

IFE/INFO

Public Policy Salon

Trickle-Up Innovation: How Governments Can Support Grassroots Science & Tech

Enriching Washington's Public Policy Life • Making World Affairs Our Business



Institute
for
Education

A Panel Discussion with White House Presidential Innovation Fellows:

Garren Givens, White House Presidential Innovation Fellow: Open Data Initiatives, Department of Education

Hillary Hartley, White House Presidential Innovation Fellow: MyProject USA, General Services Administration

Andreas Ledergerber, Head of the Office for Science, Technology and Higher Education at the Embassy of Switzerland in the United States.

Moderator

John Paul Farmer

*Former Senior Advisor to the
White House Office of Science
and Technology Policy*

Special Guest

Aneesh Chopra

*First Chief Technology Officer
of the United States (2009-2012)*

Hosted by

H.E. Manual Sager

*Ambassador of Switzerland
to the United States*

Residence of the Swiss Ambassador | Washington, D.C.

Thursday, March 13, 2014

Public Policy Evening Salon

Panel Moderator



John Paul Farmer

John Paul Farmer served as Senior Advisor to the US Chief Technology Officer in the White House Office of Science & Technology Policy. As such, he directed the Presidential Innovation Fellows program, which brings top innovators and entrepreneurs from the private sector for tours of duty in government, where they team with top government innovators to make game-changing progress on projects of national importance. John previously served as Senior Advisor for Healthcare Reform at the U.S. Office of Personnel Management, working on healthcare information technology, delivery system reform and economic issues. Prior to Washington, John worked in the investment industry for Credit Suisse and Lehman Brothers. He played professional baseball as a shortstop in the Los Angeles Dodgers and Atlanta Braves minor league systems. John holds an MBA with honors from Columbia Business School and a BA with honors from Harvard University. John is also the cofounder of IFE’s Emerging Market Roundtable program. ■

Special Guest Speakers



Garren Givens

Garren Givens is a Presidential Innovation Fellow working on Open Data Initiatives at the Department of Education. He is an experienced entrepreneur and product strategist, and is passionate about consumer Internet. He has contributed articles to VentureBeat and Huffington Post, and his startups have been covered by Entrepreneur, Forbes, TechCrunch, VentureBeat, and other publications. Garren holds a BA and MBA from Yale University, and received the prestigious Silver Anniversary Scholarship from Yale School of Management. He is a self-taught coder, and possibly the only programmer who still prefers books to online tutorials. Garren Givens is an avid golfer and classical pianist and lives in Washington, DC, with his wife, Alexandra. ■



Hillary Hartley

Hillary Hartley is a Presidential Innovation Fellow working on the MyUSA project at the General Services Administration. Hillary has been working to make government more accessible and available online for over 15 years, starting as a web designer for Arkansas.gov in 1997. In her most recent role as Director of Integrated Marketing for eGovernment provider NIC, Hillary helped NIC’s 29 state portals embrace new technology and concepts for a 21st century government. She speaks at events across the country, educating and evangelizing “government 2.0” and social networking best practices for government. In 2004, Hillary led the team that created MyPollingPlace.com – the first-ever nationwide polling place lookup site launched during the 2004 November general election. ■



Andreas Ledergerber

Andreas Ledergerber obtained his M.A. degree in communication science and history from the University of Zurich, where he contributed to research projects in the field of concentration of media ownership and self-regulation in the media sector. He joined the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology (ETH Zurich) in 2006, working as a senior advisor in the Office of the Vice President for Research and Corporate Relations, advising the executive board on both strategic and operational levels on international research initiatives. Since October 1, 2013, Andreas Ledergerber is the Head of the Office for Science, Technology and Higher Education at the Embassy of Switzerland in the United States. ■



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Guests

Phil Ashlock*

General Services Administration

Dr. Rosa Batoreau

Deputy Chief of Mission
Embassy of the Portugal

H.E. Rudolk Bekink

Embassy of the Netherlands

Andy Burness

Burness Communications

Aneesh Chopra

Co-Founder & EVP,
Hunch Analytics
Former U.S. Chief Technology
Officer

Steve Ciccone

Toyota NA
IFE Innovation Founder

Eleanor Clift

The Daily Beast

Adam Dole*

DHHS

John Paul Farmer

White House Senior Advisor
(former)
IFE EMR Cofounder

John Felleman*

General Services Administration

Garren Givens*

Department of Education

Ina Ginsburg

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RFFG Fellow

Hillary Hartley*

General Services Administration

Michael Hirsch

National Journal

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Joanne Ke

The World Bank, IFE Fellow

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Technology or Teachers?

