent, more than any city in the country. Property owners owed \$472 million in back taxes and penalties. The city administration quickly announced ramped-up sheriff's sales.

In June, the first Power Map of Philadelphia was published, an online map detailing a shadow government consisting of appointees of the city's 29 boards and commissions. The map identified members, terms, compensation and interconnections among various appointees.

In March, Metropolis website and Al Dia, the Hispanic weekly, published a joint bi-lingual report on the plight of Latino males, noting that in one

**“The results have been outstanding ... Most of all, we learned that a new generation of public-interest journalism is being hatched in new venues.”**

*Jeremy Nowak, president and CEO of the William Penn Foundation*

12-month period, 26 percent of all 18-to-24-year-old Latino males in Philadelphia were under control of the criminal justice system.

Meanwhile throughout the year, thenotebook.org, which covers public schools, and WHYY's Newsworks.org engaged in such vigorous coverage of a school turnaround initiative that their reporting of irregularities at a charter school helped lead to the resignation of the city's school superintendent.

These are just four of the stories developed over 10 months by winners of 14 Philadelphia Enterprise Reporting Awards, funded by the William Penn Foundation and administered by J-Lab at American University.

Each project received \$5,000 to develop – and collaborate with other media organizations on – a discrete in-depth reporting project. The Request for Proposals called for the projects to be completed within six months of receiving funding.

The awards were announced on Oct. 29, 2010. As of Aug. 29, 2011, 13 of the projects had launched. The last one, a data-driven New Jersey Voter's Guide, launched in mid-September as the start of a data library on NJSpotlight.com, a watchdog news site for New Jersey.

The news and information that resulted from the \$70,000 awarded for these efforts exceeded ex-

pectations, both in terms of impact and volume of stories. The 14 projects produced some 300 stories, blog posts, videos, podcasts, searchable databases and maps. Stories ranged from 50 to 11,000 words.

Because all the awardees were involved in media collaborations, the multiplier effect of the reporting was considerable. Half of the stories and news items, some 128, received an additional megaphone because they were either co-published on all partner sites (44) or linked to from partner sites (84).

At least 21 other news organizations republished all or parts of the stories produced. New partners joined some efforts. Media partners anted up two \$5,000 matches. Overall, the awards leveraged \$96,000 in other funding.

The resulting journalism led to recommendations that influenced the city's broadband plans, recommended reforms for redrawing City Council districts, tracked how a major city school-turnaround initiative was faring, produced angry stories of how developers couldn't access city properties they want to rebuild, and poignant stories of how harsh realities affected some of the city's downtrodden.

Jeremy Nowak, president and CEO of the William Penn Foundation, was pleased with the outcome. "We were interested in seeing what happened if enterprising news organizations had the resources to focus on under-reported topics. The results have been outstanding. We learned about how a cash-strapped city still can't effectively collect the taxes it is owed; how neighborhood politics subvert sound economic development strategy; and the challenges of turning around the lowest-performing schools. Most of all, we learned that a new generation of public-interest journalism is being hatched in new venues. We are excited to partner with these social entrepreneurs and look forward to much more."

## Key Findings:

- ◆ The media collaborations were successful and most will likely continue.
- ◆ Some of the most robust collaborators were the city's new media startups: the [notebook.org](#) (public schools), [PlanPhilly.com](#) (planning and development), [Technically Philly.com](#) (technology community), [WHYY's Newsworks.org](#) and [Metropolis](#) (the metro region) as well as two alternative newspapers, the [City Paper](#) and [Philadelphia Weekly](#).
- ◆ Publishing stories in multiple venues made the journalism available to larger audiences and seemed to be a win-win for all partners.
- ◆ Those entrepreneurial news startups that partnered with mainstream news outlets got a megaphone that served to validate their efforts.
- ◆ Six months was too rugged a timeline to complete some of the projects, especially those requiring training or data retrieval.
- ◆ The funding jumpstarted significant reporting that journalists knew needed to be done.
- ◆ The \$5,000 awards were not enough to fully fund all the journalism produced.
- ◆ The awards did leverage a vast array of other resources.
- ◆ All the award winners said they would do it again.
- ◆ The idea of set-aside funding for collaborative enterprise reporting initiatives is exportable to other cities, whether spearheaded by foundations, traditional media companies, universities or public media stations.

The projects gave public officials some new roadmaps with the delivery of three searchable databases detailing abandoned city properties, tax-delinquent city properties, boards and commission memberships, plus maps on redistricting and broadband penetration. One project identified the city's 10 most active drug corners.

The projects also gave the participating journalists new roadmaps for additional reporting and collaboration opportunities.

## Collaboration:

The partnerships generally took three forms:

- **True partnerships:** These projects, such as the “PushOuts” project, led by PhillyCAM with YesPhilly and the Voice of Philadelphia, involved members of the various teams working together closely to create the final projects.
- **Distribution partnerships:** In these situations, one outlet primarily created the content with multiple outlets co-publishing or linking to the finished stories, giving them a broader distribution pipeline. Examples include the Artblog Radio project, which appears on WHYY's Newsworks.org, or Metropolis's “Ballad of Red Dog,” which was also a City Paper cover story.
- **Commissioned stories:** These were essentially freelance projects, either pitched by, or produced by, freelancers hired to do the bulk of the reporting. Then they were slated to run in several outlets. A key example is freelancer Patrick Kerstra's investigative report on the vast number of tax-delinquent properties in Philadelphia.

Regardless of the shape of the collaboration, there seemed to be general consensus that there was a greater benefit in the outlets working together. Aside from the production of excellent journalism,

some of the most valuable outcomes of the awards have been the relationships formed by the partners, many of which are continuing.

To say that the \$70,000 awarded to these 14 projects funded all the journalism would be an overstatement. The awards certainly jumpstarted compelling news stories and additional funding. However, all the projects benefited from countless hours put in by editors, web/video/audio producers, photographers, graphic artists, trainers, educators, lawyers and others who were not covered by these awards.

“There was collaboration and stories that normally would not get done, did get done,” said Metropolis founder Tom Ferrick.

PlanPhilly.com, a site that focuses on planning and redevelopment, was one of the biggest collaborators, co-publishing, summarizing, and linking out to stories on tax-delinquent properties, abandoned properties and the city's plans for broadband connectivity.

The most prolific producer of stories was The Public School Notebook news site. It used the award for full-blown coverage of a major turnaround initiative for poor-performing schools, producing at least 126 stories over 10 months about the so-called Renaissance Schools initiative in partnership with WHYY's Newsworks.org.

