



PRESS RELEASE

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DC Business Woman Featured At International Symposium In Japan

Washington, DC – October 17, 2003 - Lisa Kimball, Executive Producer, Group Jazz delivered a keynote address at the symposium, "Civil Society and the Internet - 20 Years of Networking and the Progress to the Future," held in 4 cities in Japan on 11 – 19 October 2003. Ms. Kimball spoke on "Social Computing: Creating Collaborative Conversations to Support Civil Society Networks." Since 1986, Ms. Kimball has been using online technologies to create off-site meetings, professional conferences, and virtual team spaces of all kinds.

The symposium was organized by Japan Computer Access for Empowerment (JCAFE) and held in Tokyo, Sendai, Hiroshima, and Kobe. The meeting was funded by the Toyota Foundation and the Tokyo Metropolitan Government and supported by the NEC, Internet Association Foundation and the Japan Science and Technology Corporation.

Based on the concept that civil society is built upon the trust in place between individuals, individuals and organizations, and organizations, the symposium focused on the way to connect people who have like-minded objectives (non-profits, civic organizations, and community activists). "We'd like to support networking of NGOs across regions, fields, and genres in Japan and in the world through this symposium," explained Hamada Tadahisa, President of JCAFE.

"The members of JCAFE have admired Ms. Kimball's pioneering work in networking activities for many years, and look forward to learning about her views on how we can make more progress in the future" explains Tadahisa.

"During the 1980s, the subject of Networking was discussed throughout society," says Tadahisa. "The means by which people corresponded and gain access to information has been dramatically altered with the advent and access to the Internet becoming more widespread."

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These symposia will consider how to create a future society focused upon its individual citizens, and role played by the effective use of the Internet, while evaluating and discussing its usage during the last twenty years.”

“We usually define the digital divide as being about information gaps – who has and does not have access to the vast stores of information available online,” says Kimball. “I propose that the bigger problem is something else. Too few people have the perspective and know-how they need to PRODUCE information and distribute it via the Internet. Not enough people are able to use the Internet to tell their stories, share their experience, or provide us with their language to help us understand the world from their point of view.”

“If the Internet is going to fulfill its promise to support and enhance the quality of Civil Society and support our efforts to collaborate to make a better world, then we need to focus more on the social computing capacities of the Internet and less on its information processing capacity. We need to understand the Internet as a place for groups of people to interact in social spaces – not just a place for individuals to access canned information,” concludes Kimball.

Following Ms. Kimball’s return, Group Jazz is sponsoring a virtual event November 3-14, 2003 with The Benton Foundation and New York State Forum. E-Government for All: A Virtual Conference on E-Government and the Digital Divide
<http://www.egov4all.org>

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