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NetSquared Conference Announces \$100,000 Innovation Award Winners and New Innovation Support Network

Maplight.org, Miro, Freecycle Network named top projects using social Web for social benefit

San Francisco, CA—May, 31 2007—Following a competition that combined an innovative online voting process and intense in-person campaigning, the winners of the NetSquared Innovation Awards were announced last night at the NetSquared Conference (www.netsquared.org) at Cisco Headquarters in San Jose, CA. The competition and the conference were created by TechSoup (www.techsoup.org), a nonprofit that helps the global nonprofit community acquire and use technology to fulfill their missions.

The conference attendees and online voters assessed the projects on the basis of their technological innovation, financial sustainability, and social benefit. Chosen from a field of 152 nominees, of which 21 finalists were showcased at the conference, the three top projects using social Web technologies for social benefit are:

- Maplight.org: A Light on Politics and Democracy (www.maplight.org)
- Miro Open Source Open Standards Video (www.getdemocracy.com)
- The Freecycle Network (www.freecycle.org)

The winning projects will share half of a \$100,000 cash award, with the other 18 finalists dividing the balance of the award funds. In addition, all of the finalists are eligible for substantial in-kind support donated by the newly formed NetSquared Innovator Support Network to help them turn their visions into realities.

TechSoup founder Daniel Ben-Horin commented: "We first congratulate the community that leaned into this process, volunteered immense time and energy, and created an invigorated ecosystem for support of a very new field. Hundreds of people and organizations participated, in a wide variety of ways and brought a tremendous span of resources to the table. The energy and resources of this community aren't going away after the conference. We hope and expect that they will multiply and that the support base for Web-driven social enterprises will be immensely strengthened.

Next, in the short term, cash always helps, and Maplight.org, Miro: Open Source, Open Standards Video, and The Freecycle Network convinced a tough crowd that they stood out among extremely challenging competition. Our congratulations to them and to the other featured projects. They all worked like crazy to prepare, and we only wish there could have been more cash to hand out. Next year we think there will be."



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The new NetSquared Innovation Support Network (<http://www.netsquared.org/2007/partner/innovator-support-network>) provides hands-on expertise, resources and mentoring to the 21 finalist projects in the areas of Web development, technology assistance and Web-based tools and services.

Ben-Horin extended an invitation to companies interested in joining the network, noting that “companies with technical or business expertise that can help nurture new social ventures are excited by this opportunity to leverage their philanthropic and pro bono activities.”

The 2007 conference supporters reflect the diversity of the NetSquared community. They include Cisco (www.cisco.com), Yahoo! (<http://brand.yahoo.com/forgood>), Microsoft (www.microsoft.com), Ensemble Capital Management (www.ensemblecapital.com), ReadyTalk (www.readytalk.com) and Symantec (www.symantec.com). Additional conference sponsors include Business Objects (www.businessobjects.com); Bryght (www.bryght.com); Citizen Agency (www.citizenagency.com); and CMC (www.cmc-americas.com), as well as Bring Light (www.bringlight.com); Care2 (www.care2.com); Man On a Mission (www.manonamission.biz); Network for Good (www.networkforgood.org); Tendenci (www.tendenci.com); and Wild Apricot (www.wildapricot.com).

The conference is also supported by the following organizations: Aspiration Technology Community; Technology Foundation of California; Full Circle Fund; Kellogg Foundation; Make Change Trust; Mozilla Foundation; Nonprofit Finance Fund; Nord Foundation; Omidyar Network; Silicon Valley Community Foundation; Sunlight Foundation; and Surdna Foundation.

About NetSquared (www.netsquared.org)

NetSquared’s mission is to spur responsible adoption of social Web tools by social benefit organizations. Nonprofits and NGOs thrive on relationships, which means the social Web holds tremendous potential to transform their effectiveness and impact.

At this year’s NetSquared Conference May 29-30, 2007 at Cisco Headquarters in San Jose, 21 social benefit technology projects, which were chosen from a pool of 152 (<http://www.netsquared.org/projects>), competed for the \$100,000 NetSquared Technology Innovation Award.

The NetSquared initiative is spearheaded by the nonprofit technology Web resource TechSoup (www.techsoup.org), which offers a wealth of information on products, applications, best practices, online forums, and ideas on nonprofit tech topics from networking to open source and Web 2.0. It also gives its 400,000 unique monthly visitors access to the TechSoup Stock (www.techsoup.org/stock) service, which offers hundreds of hardware and software products donated by leading providers such as Cisco, Microsoft, Symantec, Intuit, and Adobe. Since its inception in January 2002, the service has distributed more than 2.7 million products to nonprofits in North America, Europe, Australia, and Africa, and freed up over \$700 million for other uses.

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