The most ambitious undertaking was the full-blown investigative report on the city's vast inventory of tax-delinquent properties, which filled nearly six full pages of The Philadelphia Inquirer.

The bottom line: These awards served to show that Philadelphia is still a city where journalists can show how journalism, in all its iterations, can be done. ■



# Renaissance Schools – Philadelphia’s School Turnaround Initiative

The most robust of the Enterprise Reporting projects, in terms of volume of news stories, involved ongoing updates on the Philadelphia School District’s efforts to turn around some of the city’s lowest-performing schools. Nine schools were assigned to three different turnaround models in 2011, following 14 schools that launched the initiative in 2010.

The Notebook, a respected school-news site, partnered with public broadcaster WHYY’s Newsworks.org, which matched the \$5,000 Enterprise Award with another \$5,000. That helped The Notebook hire freelancer Benjamin Herold to continue the reporting he began during the first year of the



## Project Websites

### The Notebook:

<http://www.thenotebook.org/renaissance-schools-page>

### Newsworks:

<http://www.newsworks.org/index.php/mlkcharter>

so-called Renaissance Schools initiative. Another \$8,000 in funding from WHYY’s Newsworks.org also supported work by another reporter, Bill Hangley, whose

reporting The Notebook supervised.

Their investigation of the Martin Luther King charter school helped lead to the resignation of City School Superintendent Arlene Ackerman and the chairman of the Philadelphia School Reform Commission.

The announcement of the award prompted deeper conversations about collaboration between Paul Socolar, co-founder and editor of The Notebook, and WHYY’s Chris Satullo, who have known each other for years. WHYY wanted to do more schools coverage. The Notebook was looking to reach a wider audience.

“We were able to create a 4/5-time position for Herold that is shared by both news organizations with Herold based at The Notebook,”

*Paul Socolar, co-founder of The Notebook*



The Notebook's coverage actually started earlier, in January 2010. Herold was contracted to work for the project on a short-term basis under other grant funding. Socolar feared the project would end until this competition came along.

The series expanded well beyond the scope of what the \$5,000 could fund. One piece was commissioned by the Hechinger Report.



Socolar raised an additional \$2,000 on Spot.us to help fund another story by Herold. The success of the partnership helped bring in additional funds, and

ultimately WHYY and The Notebook agreed that it made sense to scale up the partnership. Socolar said, "We were able to create a 4/5-time position for Herold that is shared by both news organizations with Herold based at The Notebook." Herold joined the Notebook staff in July 2011 and continues to cover Renaissance Schools as part of a broader Philadelphia public education beat.

The Notebook established a dedicated section of its website featuring the School Turnaround stories. And the topic of turnarounds was the focus of The Notebook's October 2011 print edition.

With all the funding it has raised, The Notebook has posted at least 126 stories covering the initiative between November 2010 and August 2011. WHYY has linked to at least 60 of these stories on its Newsworks.org site and co-published about a half dozen.

During this time Newsworks also posted many Renaissance School stories from its own

reporters covering WHY's targeted neighborhoods.

The Notebook regularly linked to those in its daily "Notes from the News" and often

ran separate, longer teasers to the WHYY stories. Content from the coverage is also featured on a page of the national news site Education Week.

As part of the collaboration, Herold received audio training from WHYY staff. He was also loaned equipment for radio reports.

Many of The Notebook stories elicited notable engagement from readers as measured by commenting activity. It was common for articles on popular or controversial issues to receive 30 or more comments and, in several cases, more than 100 comments were posted.

With the whole concept of "school turnarounds" continuing to get a lot of attention locally and nationally, Socolar said he is hoping to continue to develop print and online content on the topic, adding more interactive features to this section of The Notebook site as well as evergreen content. That will require additional funding. ■



# The Power Map of Philadelphia

The Power Map of Philadelphia is an interactive guide to the 29 often-mysterious boards and commissions that wield government power and control public money in Philadelphia. The map tells you what these boards do and who sits on them. It contains information on board service, such as when board members were appointed, length of term and compensation. Biographical information also exists, including former income sources, family members and additional board

## Project Websites

### Philly.com:

[http://www.philly.com/philly/hot\\_topics/120296939.html](http://www.philly.com/philly/hot_topics/120296939.html)

### Technically Philly:

<http://bit.ly/meQeOl>

and individual affiliations. On the map, blue dots are boards, orange dots are board members, and green dots are appointing authorities.

The map allows one to see the connections between board mem-

bers and the power players who appoint them by searching the database for information about board members' income sources and affiliations. For instance, if you'd like to see the board members connected to the law firm Ballard Spahr, type "Ballard Spahr" into the search box, and a list of members connected to the firm will pop up.

Daily News Editorial Page Editor Sandra Shea spearheaded the project with Doron Taussig of the paper's "It's Our Money" team. The partners discussed what information to include. It's Our Money reporters requested data, combed through financial disclosure forms and built a database to enter the information.

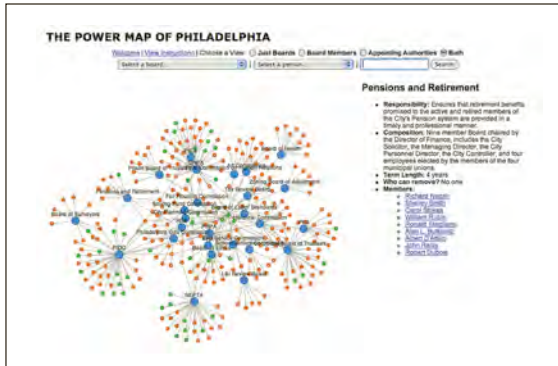
Shea and WHYY's Dave Davies and Chris Satullo guided reporters when they ran into roadblocks. Mateo Rando from the Fels Institute contributed some research. The design of the map involved technical experts and journalists from the Daily

**“There is definitely more we'd like to do with the Power Map. In fact, we think the \$5,000 award was a good 'get something off the ground' award and enough to get us started on a larger accountability project,”**

*Project Partners*

News and Philly.com. The project hired a Haverford College coder to build the map; all the partners weighed in with feedback. The Power Map team has not yet done a publicity push on the map. They are still collecting feedback.

The award's amount and timeframe were "appropriate" but that's because the partners designed the project to fit the award's specifications. For instance, because of time and resource constraints, they did not include campaign finance contributions in the data.



