VIRTUAL CHAUTAUQUA SURVEY DATA ANALYSIS
by Mary E. Virnoche, University of Colorado at Boulder, Copyright 2000

Ninety-seven (97) surveys were administered to people who received Virtual Chautauqua artist awards, people who received disability small grants, and teachers at a Virtual Chautauqua pilot site (Appendix 1). Most surveys were delivered and returned by U.S. Mail. In the case of most of the people with disabilities, the surveys were administered in person by an interviewer who also recorded responses. More than 50% (51) of the surveys were completed and submitted to the Virtual Chautauqua Research Director.

Respondents included 35 artists (68%), 8 teachers (16%) and 8 people who received disability small grants (16%). One of the artist awardees also had a physical disability, so a total of 9 respondents reported having a physical disability. Eight percent (4) of the respondents identified themselves as Hispanic or Mexican American. Most (80%) identified as Caucasian. Almost twice as many women (31) as men (18) responded. Most respondents (60%) were 40 years or older. Fourteen percent (7) used some type of adaptive technology that allowed them to use their computer. Eighteen percent (9) lived in cities of less than 20,000 people and five were further than 20 miles from a larger metropolitan area.

Comfort with Computing

Most of the respondents were frequent Internet users: they reported that they used the Web two or more times each week (73%). For most of these users, they accessed the Internet at home (78%), but a significant number also reported using the Internet at school (26%) and at a non-home work site (24%).

While 92% (45) were comfortable using email and 84% (42) were comfortable using the Web, only 34% were comfortable using online bulletin boards. About one third (34%) of the respondents reported that they knew how to maintain a web page. When the respondents encountered problems in computing, most worked through the problem on their own using trial and error (72%).

Only two respondents participated in any training offered by the Virtual Chautauqua project. Most (70%) had taught themselves how to use the Internet and 86% used email two or more times a week. While 37% reported that their skills were about the same as those with whom they had regular contact; 36% felt their skills were better; and 26% felt that their skills were lower. Men were more likely than women to report that their skills were higher than those with whom they had frequent contact. Women were more likely to report their skills were lower than those with whom they had frequent contact, but the number of cases was too small to establish statistical significance (Table 1).

Table 1: Gender and Computing Skills Self Perception

	My skills are higher than others	My skills are about the same as others	My skills are lower than others	Total
Men	8 (44.4%)	6 (33.3%)	4 (22.2%)	18 (100%)
Women	10 (32.3%)	11 (35.5%)	10 (32.3%)	31 (100%)

Chi Square p < .6

One third of the respondents who had a web page (13) said that without the assistance of the Virtual Chautauqua project, it would be unlikely that they would have a web page with online performance clips. A few (12%) also attributed their use of the Internet to Virtual Chautauqua.

Arts and Technology

Experiencing a mediated performance, whether on compact disc, television or via the Internet is certainly different than the experience of a live performance. Yet more than 90% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that the "Internet is a great medium for sharing the arts." One might expect that artists themselves would be most critical of alternatives to live performance. The survey data supported this assumption.

The experience of living in communities with few artistic live venues may be one factor that contributes to the likelihood that an artist will be more accepting of online performance as an adequate alternative. Those artists who themselves were most geographically isolated were more accepting of the Internet as an alternative venue, compared to artists who lived in more urban areas. All of those who lived in smaller communities agreed with the statement "The Internet is a great medium for sharing the arts." All of those who disagreed with that statement were artists who lived in cities with populations over 50,000.

A similar distinction between urban and rural artists was found in their reports of satisfaction with their online performance clips. While 82% of those with online clips indicated they were satisfied or very satisfied with their clips, all of those artists who were unsatisfied with their clips were from more urban areas (4). Likewise, all artists from communities with populations of less than 50,000 people reported being satisfied with their online performance clips. Because of the small number of respondents who had online clips at the time of the survey, these differences are not statistically significant ($p < .2$).

Almost three fourths of those 35 respondents with clips online indicated that it would be unlikely that they would have a performance clip online without the assistance of the Virtual Chautauqua project. Most (67%) were satisfied with the overall Virtual Chautauqua performance site. Almost all felt that the arts provided an effective way for learning about the world. And 81% felt that their profession had been enhanced through the use of the Internet. Thirteen respondents (25%) felt that they did not have adequate opportunities to see live performance. As one might expect, respondents who had a physical disability and lived in less urban communities were more likely to report inadequate opportunities to see live performance (Tables 2 and 3).

