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Statement of Direction for PCC Oct. 23, 1981

DRAFT

WHAT PCC IS NOT.

1. Just a publishing Co..
2. Just a device for profit
3. Just a computer literacy vendor

WHAT PCC IS.

1. A supporter of cutting edge technology
2. A self-supporting business, including paying a reasonable salary
3. An information gathering and distribution Company.
4. A promoter of the use of computers by as large a *segment of the population as possible.*
5. An educator -- about computers, microcomputers, computing, telecommunications.
6. A provider of public access to computers and information about computers.
7. An undertaker of unique projects - sometimes high risk projects which may not yet be profitable but are socially valuable.
8. A promoter of mass digital communications.
9. An organization dedicated to getting accurate information on

computer related products to the public

10. A group oriented toward the individual and small group use of computers as compared with large medium and large scale organizations.

POSSIBLE STRUCTURES FOR PCC

1. Non-profit parent with a series of profit or non-profit children.
 - a. projects start within PCC and spin off when mature or better carried on outside of PCC in order to free PCC resources for new projects.
 - b. spin out means:
 1. sell
 2. give unrelated business operation status within the PCC structure
 3. form independent non-profit corporation
 4. form independent for profit corporation
 5. form a joint venture with another organization.

It is our intent that the people who create and staff a project will form part of the spin-off and will participate in the equity if the spin-off is for profit.

It is also our intent that PCC will retain a small portion of the equity in spin offs. This

will endow PCC with a revenue source in the case of profits and a modest amount of control in the case of non-profits

c. terminate project - when job is done

HOW TO ACCOMPLISH OUR GOALS

1. Run profitable business and use profits to support losers.
2. Get grants to support projects (ie non-businesses; but allow these to become businesses)
3. Obtain venture capital - see spin-offs
4. Receive donations -
 - a. \$10,000 to 1,000,000. from large companies supportive of PCC's goals
 - b. \$10 to 1,000 from subscribers and individual supporters.
 - c. government (talk to Liza...)

JIM'S CONTRIBUTION

The purpose of Peoples' Computer Company is the encouragement of and dissemination of computing power and electronic information processing understanding and abilities to and for the general public.

educational computer
computing

Recreation education

RC

(didn't have time to complete this, Jim is writing it up)

LIZA'S COMMENTS

The PCC Board is a collection of computing and other professionals who have a vision of the future and want to help the rest of the world get there. Each member has a slightly different "holy grail". The PCC staff, with the exception of Ramon and myself, is a collection of "non-computing professionals" who are charged with carrying out the Board's visions. For a considerable period this has been accomplished through publishing magazines.

At today's meeting magazine publishing was clearly identified as a means to the end of spreading many words about computing, not the end in itself. Several other means were enumerated -- electronic publishing,

seminars, teleconferencing, and public access sites.

The role of money making within PCC was seen as a means of providing adequate salary to the staff and thereafter supporting "far out" computing projects. The board expressed satisfaction with the resolution of RC and suggested that spinning-off projects in this way is a positive goal rather than a failure.

The specific interests of those board members present was difficult to figure out. Dave Caulkins, Keith Britton, Jim Warren, and Dennis Allison are all interested in PCNet, and electronic publishing. Dave and Jim have professional expertise in telecommunications. Robyn Shotwell is also involved in electronic publishing and expressed interest in educating corporate executives. Keith and Dennis had strong positive words for DDI and spoke about artificial intelligence. All board members expressed approval of ComputerTown and the idea of enlarging the project into a national organization from its present position as a research project. Michael Berman, Dave Thornburg, and Ramon Zamora were absent.

The PCC staff was represented by Cliff West, Craig Harper, Harlin Overson, and myself. Cliff, Craig, and Harlin all have publishing backgrounds and joined PCC to work on the magazines. I joined PCC to work with CTUSA bringing experience in personal computing, teaching, and technical writing.

Dave Caulkins mentioned that the goal of this meeting was to outline short (6 months), middle (1 year), and long (5 year) goals for PCC. I

don't think we got quite that far but perhaps I can make some valid inferences, on the basis of what was said.

1) Short term:

a) DDJ should grow and establish its financial stability under the guidance of the present staff.

b) ComputerTown should proceed with the NSF Grant Deliverables and piggyback, as much as possible, the formation of the National Organization into its current activities.

c) PCNet was not mentioned directly.

2) Middle term

a) The possibilities for DDJ should be examined. It could be spun-off in any of the ways outlined above. Meanwhile, it should support its staff in the manner to which they would like to become accustomed and provide PCC with some seed money for other projects. An electronic version of DDJ should be published as soon as possible, either as a separate project or as part of DDJ.

b) ComputerTown National should be started and run concurrently with the winding down of the NSF Grant. Additional funding should be raised in order to employ more hours of the existing staff and or bring other people on board. Several activities are appropriate for ComputerTown National --

teaching for money, publishing of a resources list (hard copy and electronic) and product evaluation in the areas of informal education and beginning computer use. ComputerTown National's major function would be to serve as a continuing communication link between local ComputerTowns and similar computer literacy projects throughout the country (and possibly around the world).

c) PCNet???

d) Book Publishing - do it.

e) Other electronic publishing - it would seem natural to start up a BBS or Conference Tree within PCC in this time frame.

2) Long Term

a) DDJ should be spun-off

b) ComputerTown National should continue until computer literacy is "universal". Then it should either find a new mandate or wind down.

c) PCNet protocol should be established and the project might have several spin-offs.

d) Book Publishing - depends on the staff at the time.

e) Electronic publishing should now be a PCC forte!

If this scenerio is to occur, some action is appropriate now. I suggest that all PCC employees have becomming "Computer Literate" added to their current job descriptions. ^{To do this, they will need a few hours each week for study and teaching.} In the future, all new employees should have a specific interest in promoting the ideals of PCC as well as the necessary skills to perform routine office tasks. We should all be using computing equipment whenever possible in order to "practice what we preach".

This draft is being circulated double-spaced so that each of you may add your comments. My comments were written after the meeting ended and noone has approved (or disapproved) of them. Please add to or line out as you see fit.