“One important piece of the partnership hasn’t actually occurred yet: The journalism that will get done surrounding the Power Map,”

*Project Partners*

“The map’s functionality is good but we think the aesthetic presentation could be strengthened,” the partners reported. “One important piece of the partnership hasn’t actually occurred yet: The journalism that will get done surrounding the Power Map.”

The partnership may add some new academic partners to help analyze and do stories on the map’s data.

“There is definitely more we’d like to do with the Power Map. In fact, we think the \$5,000 award was a good ‘get something off the ground’ award and enough to get us started on a larger accountability project,” the team reported. To that end, the team suggests a “tiered” award process in which applicants can apply for larger awards after successfully completing earlier stages of projects. ■

# The Ballad of Red Dog (The Unforgiven)

Pennsylvania is one of the six states where the sentence for murder is life without parole. Metropolis website, working with City Paper and the Pennsylvania Prison Society, published a graphic-illustration story with text that examined the journey of one of the 2,488 Philadelphia lifers, many of whom were locked up as teens. His nickname is Red Dog.

The Prison Society suggested possible inmates to be subjects of the story. Metropolis's Tom Ferrick did all of the reporting and contracted with the

“I was interested in the narrative arc of the story of what happens to a lifer when ... they realize they're never going to get out of here,”

Tom Ferrick, founder of Metropolis

## Project Websites

### Metropolis:

<http://www.phlmetropolis.com/2011/04/the-ballad-of-red-dog-1.php>

### City Paper:

[http://www.citypaper.net/cover\\_story/2011-05-05-the-ballad-of-red-dog.html](http://www.citypaper.net/cover_story/2011-05-05-the-ballad-of-red-dog.html)

graphic artist. The City Paper published the story on its May 5, 2011, cover.

“The Ballad of Red Dog” captures the story and delivers an emotional tug on the journey of Haywood Fennell, now 60, a model prisoner who’s been in Graterford Prison since 1968

for a murder committed when he was 17.

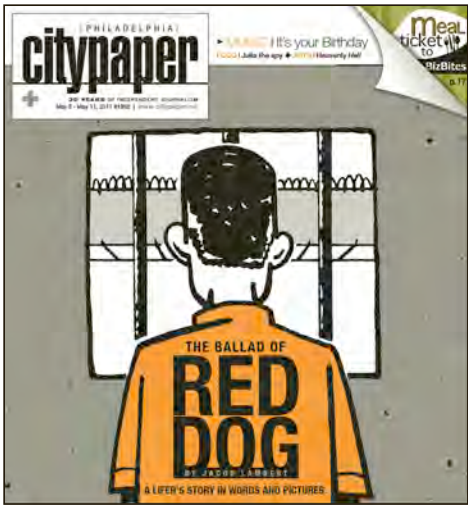
The story is all told in seven panels of illustration by Jacob Lambert, whose work occasionally appears



in Mad Magazine. It was also featured on the Philadelphia Cartoonist Society's website.

"I was interested in the narrative arc of the story of what happens to a lifer when ... they realize they're never going to get out of here," Ferrick said, referring to Fennell's current abode.

**“Telling the story in graphic novel form generated a lot of informal buzz,”**

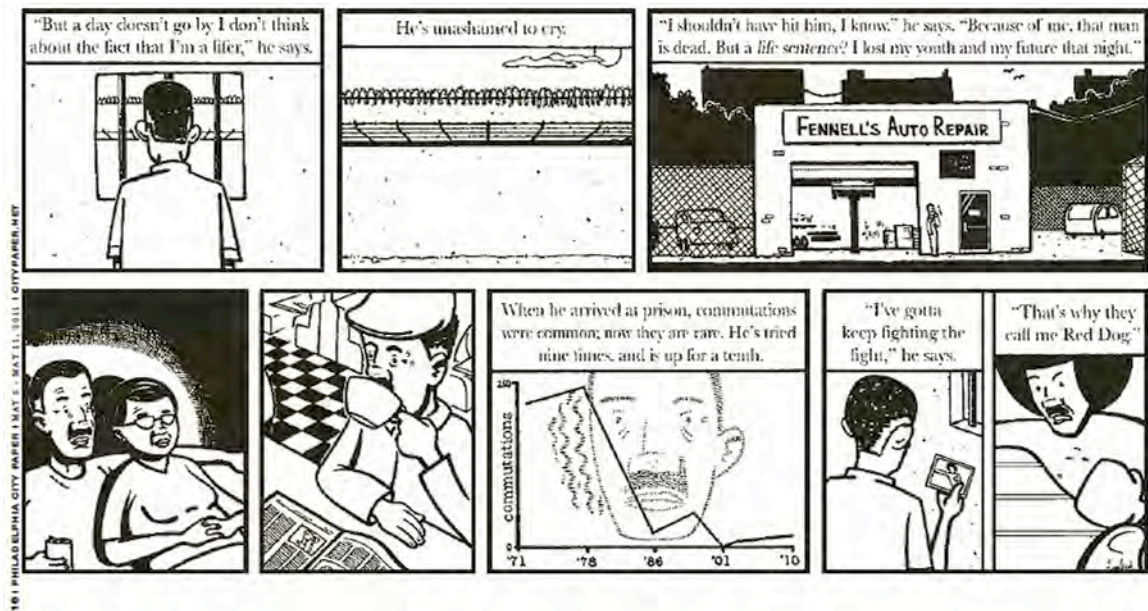


*Tom Ferrick, founder of Metropolis*

Ferrick distilled Fennell's story to its essence after doing hours of interviewing, tracking down the prosecutors, and searching for documents.

"For years, I have been reading or writing stories about young men - sometimes in their late teens or

early 20's - who end up being sentenced to life in prison for murder, usually over some trivial matter - a fight over a girlfriend, an insult to their manhood, or in Red Dog's case, a petty robbery, that went awry," Ferrick wrote in his blog post 'Life means Life.' [<http://www.phlmetropolis.com/2011/04/life-means-life.php>] Telling the story in graphic novel form generated "a lot of informal buzz," Ferrick said. ■





# A Deluge of Deadbeats

**A**fter decades of weak collection efforts, property-tax delinquency has become an epidemic in Philadelphia. As of April 30, 2011, there were about 111,000 tax delinquent accounts in the city – nearly one out of every five properties. Collectively, they owe the city and school district \$472 million in principal, penalties and interest.