Table 2: Variation in Opportunities to See Live Performance by Presence of Physical Disability

	Adequate Opportunities to See Live Performance	Inadequate Opportunities to see Live Performance	Total
No Physical Disability	34 (81%)	8 (19%)	42 (100%)
Physical Disability	4 (44.4%)	5 (55.6%)	9 (100%)

Chi Square $p < .05$

Table 3:
Variation in Opportunities to See Live Performance by Community Population

	Adequate Opportunities to See Live Performance	Inadequate Opportunities to see Live Performance	Total
Community of less than 50,000	26 (81.3%)	6 (18.8%)	32 (100%)
Community of more than 50,000	11 (61.1%)	7 (38.9%)	18 (100%)

Chi Square $p < .1$

Project Effects on Communication and Contacts

Respondent participation in the Virtual Chautauqua project increased the amount of time they spent online, as well as the number of professional contacts that they made. More than one-third (18) of respondents reported an increase in contacts with audience members due to their participation with the Virtual Chautauqua project. Likewise, 21% (11) reported an increase in the number of contacts with artists or other professionals. Respondents reported spending more time in general on the Web (47%). More specifically they were spending more time updating web pages (20%), and more time using email (25%) (Table 4).

Table 4: Changes in Online Activity Attributed to the Virtual Chautauqua Project

Activity Type	Respondents Reporting Increase
Contact with Audiences Members	18 (38%)
Contact with Artists or other Professionals	11 (21%)
Time Spent on the Web	24 (47%)
Time Spent Updating Web page	10 (20%)
Time Spent Using Email	12 (24%)

Discussion

As expected, survey respondents were a very computer literate group. They were voluntary participants in a technology project. This participation in itself most likely attracted a pool of potential respondents who were interested in and able to use the technology. Most respondents were frequent Internet users coming into the project and many reported increased online activity after becoming involved with Virtual Chautauqua. A significant number of artists credited the Virtual Chautauqua project for their ability to put examples of their performance art online. In addition, quite a few respondents also credited Virtual Chautauqua for their ability to be online at all.

A certain "live elitism" surfaced in the survey data. There were a small but significant number of artists who indicated that the Internet was not a great medium for sharing the arts. This disdain for the use of the technology for performance can also be found in other fields such as education.

For a variety of reasons, many have argued that the face-to-face classroom experience is supreme and that online education is unacceptable. At one university, the Women Studies Department went so far as to posit that distance education via the Internet was on its face "anti-feminist." In that Department, a female faculty member had proposed offering a course on Women and Crime over the Web. Women Studies contested the proposal despite the great interest from students who lived far from the home campus.

Those with the privilege of participating in live forums; whether they are artistic or educational, seem to be the most cautious and even antagonistic to the use of technology to mediate the presentation. Like the rural artists, those students who are geographically or socially isolated are most accepting of distance education. In the case of the Women Studies Department mentioned above, 70% of the distance education students were non-traditional students including high numbers of single mothers. For them, there was no alternative other than distance education via the Internet.

To develop a full understanding of the factors that contributed to real and perceived quality variation as live venues merge with technology, more research is needed across and within a number of institutional, geographical, and cultural contexts. This research would allow us to contextualize the characteristics of technologically mediated presentations and accompanying online and offline interactions and perceptions.

Appendix 1: Virtual Chautauqua Questionnaire
This questionnaire should take you approximately 10 minutes to complete.

1. ___ Respondent Code

2. Sex
___ male
___ female

3. Age
___ 18-29
___ 30-39
___ 40-49
___ 50 or older

4. Ethnicity
___ African American
___ Asian American
___ Caucasian
___ Hispanic
___ Mexican American
___ Native American
___ Pacific Islander
___ Other (please specify) _____

5. Type of community in which you live
___ large city (population more than 100,000)
___ medium size city (population between 50,000 and 99,999)
___ small city (population between 20,000 and 49,999)
___ community with less than 19,999 people but within 20 miles of a larger city
___ community with less than 19,999 and more than 20 miles from a larger city

6. If you are a performing artist (professional or amateur), what is your area of performance?
___ Dance
___ Theatre
___ Music
___ Storytelling
___ Other (please specify) _____
___ I am not a performing artist

7. Physical Disability and Adaptive Technology
___ I do not have a physical disability
___ I have a physical disability that requires adaptive technology for me to use the Internet.
___ I have a physical disability but do not require adaptive technology to use the Internet.

   8. If you indicated that you have a disability, please characterize that disability _____

For questions 8-11, please respond with one of the following:
(1) strongly agree (2) agree (3) disagree (4) strongly disagree (5) no experience

___ 9. I am comfortable using the World Wide Web.
___ 10. I am comfortable using electronic mail (email).
___ 11. I am comfortable using at least one type Internet-based non-email communication
        tool such as chat rooms or bulletin boards.
___ 12. I have the skills to maintain a simple web page of my own.