Kathy Kemper

Founder and CEO, Institute for Education

Posted: The Huffington Post – February 19, 2014

The White House recently announced a nearly \$1 billion private sector commitment to ConnectED, an initiative that President Obama launched last summer to connect 99% of the nation's students to high-speed Internet by 2017. The hope is that greater connectivity can play a significant role in improving student achievement and preparing young people to thrive in a workplace dominated by information technology.

Educational outcomes in the U.S. considerably lag those of many other advanced countries. In 2012, to name just one recent example, the OECD's Program for International Student Assessment ranked student performance in the U.S. (as measured by standardized tests) below the OECD average in math and science, and just slightly better than average in reading. Singapore, meanwhile, scored second overall. How come? Here is how Singapore's Ambassador to the U.S., Ashok Kumar Mirpuri, explains the excellence of his country's educational system:

We take pride that more than 90% of our students are in schools where their learning is not hindered by a lack of educational resources like computer software and instructional materials. This is possible because of centralized curriculum design and three successive information and communication technology master plans implemented across all our schools to support our teachers who use a range of teaching approaches, including leveraging technology, so as to enhance our students' learning. Beyond developing a strong foundation in literacy, numeracy, and sciences, we have also emphasized the development of character

and values in our students. Teachers, parents, and the community each play important roles in developing the full potential of our children. We recognize our teachers as members of a professional force, and we also value the support and confidence of parents and the community as our partners in education.

There is no silver bullet that will enable the U.S. to catch up, and it has been clear for some time, moreover, that simply throwing money at schools is not the answer. According to the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, funding per student is four times higher today than it was roughly 40 years ago, but this has not kept average student achievement from plateauing.

Given the importance of information technology in the 21st century, and the development of innovative educational methods which revolve around broadband access, it makes sense that greater connectivity would improve learning outcomes. Internet access itself is not a problem--almost all schools in the U.S. are connected to the Internet, and over 90 percent have a broadband connection. However, an estimated two-thirds--including not only primary and secondary schools, but also colleges and universities--subscribe to speeds lower than 25 Mbps. In Finland, by contrast, only roughly 40% of students in grade 8 alone attended a school subscribing to a speed this low. Meanwhile, Singapore has launched a plan to provide nationwide access to broadband at speeds of 1 Gbps or more.

Can the faster broadband speeds the Obama administration is pushing for help boost educational achievement? It seems that the jury is still out on this

question. Some studies, including reports completed by the Department of Education and the International Society for Technology in Education, suggest that access to broadband has a positive impact on student outcomes, from better grades to higher achievement on standardized tests, especially among low-income households. But there is almost as much evidence indicating that greater access to the Internet has no effect--or even a negative effect--on learning. A 2006 University of Chicago study which examined the rollout of expanded Internet access in the late 1990s concluded that it had little impact on learning outcomes. In 2010, the Urban Institute found that increased access to broadband in North Carolina was actually associated with a small negative impact on math and reading test scores.

At first glance, these unfavorable findings might be surprising. But considering the endless possibilities for distraction and procrastination that the Internet offers, they could almost be expected. In fact, a study completed by researchers at Carnegie Mellon found that students attending schools which blocked access to YouTube and other non-educational sites performed comparatively better. Like all technologies, broadband is a double-edged sword. The administration can push for greater connectivity, but as long as kids are looking to play Candy Crush, it's far from clear that this emphasis will result in the educational gains for which it hopes.

Kathy Kemper is founder and CEO of the Institute for Education a nonprofit foundation, headquartered in Washington, DC, that recognizes and promotes leadership and civility locally, nationally and in the world community. IFE also encourages youth global citizenship with programs that foster intercultural understanding.