Freelancer Patrick Kerkstra, a former Philadelphia Inquirer investigative reporter, worked with The Inquirer, Philly.com and Plan Philly to develop the data and the stories documenting the problem. Both

PlanPhilly and The Inquirer contributed \$2,500 apiece to match the Enterprise Reporting Award, once the amount of work involved became clear. Kerkstra's reporting culminated in an extensive

## Key Links

### Day One Mainbar:

<http://planphilly.com/special-report-delinquency-crisis>

### Day Two Mainbar:

<http://bit.ly/r5RUiX>

### Sidebar on property values of delinquent land:

<http://planphilly.com/many-delinquent-properties-have-real-market-value>

### Sidebar on flawed delinquency records:

<http://planphilly.com/flawed-delinquency-records-abound>

### Sidebar on bad assessments:

<http://planphilly.com/broken-assessment-system-complicates-sales-delinquent-property>

two-day report that began in the Sunday, Aug. 14, newspaper (including the Aug. 13 bulldog edition). The overall package consisted of two stories – one at 120 inches, another at 100 inches – with three sidebars, five data-packed graphics, a video and photos. The Inquirer's print version took up three full inside pages in the Sunday paper plus a chunk of Page One and two pages in Monday's edition.

A key part of the project was a searchable map of delinquent properties, appearing on both Plan Philly and Philly.com: [[http://planphilly.com/tax-](http://planphilly.com/tax-delinquent-properties)

[delinquent-properties](http://planphilly.com/tax-delinquent-properties)] Plan Philly reported that the project bumped its site traffic to double its usual rate with readers spending an average of five minutes studying the map.

The AP rewrote the Sunday story and its versions were published on websites and in papers across Pennsylvania.

for a meeting after the publication of the series and awarded us a \$75,000 grant to continue reporting the tax-delinquency story. PlanPhilly published an-

“Projects, particularly investigative projects, take as long as they take. There are leads that can take weeks to sort out only to find that they are not germane ... In this case, the story has been larger and more complicated than anticipated. The reporting hours that have gone into it absolutely dwarf the size of the award.”

*Patrick Kerkstra, freelance reporter*



By the following Sunday, the city administration announced that it would increase the number of sheriff's sales of delinquent properties to 600 by January 2012. By September, the state legislature began drafting legislation to set firmer requirements for cities to either collect taxes or foreclose on delinquent properties and put them up for sale.

Soon after the report was published, the William Penn Foundation made a \$75,000 grant to PlanPhilly.com to support continued reporting on the issue. “The William Penn Foundation called PlanPhilly in

other segment in October and is collaborating with The Philadelphia Inquirer on a series of stories and data presentations that will take us into the summer of 2012,” PlanPhilly editor Matt Golas said.

Kerkstra urges more time for projects like his. “Projects, particularly investigative projects, take as long as they take. There are leads that can take weeks to sort out only to find that they are not germane ... In this case, the story has been larger and more complicated than anticipated. The reporting hours that have gone into it absolutely dwarf the size of the award.” ■



# The Abandoned City

The City of Philadelphia is the largest owner of abandoned properties in the city. The City Paper, working with PlanPhilly.com's Anthony Campisi and TechnicallyPhilly.com, identified about 40,000 of these properties and produced a series of seven stories about how these vacant sites were affecting city neighborhoods.

## Project Websites

### Plan Philly:

<http://planphilly.com/series/abandoned-city>

### City Paper:

[http://www.citypaper.net/cover\\_story/2011-07-21-the-vacant-land-issue.html](http://www.citypaper.net/cover_story/2011-07-21-the-vacant-land-issue.html)

### Technically Philly:

<http://technicallyphilly.com/?s=abandoned&submit.x=43&submit.y=10>

development Authority. The RDA has the power of eminent domain and may dispose of property for less than market value. RDA has conveyed thousands of vacant properties over the past few decades to individuals, companies, and organizations. Most have been redeveloped - but not all.

A key part of the project was an interactive database [<http://planphilly.com/abandoned-city>] and map of still-vacant properties conveyed to others by the city's Re-

Project partners also made public the raw data of the RDA properties as well as properties listed by the Water Department as likely vacant. ■



# Top 10 Drug Corners (Shame of the City)

Freelancer Steve Volk followed up his 2007 report, locating and ranking the top 10 drug-selling corners in the city with a new report on the most active drug-trafficking spots. An abridged article (3,000 words) ran as the Aug. 24, 2011, cover story in Philadelphia

## Project Websites

### The Phawker:

<http://www.phawker.com/2011/08/23/special-report-the-top-10-drug-corners-2011/>

### Philadelphia Weekly story and photo slide show:

<http://bit.ly/rpCGOD>

Weekly. The full 11,000-word version ran the same day on Phawker.com and was edited by Phawker founder Jonathan Valania.

Steve Volk reports: "Philadelphia is awash in the narcotics trade. And like all illicit economies, the drug trade begets

**"The locus of the most heavily trafficked drugs corners is constantly shifting in reaction to supply and demand, police activity and internecine turf warfare. If one corner is not active at the moment, then the action most likely lurks around the next corner or will be heading this way awfully soon,"**

Steve Volk, freelance reporter

a brutal gangsterism whose stock in trade is violence – violence on an industrial scale. The statistics are as astonishing as they are appalling. 'We've had 16,000 shootings here in the last 10 years,' says Assistant U.S. Attorney Rob Reed. 'Sixteen thousand!' That averages out to four Philadelphians being shot every day, or one citizen every six hours. Since 2008, more Americans have been murdered in Philadelphia than killed in Iraq. In other words, we



have the equivalent of an undeclared shooting war raging semi-visibly in the city's most desolate and depleted neighborhoods.

“Phawker “logged more than 30,000 direct hits from visitors looking for the unabridged version,”

*Jonathan Valania, founder of Phawker*

“ ... First, there is so much drug dealing in the city – and the mechanics and geography of the drug trade is so fluid – that narrowing it down to the top 10 corners is a fool's errand: It could well be 20 corners, or 50 or 100. Furthermore, even

the most extensive combination of face-to-face interviews, boots-on-the-ground surveillance and crunching of arrest stats will at best result in a snapshot of a moment in time, and the enduring accuracy of that resulting picture is debatable. The truth is that the locus of the most heavily trafficked drugs corners is constantly shifting in reaction to supply and demand, police activity and internecine turf warfare. If one corner is not active at the moment, then the action most likely lurks around the next corner or will be heading this way awfully soon.”