For questions 12-15, please respond with one of the following:
(1) everyday (2) 2-6 times a week (3) 1-7 times month (4) 1-11 times a year (5) never

___ 13. I use the World Wide Web on average
___ 14. I use email on average
___ 15. I use non-email Internet-based communications tools such as chat rooms or bulletin
      boards on average
___ 16. I personally make changes to a web page on average

17. Rank your overall Internet skill level (surfing, email use, discussion group use, building web pages) as it compares to those with whom you have contact on a daily basis: (check one)
___ My Internet skills are generally <u>higher</u> than others with whom I have contact on a daily basis.
___ My Internet skills are generally <u>about the same</u> as those with whom I have contact on a daily basis.
___ My Internet skills are generally <u>lower</u> than those with whom I have contact on a daily basis.

Who helped you learn how to use the Internet? (Check all that apply)
___ 18. I taught myself
___ 19. a friend
___ 20. a co-worker
___ 21. a family member
___ 22. a teacher who used the Internet in the her/his classroom
___ 23. a teacher of a specific Internet class in which I was enrolled
___ 24. other (please specify) _____

Where do you use the Internet? (check all that apply)
___ 25. at home
___ 26. at school
___ 27. at a non-home work site
___ 28. at a public access site (i.e. a community center or library)
___ 29. other (please specify) _____

If you run into a problem with using the Internet, what do you most often do for help? (Check all that apply)
___ 30. try to figure it out myself with trial and error
___ 31. look in a book
___ 32. go to online help features or other online documentation
___ 33. ask a friend
___ 34. ask a co-worker
___ 35. ask a family member
___ 36. ask a teacher who uses the Internet in the her/his classroom
___ 37. ask a technology professional
___ 38. other (please specify) _____

Because of your participation in the Virtual Chautauqua project, which if any of the below Internet activities do you devote more time to than you did before your involvement with the project (Check all that apply):
___ 39. the World Wide Web
___ 40. email
___ 41. non-email Internet-based communications tools such as chat rooms or bulletin boards
___ 42. web page updating

Please rate your satisfaction with the following Virtual Chautauqua elements.
For questions 42-48, please respond with one of the following:
(1) Very Satisfied   (2) Satisfied (3) Unsatisfied (4) Very Unsatisfied (5) never used/don't have
___ 43. Your own web page housed on the Virtual Chautauqua web site
___ 44. Your online performance clip(s)
___ 45. The overall Virtual Chautauqua Web site
___ 46. The education database (Performing Arts Center).
___ 47. Trainings on various Internet skills
___ 48. Email correspondence generated by your web site

I received Internet training through the Virtual Chautauqua project on the following:
(check all that apply):
___ 49. Using the World Wide Web and the Virtual Chautauqua site
___ 50. Using email
___ 51. Using non-email Internet-based communications tools such as chat rooms or
        bulletin boards
___ 52. Maintaining my own web page
___ 53. Use of adaptive technologies
___ 54. Other (specify) _____

Please use one of the following to respond to items 55-57:
(1) Very Likely (2) Likely (3) Unlikely (4) Very Unlikely (5) I do not use/have this
Without your participation in Virtual Chautauqua project, how likely would it be that:
___ 55. You would use the Internet
___ 56. You would now have a web page
___ 57. You would have a digitized performance available on the Internet

58. Video and/or audio recordings of performances which are made available over the Internet offer a
  _____ alternative for those who would not otherwise be exposed to the performance.
__ very good   ___ good   ___ poor___ very poor

59. How has your Internet-based participation in Virtual Chautauqua affected your contacts with
performing artists or related professionals (i.e. recording studio contacts)?
___ decreased my number of contacts
___ no change in my number of contacts
___ increased my number of contacts

60. How has your Internet-based participation in Virtual Chautauqua affected your contacts with audience
members?
___ decreased my number of contacts
___ no change in my number of contacts
___ increased my number of contacts

61. How many offline interactions (i.e. face-to-face, phone) has your Internet-based participation in Virtual
Chautauqua generated?
___ none
___ 1-5
___ 6-10
___ more than 10

62. On average, I am engaged in some type of "in person" performing arts related activity (my own
performance/practice, watching or listening to a performance):

___ everyday
___ 2 - 6 times each week
___ once a week
___ 1 - 3 times a month
___ less than once a month

Please use one of the following to respond to items 62-63:
(1) strongly agree (2) agree (3) disagree (4) strongly disagree (5) no opinion

___ 63. I feel that I have adequate opportunities to see a variety of live (in person) performing arts events
such as concerts, plays, storytelling, or dance.

___ 64. The arts provide an effective way of learning about the world.

___ 65. The Internet is a great medium for sharing the arts.

___ 66. My profession has been enhanced by the use of the Internet.