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CompuMentor Receives $750,000 Surdna Foundation Grant
Grant fosters advancement of nonprofit technology use nationwide

San Francisco, CA – September 29, 2003-- The Surdna Foundation and CompuMentor announced today the approval of a three-year $750,000 grant that supports CompuMentor's long-term strategy to advance technology use within the nonprofit sector nationwide. The grant will support the implementation of two key elements of this strategy:

- Vastly enhance the availability of donated and discounted technology products by expanding its product donation distribution service DiscounTech, which is housed on TechSoup.org, CompuMentor's nonprofit technology portal. The grant will help secure more donations, especially of essential products such as hardware and connectivity. It will also ensure that the growing pool of donations is distributed as effectively and efficiently as possible, and that nonprofits receive the support they need to put these products to good use.

- Expand TechSoup to serve as a technology education and support resource for the nonprofit sector. This initiative will include the development of content for key nonprofit sub-sectors such as low-income community health clinics and domestic violence shelters. TechSoup will be providing customized technology resources to these groups in collaboration with sector leaders and specialists.

This is the latest set of grants from the Surdna Foundation, which already provided $600,000 of venture funding and core support for TechSoup between 1999-2002. Edward Skloot, Surdna's Executive Director, said the grant was an unusually large and long-term commitment for continuing support. "We looked at this as a way of building on our investment," Mr. Skloot said. "CompuMentor had paid major dividends in terms of the quality of its work on our first set of grants, and we thought they could pay even bigger dividends if we stayed the course with them."

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Vince Stehle, Surdna Program Officer for Nonprofit Sector Support, pointed to the First National Business Plan Competition for Nonprofits (http://www.compumentor.org/news/cm_050903.html). This competition, created by The Partnership on Nonprofit Ventures (Yale School of Management, The Goldman Sachs Foundation and the Pew Charitable Trusts), selected DiscounTech (and three other entries) from 655 entries to be awarded a $100,000 grand prize. "The Yale prize confirmed what we already knew: that these folks know how to create a sustainable social venture that renders the highest conceivable social benefits. They are both visionaries and implementers, and we are proud to be their partner in this enterprise."

CompuMentor's long-term-strategy is aimed at channeling up to a billion dollars of donated technology products into the nonprofit sector, accompanied by a comprehensive program of education and support, both for use of the donated products and to support the evolution of nonprofit and low-income technology utilization generally. Additional components include a heightened level of collaboration within the technology support sector toward a goal of bringing high-impact benefit to targeted programmatic areas.

CompuMentor's President and Founder, Daniel Ben-Horin, presented this ambitious plan to 30 potential national investors earlier this year. The unusual meeting was convened and co-hosted by Surdna, Microsoft, the AOL Time Warner Foundation, The Carnegie Corporation and Peninsula Community Foundation and was held at The James Irvine Foundation in San Francisco. Presenters, in addition to the hosts and CompuMentor, included the Bridgespan Group, Cisco Systems, the Tides Foundation, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, and One Economy.

"We had reached a juncture of being able to address a set of problems with a set of solutions and resources, and of being able to do it at scale." Mr. Ben-Horin said. "But to do so, we needed to break out of the project-to-project funding cycle and to start thinking in terms of true philanthropic investment toward eventual large-scale impact and sustainability. The hosts stepped up to the plate and staged the January meeting as a way of communicating this concept to the larger funding community."

Other funders and observers of the field commented on the Surdna grant:
Sterling Speirn, President of Peninsula Community Foundation said, "It's great to see the collaborative conversation we had in January leading to this concrete result. We, like Surdna, are excited to support CompuMentor's efforts to advance technology use within the nonprofit sector. On our end, we're working with CompuMentor to pilot a program that will integrate their resources on behalf of a very targeted group of our grantees in the environmental education field. By coordinating technology support resources in this way, we think both CompuMentor and our environmental grantees will get the greatest value from Peninsula Community Foundation's philanthropic investment."

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David Eisner, who co-sponsored the investor event as Senior Vice President of the AOL Time Warner Foundation, and who has been recently named as President Bush's intended nominee to head the Corporation for National Service, commented, "This is terrific news for the nonprofit sector. CompuMentor's vision is big yet realistic and, most importantly, it transcends the compartmentalization that today limits much technology support for community-based organizations. Surdna is really advancing the field by supporting CompuMentor's push toward a comprehensive and integrated approach."

Robert Deutsch, Senior Community Investment Manager of Cisco Systems, Inc., commended Surdna for supporting CompuMentor's product donation distribution service: "CompuMentor's program has enabled Cisco to donate to as many organizations per month as we previously donated to in one year. More importantly, CompuMentor now has the ability to assist nonprofits in acquiring a complete technology solution instead of software and hardware that might not work for their specific needs. This service will assist non-profits in setting up technology systems to improve business processes so they can focus on serving the communities and people in need."

About CompuMentor

CompuMentor (www.compumentor.org) is one of the country's oldest and largest technology assistance organizations serving the nonprofit community. Founded in 1987, CompuMentor offers a wide range of programs and services that help nonprofits and schools use technology to achieve their missions. Online, nonprofits can access technology information and resources through TechSoup (www.techsoup.org), the technology website for nonprofits. TechSoup features include Articles and Worksheets, News and Views, a Services Directory, and a thriving online Community. The newest TechSoup service is DiscounTech, which distributes donated and discounted technology products to nonprofits at the lowest possible cost. Thanks to generous contributions from leading technology providers such as Microsoft, Macromedia, Symantec, Intuit, and Cisco, the retail value of products channeled into the nonprofit sector is expected to reach $150 million in the current year. TechSoup also publishes a free weekly e-newsletter, *TechSoup...By the Cup*, which is read by over 30,000 subscribers. CompuMentor provides direct service to nonprofits and schools through its Consulting Services practice. This deep, hands-on work includes services from technology planning to ongoing support, as well as three areas of sector focus: Community Technology Centers (CTCs), Healthcare, and Computer Recycling and Reuse. CompuMentor is based in San Francisco, CA. CompuMentor has an annual budget of $9 million and a staff of 80.

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