Valania said he didn't have much luck getting any of the city's TV stations or newspapers to pick up on the report. However, he said it did “spark a lot of interest with readers.” PW published 100,000 copies, most of which were snapped up. And Phawker “logged more than 30,000 direct hits from visitors looking for the unabridged version,” he said. ■

ibby Rosof and  
Roberta Fallon  
partnered with  
WHYY's Newsworks

**Project Website:**  
<http://theartblog.org/radio/>

and created some 20 podcasts of interviews with people from Philadelphia's art world that were produced by WHYY's Peter Crimmins. New episodes were available every other Monday. Last spring, they also began producing photo slideshows to go with the podcasts. Artblog Radio is one part of their larger website, which covers a variety of contemporary art news.

WHYY carried an Artblog logo on its Arts and Culture page and linked out to the podcasts but it did not host the podcasts on its site (at the request of Rosof and Fallon), which prevented Newsworks from archiving them. A listing of those podcasts that were produced, though, might have helped to juice some content on WHYY's site.

The Artblog's founders were grateful that WHYY sent them traffic. Some of the podcasts have aired on the Newsworks Tonight newscast, WHYY's Chris Satullo said.



Rosof said the Artblog is now working on a new project with Newsworks – Artblog Art Safaris, “in which we take people on van tours to Philadelphia’s hard-to-navigate, widespread

galleries, videotape the tours.” Artblog will post the videos at the various galleries.

“People tell us they love the podcasts,” said the Artblog team. “We don’t think people notice the two different websites.”

## People interviewed include:



Tyler Kline graduated with an MFA from PAFA. His work has been shown locally at Little Berlin, where he is a member, at Rebekah Templeton and Vox Populi, and before that, at the skateboard shop, Minnow.



Amir Lyles has used the brick dust that falls off the cellar walls to give his paint texture. He has also used bits of his beard. His house and his family are essential parts of the identity that he pours into his paintings, many of them with themes of African identity—but also Rastafarianism, jazz and hip-hop to soul.



The triumvirate who run Extra Extra aim their exhibitions at fellow artists. For Derek Frech, Joe Lacina and Daniel Wallace, success is not defined by sales. Rather, it's defined by ideas, the conversation and the buzz the exhibit generates in Philadelphia's alternative art community.



# The Lost Generation

This story was a joint project of Metropolis, a web startup founded by former Inquirer columnist Tom Ferrick, and Al Dia, Philadelphia's Spanish-language weekly newspaper.

It was researched and written by Ferrick and reported by freelance reporter Gustavo Martinez and Ana Gamboa, a staff writer for Al Dia. Photos are by David Cruz of Al Dia.

Ferrick's reporting ability helped Al Dia, which had less reporting capacity but published the stories as a cover package and followed up with editorials. Ferrick hired a Spanish-speaking freelance writer to help.

A few quotes from the report: "By almost any measure,



## Project Website:

<http://www.phlmetropolis.com/2011/03/the-lost-generation.php>

never graduated from high school (compared to 19% citywide); only 10 percent have college degrees (compared to 22% citywide.)"

"Along with poverty comes a witch's brew of problems: broken families, poor health, dependence on drugs and alcohol and a sometimes violent street culture that offers the lure of big money – if you are willing to sell drugs. As one Latino male who grew up in one of these neighborhoods put it: 'Every male role model I had in my life was involved in something they were not supposed to be involved with.'"

The project profiled three Latino males in their late teens and early 20s working and living in Philadel-

lag behind other Philadelphians. Nearly 40 percent live in poverty (compared to a citywide rate of 25%); 40 percent of Latino adults

"I think the goal of the program was met: There was collaboration and stories that normally would not get done did get done."

*Tom Ferrick, founder of Metropolis*

“By almost any measure, Latinos lag behind other Philadelphians. Nearly 40 percent live in poverty (compared to a citywide rate of 25%); 40 percent of Latino adults never graduated from high school (compared to 19% city-wide); only 10 percent have college degrees (compared to 22% citywide.)”

*Tom Ferrick, founder of Metropolis*

phia. [<http://www.phlmetropolis.com/2011/03/three-latino-males.php>]

One story quoted a man who, after leaving prison, was in a barbershop one day when he overheard some young men talking about those men they called ‘The Legends.’ He was startled to hear his name mentioned. “Here he was a man who took the wrong path, ended up in prison for murder, and these young men looked up to him as a role

model?” the story said.

“When I look back, I still feel guilty for certain decisions that I made,” said Edwin Desamour.

“But I also got

to accept that I was a product of my environment. I’m not justifying anything, but really just trying to understand it.”



Ferrick said the \$5,000 award “was plenty” for the reporting part of these projects. “However, my original idea was to make the Latino male story a sophisticated graphic presentation that told the story in a lot of different ways. I approached a local web/graphic arts group ... and they said that \$5,000 was far too little, given the work that they felt was needed. So, Latino ended up being strictly a linear piece on Metropolis.”

“I think it would be helpful if you were to offer supplemental grants to those who come up with a particularly ambitious project involving multimedia or a lot of additional web design. But I think the goal of the program was met: There was collaboration and stories that normally would not get done did get done.” ■

# PushOuts (Drop Zone)

**P**ushOuts is a youth-led multimedia project reporting why young people of color are failing to graduate from Philadelphia public schools. It resulted in a blog, a 27-minute documentary and a 50-minute special that has been shown on PhillyCAM, the city's public-access station, several times since its launch on June 6, 2011. In addition, 100 DVD copies of the project were made for use by community groups for their own screenings.

“YESPhilly plans to incorporate some of the learning into its ongoing curriculum.”

*Gretjen Clausing, Executive Director of PhillyCAM*

## Project Websites

### PhillyCAM:

<http://pushout-philly.blogspot.com/>

### VoiceofPhilly:

<http://voiceofphilly.wordpress.com/>

### Featured on NBC:

<http://bit.ly/sUeqo7>

### Philadelphia Sun article:

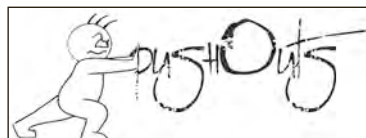
<http://bit.ly/ltrhyB>

The project trained young people in interviewing and documentary making and it garnered coverage on NBC and in the Philadelphia Sun.

PhillyCAM took the lead, providing a base of operations, video production training and equipment and project administration. YESPhilly, which helps train high school dropouts, recruited

the student participants, incorporated the project into its weekly curriculum, provided instructors, did the graphics and music for the project, organized the gallery exhibit and did PR support for the video release. Voice of Philadelphia provided the journalism instruction, edited the written works and provided training in best practices for journalism and research.

The project came together in several forms. There is

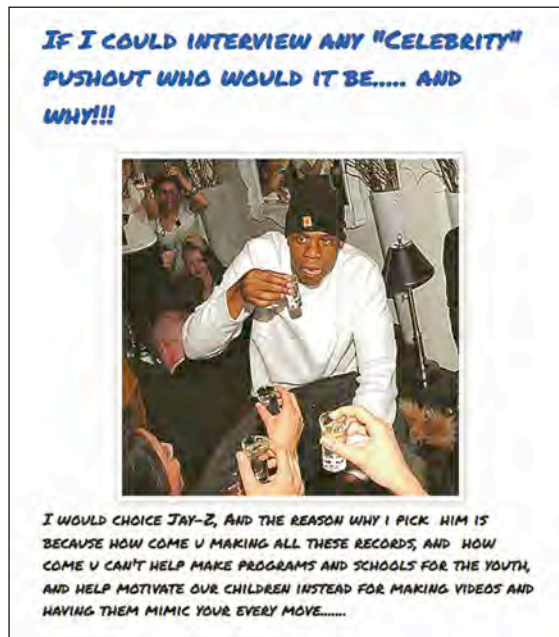


the blog, which YESPhilly plans to continue with future stu-



dents. The 27-minute documentary is a stand-alone work. The 50-minute special includes excerpts from a panel discussion recorded at the documentary's May premiere and has been aired on PhillyCAM several times since June. There was also a gallery

"Most significant was the transformation of the six youths who went from unsure participants to fully engaged video journalists, proud of their work and wanting to represent their experience to



**From one participant's personal reflections:**

"Free Hand: Around this time there's a point where I feel lonely. I want to talk about it but when I try I think the person will look at me differently. My counselor told me I was moving up in my classes but I also feel I'm not making progress. Then I'm in this situation where I need this job and I need school too and I know I'm not ready to take parts of the GED because I still need help...I just need to get pointed in the right direction."

exhibit of art by YESPhilly students. The DVDs also contain post-project interviews with the students. Participants appeared on NBC 10's live special for Education Nation on June 6, 2011.

a broader public. This project gave them confidence in their words and opinions and validated their experience."

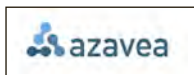
PhillyCAM Executive Director Gretjen Clausing said the project exceeded expectations. "YESPhilly plans to incorporate some of the learning into its ongoing curriculum. Participating in this project also helped Voice of Philadelphia refine its mission going forward. It has decided to shift its emphasis from direct news publication to journalism training as a means of collaborating with different community organizations. PhillyCAM learned valuable lessons about working with young people not in a traditional school system and approaching video journalism projects," she said.

Clausing said there was not enough time to add a "print" segment to the blog and do all the video work at the same time. "Only one of the six students felt comfortable writing ... If we were to do it again, it would be preferable to have two teams, one for video documentary and the other for written articles."

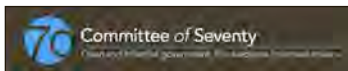
Clausing called the budget ample for a "pilot." But all the instructors and staff people from the partner organizations put in a significant amount of additional time that was not budgeted. ■

# Redistricting the Philadelphia Region

Redistricting the Philadelphia Region is a joint project of Azavea, a Philadelphia-based, Geographic Information Systems (GIS) software development company, WHYY's Newsworks.org and the Committee of Seventy, a non-partisan, non-profit government watchdog group now run by the former editor of the Philadelphia Daily News.



Key elements of the partnership were in place before the enterprise awards were announced.



The project is part of Azavea founder Robert Cheetham's larger efforts to help redistricting discussions around the country.

Philadelphia's City Charter required City Council to redraw the 10 City Council district lines by Sept. 9, 2011 – six months after the publication of the 2010 Census population figures – or forfeit their salaries. One day after the city's Census figures were

## Project Websites

### Committee of Seventy:

<http://bit.ly/jS7lJU>  
<http://bit.ly/qhBLtg>

### Azavea:

<http://www.redistrictingthenation.com/philadelphia/>

### WHYY'S Newsworks.org:

<http://bit.ly/sGUgDr>

released, the Committee of Seventy released a 15-step plan to bring greater transparency and public participation to the redistricting process and participated in public forums on redistricting. Some of its recommendations have been picked up.

Azavea's project site explained historical abuses, timelines,

reform efforts and redistricting principles. At [www.fixphillydistricts.com](http://www.fixphillydistricts.com), Philadelphians were

invited to use Azavea's software to draw maps of what they thought the 10 districts should look like.

WHYY organized and hosted an Aug. 8, 2011,



“Maybe they should change the name for gerrymandering - the practice by which politicians carve out districts to help incumbents get reelected - to Philly-mandering. The Committee of Seventy proposed to City Council a process for redistricting that invites public input into this oft-closed door remapping,”

*The Philadelphia Inquirer*

forum attended by more than 100 people to roll out FixPhillyDistricts.com and explain to people how to use the tools. It also put up \$1,000 in award money for the best citizen maps, which Newsworks and others published.

The contest was also sponsored by the Penn Center for Civic Engagement, Philly.com and the Daily News.



The coverage received many external links, television coverage, and local papers editorialized: “Maybe they should change the name for gerrymandering - the practice by which politicians carve out districts to help incumbents get reelected - to Philly-mandering. The Committee of Seventy proposed to City Council a process for redistricting that invites public input into this oft-closed door remapping,” said an editorial in the Philadelphia Inquirer. ■

# Neighborhood Development, Politics and their Relationship

In the first half of 2011, NEastPhilly.com, a startup covering Northeast Philadelphia, led an investigative look into the corruption charges against former State Rep. John Perzel and how the allegations against him have affected the 172nd District. Perzel and three former staffers pleaded guilty in summer 2011 ahead of a September trial. He spent three decades in the state House, including a stint as a powerful Speaker of the House, and was known for bringing an impressive stream of state funding back to his district, most notably the Mayfair neighborhood.

The website follows the charges against Perzel through videos, articles, photographs and visual aids such as maps, graphs and an interactive timeline.



## Project Websites

### NEastPhilly.com:

<http://neastphilly.com/tag/district-172>

<http://neastphilly.com/john-perzel/>

### PhiladelphiaNeighborhoods.com:

<http://bit.ly/tR8yO5>

NEast Philly chose the project topics, coordinated the coverage and is publishing the bulk of the content. Philadelphia Neighbor-

hoods.com, a project of Temple University, assigned four students to create a series of multimedia packages that have been incorporated into the report. Jim Smiley of the Frankford Gazette designed the landing page on NEast Philly's site. The late-fall 2010

**“A slightly larger award and more reporting time would have yielded a more comprehensive project ... but I wouldn't go too much bigger or stretch the timeline too long. The quick turnaround helps with motivation and produces more results more quickly, which readers appreciate,”**

*Shannon McDonald, founder of NEast Philly*



announcement of the awards meant that NEast Philly had to wait a few months for students to schedule around other classes, jobs and internships and be available to dig into the project.

the partners to work out,” but she added, “\$5,000 feels like a lot less once reporting begins.”

“A slightly larger award and more reporting time would have yielded a more comprehensive project ... but I wouldn’t go too much bigger or stretch the timeline too long. The quick turnaround helps with motivation and produces more results more quickly, which readers appreciate,” she said.

NEast Philly founder Shannon McDonald said she liked that the terms of the Enterprise Reporting Awards were “left open for

One graphic on the website breaks down funding in Mayfair, a neighborhood that benefited greatly under Perzel. [\[http://bit.ly/fdAxyQ\]](http://bit.ly/fdAxyQ)





# Broadband 2035

Technically Philly and Plan Philly joined forces to report on the status of the city's broadband adoption and tie it to the city's issuance of a citywide master plan. The biggest contribution of the project, to date, has been to actively solicit reader recommendations on the conditions of the city's broadband infrastructure and on city residents' hopes for the future.

The project used that input to craft a list of wants-and-needs bullet points and provided it to the city's Planning Commission. Some of that language was directly added to the proposals put forth by city officials in their comprehensive Philadelphia2035 strategic plan, issued in May.



Technically Philly and also now works as Plan Philly's web editor.

**Project Websites**

**Technically Philly:**  
<http://technicallyphilly.com/series/broadband2035>

**Plan Philly:**  
<http://bit.ly/rvWChs>

“The partnership between Plan Philly and Technically Philly proved powerful in two regards,” said Brian James Kirk, who co-founded Techni-

“It created a broader audience (15,000 at Technically Philly and 25,000 at Plan Philly) to publish to. Second, it created the opportunity for each niche community to be enlightened on important issues in related sectors. We saw interest from folks

in the planning community who hadn't originally seen the immediate value of technology's role in the comprehensive plan. At the same time, our technical readers at Technically Philly were made aware of the Philadelphia 2035 [master plan]



and the opportunity to include technology in that future outlook.”

Project partners have been invited to be on a committee to help guide a city broadband plan along with the city’s Planning Commission and Division of Technology. “We’re doing our best to use our expertise to guide the process as publishers,” Kirk said.

“The partnership between Plan Philly and Technically Philly proved powerful in two regards. It created a broader audience (15,000 at Technically Philly and 25,000 at Plan Philly) to publish to. Second, it created the opportunity for each niche community to be enlightened on important issues in related sectors,”

*Brian James Kirk, co-founder of Technically Philly*

Having released a citywide plan, next up for the city are district plans at the neighborhood level. The first two neighborhood meetings were in September and the project now plans to do some in-depth reporting in those two neighborhoods – The West Park District (Parkside, Overbrook), and the Lower South District (Navy Yard, Packer Park), where broadband adoption rates are particularly low.

Kirk said the collaboration helped each partner. “TP’s freelancer was able to garner leads from conversations with PP’s editor. And PP’s ongoing and regular coverage of the Planning Commission kept TP in the loop about developments around ... a section of the comprehensive plan dedicated to information technology and network infrastructure.”

Technically Philly worked directly with a freelance reporter to plan topics. Line editing has been completed by Plan Philly’s managing editor. Publishing is done on both websites with Technically Philly focused on shorter stories and dialogue-driven content. The project used a map created by Temple University of broadband penetration throughout the city, which can be found here: <http://bit.ly/rDwSgN>



For the fall, the project is creating an interactive map of broadband adoption aimed at helping city residents locate public

computer centers. The map, to launch in December, will overlay Temple’s data, information from 17 city broadband partners, and additional data collected via Technically Philly with a web-based service and complimentary text messaging service. Project leaders are talking with city officials about how to maintain the map and get the word out. “We hope the map can be used to help Philadelphia broadband stakeholder organizations strategize around future adoption efforts,” Kirk said. ■



# Stop-and-Frisk

A broadly collaborative group teamed up to do a video and narrative examination of the results of the Philadelphia Police Department's ramped-up stop-and-frisk policy, launched in 2008, on overall crime in West Philadelphia. Scribe Video Center partnered with its



affiliate, WPEB-FM community radio, and WURD 900, a major African-American AM station. Companion articles were produced in three community newspapers – Scoop, the Neighborhood Leader and the University City Review.

“We had intended to work with two community newspapers,” said Louis Massiah of Scribe Video Center. “We are now working with three newspapers and a [new] radio station (WURD).”

“Stop and Frisk” became a hot-button campaign issue in the 2007 mayoral election, when the winning candidate declared support for this policing approach to try to reduce the city’s homicide rate. The homicides were attributed to the proliferation of licensed and unlicensed guns in poor communities, specifically poor African-American and Latino communities with high unemployment for young males. A variety of community leaders

questioned the civil rights and racial implications of the practice.

With the current 2011 mayoral election underway, the partners sought to re-examine the issue.

Because of all the collaboration’s moving parts – recruitment, training, production and post-production, in addition to maintaining the collaborations – the Stop-and-Frisk project ran a bit behind schedule. WPEB, which is operated by the Scribe Video Center, ran four stories. WURD-FM joined the project and also ran the stories. Associated content appeared in the University City Review site, which is owned by Bob Christian, a WPEB board member. The Neighborhood Leader also published a story.

With the Enterprise funding, Scribe Video Center offered an Enterprise Journalism workshop for community broadcasters from WPEB, an all-volunteer community radio station serving the 125,000 residents of West Philadelphia. Scribe owns the license to the



station and has served as its steward as it works to become an independent entity. Its broadcast area covers over 10 square miles, much of it densely populated by African-Americans and immigrants from Africa. The station also covers the campuses of the University of Pennsylvania, the University of the Sciences and Drexel University. Approximately 30 percent of all residents have incomes below the poverty level.

**“We had intended to work with two community newspapers. We are now working with three newspapers and a [new] radio station (WURD),”**

*Louis Massiah, Scribe Center*

The workshop provided hands-on experience in reporting techniques, including research, field pro-

duction, writing and editing, as well as discussions about journalistic approaches and ethics.

Two instructors guided the workshop. Susan Phillips, a staff reporter at WHYY radio, is also a long-time resident of West Philadelphia. Heshimu Jaramogi, WURD news director as well as publisher of the Neighborhood Leader community newspaper, is a longtime print and broadcast journalist. The workshop also included guest presentations by Robert Christian, editor of the University City Review; Bruce Webb of the Philadelphia Scoop; and attorney David Rudovsky.

Six WPED community broadcasters were recruited to participate. They received equipment training and interviewed people for 5- to 8-minute radio pieces. Five completed the training and produced stories that aired on WPEB. The five pieces were completed and were broadcast in June, July and August 2011.

The workshop participants will now serve as the core of the “News and Public Affairs” subcommittee of the WPEB Programming Committee. The finished pieces were scheduled to be available on the WPEB website <https://sites.google.com/site/wpeb881> later in the year. ■

# NJSpotlight.com Library

**N**JSpotlight.com, a public affairs news site for New Jersey, proposed assembling a digital library for the collection, analysis and presentation of New Jersey public-interest data and research reports on such topics as schools and state and local budgets. The site planned to collaborate with Philly.com and community websites in New Jersey.

As of this report, the digital library is under construction. The first piece, a voters' guide, launched in September 2011. The project has expanded from its original plan, both in scope and partnerships, reports John Mooney, the site's founding editor.

The main addition was the "2011 Voters' Project," which will be part of the new library and accompanied the state's legislative election. Largely funded through non-profit grants, the guide queried the more than 200 major party candi-

**Project Website:**  
<http://bit.ly/s1Ur5i>



dates for Senate and Assembly on a range of issues facing the state, including education, energy and health care, and presented their answers in easy-to-use format developed by E-The People.

Along with the guide, NJ Spotlight provided corresponding research, journalism and data on the issues, collected as

part of the Enterprise Reporting Award. Included were campaign contributions and other financial disclosure information for the candidates. That collection of documents and other resources can also be accessed separately through the new Library page itself, and remain in the Library after the election.

To help distribute and promote the features, NJ Spotlight has a new agreement pending with WNYC Radio's "It's a Free Country," as well as some other potential partnerships both within WNYC and with other media organizations. ■

# Conclusion and Recommendations

It's clear that a lot of impressive journalism was accomplished with these awards. The journalism reached broader audiences because of the collaborations. Several of the projects had notable impact and elicited response from public officials. The awards brought diverse voices into the storytelling activities. They also served to validate efforts of many of the city's new media startups.

The partners say they valued the collaborations and many of the partnerships show promise of continuing. Even though the funds have been spent, many of the projects identify further reporting they'd like to do.

Some of the project leaders said they had aspired to more ambitious efforts that would have involved more sophisticated multimedia entry points or ad-

**“Several of the projects had notable impact and elicited response from public officials. The awards brought diverse voices into the storytelling activities. They also served to validate efforts of many of the city's new media startups,”**

ditional data collection, and they scaled down their efforts to match the size of the awards.

In sharing so much content, however, there were some missed opportunities to help readers find it all:

- Not all the projects created landing pages, where readers could find a list of all the enterprise stories on a particular topic in one place.
- Many individual stories in a series didn't link back to previous stories or provide any navigation (although Newsworks did provide excellent boxes on its daily Feed that gave users links to related school stories).
- Searches of the sites to find companion content showed how difficult it could be for users to find all the related project stories that were produced.
- Some attractive logos were created but not always used by all partners to brand the projects so readers could know they were part of the same collaboration.

Going forward, we see great potential in initiatives like the Enterprise Reporting Awards to incentivize collaboration, jumpstart reporting that needs to be done and nurture new players in the city's media ecosystem.

## Recommendations:

- ◆ **Extended and more flexible timelines.** Ten-month or full-year award periods would allow more space for new partners to get to know one another, for training to occur and for data to be collected and analyzed before stories are produced or written.
- ◆ **Larger awards.** Consideration should be given to \$7,500 awards, to start.
- ◆ **Tiered awards.** More complex projects should be considered for a second round of funding once they successfully launch the first phase of their projects.
- ◆ **Collaborative incentives.** Projects that engage in robust cross-linking, archive summaries or headlines of stories they linked out to, actively co-publish stories, or grow their partnerships with new members should receive a collaboration bonus to continue their efforts.
- ◆ **Adjust the start date.** The early November launch was difficult for student workers and others. A January or June start date would be better.
- ◆ **Better inter-project communication.** Many of the projects might have benefited from knowing when their peers were launching their reports and might have added links. A Google or Facebook group or email listserv might have juiced some additional linking to one another's efforts.
- ◆ **Greater adoption of in-depth reporting awards.** We believe mainstream media companies, universities, foundations and others can – and should – replicate programs like the Enterprise Awards and should set aside \$50,000 to \$100,000 a year in greenhouse funding to start them.

We also believe that WHY? paved the way in producing some collaboration prototypes that could be replicated by other public media outlets.

In all, much was accomplished by these projects in just 10 months. They produced excellent journalism. The partnerships got important news stories distributed beyond the narrow silos of individual websites. The collaborations have seeded other partnership opportunities.

“The Enterprise projects have had follow-on impacts beyond just the stories reported,” added Patrick Sherlock, of the William Penn Foundation. “Partners who first met through the Enterprise Fund are now talking about other emerging opportunities to work together, sharing audiences, techniques and staff. Philadelphia’s local community around journalism, new media and technology, formerly diffuse and unaware of their numbers, has coalesced and grown through these small projects.”

The idea of funding for discrete in-depth reporting projects is easily replicable, and we hope to see it used by foundations, traditional media companies, universities, public media stations and others interested in jumpstarting good content. ■

“Going forward, we see great potential in initiatives like the Enterprise Reporting Awards to incentivize collaboration, jumpstart reporting that needs to be done and nurture new players in the city’s media ecosystem.”





View this report online at: [www.J-Lab.org/publications/enterprise-awards](http://www.J-Lab.org/publications/enterprise-awards)



**Igniting news  
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3201 New Mexico Ave. NW

Suite 330

Washington, D.C. 20016

Phone: 202-885-8100

[www.J-Lab.org](http://www.J-Lab.org)