

Usha Venkatachallam

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- ❖ Over 15 years of experience helping nonprofit organizations creatively apply internet technologies to advance their mission. Extensive experience in dealing with organizations' strategic, operational, technical, and business issues to successfully implement online programs.
 - ❖ Expertise in finding sustainable, culture-specific, and locally-appropriate information and communication technology (ICT) solutions and building ICT capacities of communities in the Global South through trainings.
 - ❖ Frequent speaker and presenter on topics at the intersection of technology and social change.
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EXPERIENCE

Founder & CEO, AIDA, Coimbatore, India

Jan 11 to date

- Setting up AIDA, a startup social enterprise that provides free software development training for brilliant but underprivileged young women, subsidizing it with fee-based corporate employability skills trainings.

CEO, Appropriate IT (AI), Washington, DC, USA

Jun '07 to date

- Lead AI's Innovation Lab, an incubation center for the NGO and NPO sectors to work on innovative and cutting-edge technology solutions. Current project: Citizen Action Platform (CAP) in Uganda.
- Directed AI's consulting division including providing technology advisory services and custom development. Clients served in this capacity include Alliance for Justice (AFJ), Catholic Relief Services (CRS), and Partnership for Transparency Fund (PTF).

Director of Innovation & Technology, Women's Learning Partnership, Bethesda, MD

Nov '08 – Jan '11

- Led the organization's efforts to create sustainable technology solutions and build the information and communication technology (ICT) capacity of communities in 20 countries.
- Developed and implemented a prototype technology Training of Trainers program for Afghan Institute of Learning in Afghanistan that was replicated in Jordan, Lebanon, Nigeria, among others. Authored "*Making IT Our Own*," a technology training of trainers manual presently available in Arabic, English and French.
- Built a multi-lingual web site with complex character sets including right-to-left language scripts. Implemented site in open source content platform Drupal, upgrading to various versions.
- Created a dynamic blog for women's rights activists from the Global South with open source blogging software WordPress. Utilized eCRM tool DemocracyInAction and new media tools such as LiveStream, Facebook, and Twitter to create a vibrant communication and online presence for the organization.
- Coordinated the youth and women's democracy networks. Conducted highly successful video and essay contests that elicited participation from youth around the world, created awareness about social issues, and provoked them to present innovative solutions.
- Upgraded the entire internal infrastructure, including cabling and file server. Migrated mission-critical applications such as email and services including backup to the cloud.

Solutions Architect, Beaconfire Consulting, Arlington, VA

Oct '01 – Jun '07

- As management consultant to nonprofit organizations, created strategy, business, and operational plans; evaluated capabilities and resources; analyzed opportunities; assessed potential risks and rewards; identified and implemented tactical projects; and tracked success metrics. Organizations served include Easter Seals, Heifer International, Planned Parenthood Federation of America, and Unity08.
- As solutions architect, facilitated and led workshops to conduct needs assessment, found appropriate solutions to meet the need, and managed implementations. Organizations served include Alzheimer's Association, American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), Amnesty International, Human Rights First, Oxfam America, and World Resources Institute.

- As tech lead, designed technology architecture to meet client needs, identified external and internal resources for the project, developed and tested solutions. Solutions implemented include content and knowledge management systems, data warehousing, online fundraising, and advocacy. Organizations served include International Food Information Council (IFIC), International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU), NARAL Pro-Choice America, and Urban Institute.
- As Beaconfire's technology team leader, responsible for keeping the company informed of new online technologies and innovations, spoke on these issues at conferences and in blogs, strategized on company direction, hired technology personnel, and managed tech staff assignment to projects. As founding member, instrumental in moving the company from being a developer of in-house technologies to a strategic implementer/integrator of best-of-breed technologies, aiding the company's growth into a premier management and technology consulting firm in the nonprofit sector.

Senior Business Consulting Lead, AppNet/CommerceOne, Arlington, VA Jun '00 - Oct '01

- Led team of business consultants in gathering and analyzing requirements for custom web applications. Responsibilities included leading functional workshops, conducting needs assessments, documenting requirements, assisting the project manager during implementation and testing phases. Specialized in the nonprofit and business to business (b2b) sectors.

Web Developer, National Aeronautics & Space Administration (NASA), Washington, DC Aug '98 - Jun '00

- Led implementation teams in the design and execution of web, multi-media, and computer based training (CBT) applications. Responsibilities included client management, software evaluation, coordination of development teams, programming in web languages (HTML, Perl, and ColdFusion), testing, and project management. Special Mention for exceptional customer service and awards for excellence in design.

Assistant Manager, Kogod Computer Lab, American University, Washington, DC Jun '95 - Aug '98

- Created websites for American University schools and student groups including Kogod Business School and International Women's Group. Solved software and network issues, coordinated upgrades and migrations, and scheduled staff resources.

Producer, All India Radio, Coimbatore, India Sep '92 - Aug '94

- Produced radio dramas and programs with development messages on health, environment, and social ills for the women's, youth, and children's sections of All India Radio. Responsibilities included writing, recording, editing, and production of programs including daily shows. Supervised a staff of 24 including sound engineers, production assistants, announcers, and audio artists. Received awards for excellence in program production and innovative program design. "*Ilam Kadhanayagi*" (Young Heroine) series, tackling issues such as eve teasing was nominated for national award in the social issue outreach for youth category.

Production Assistant, Sasi Advertising, Coimbatore, India Dec '90 - Sep '92

- Assisted in the production of radio and television commercials. Responsibilities included script writing, production coordination, editing, and post production of audio and video ads.

EXPERTISE

Publication:

- *Making IT Our Own: Information & Communication Technology Training of Trainers Manual* (2008, with Rakhee Goyal & Marion Marquardt, Women's Learning Partnership). Available in Arabic, English, and French.

Select Articles and Presentations:

- 2012: *Citizen Action Platform: Amplifying Citizens' Voices Through Technology*, International Anti-Corruption Conference, Brasilia, Brazil
- 2010: *Freedom of Association, Assembly, & Expression: Addressing Online Security*, World Movement for Democracy, Jakarta, Indonesia

- 2010: *Mobilizing for the Future with Mass Media and Participatory Web*, UN Commission on Status of Women, New York, NY
- 2009: *Information Technology and Edutainment as Tools for Social Change*, Musawah, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- 2009: Keynote at Mobile Technology 4 Social Change Camp in Bangalore, India
- 2008: *Everything You Wanted To Know About Tech But Were Afraid To Ask*, Women Who Tech Telesummit
- 2007: *Data Integration: What's an open API and what difference can it make?* NTEN, Washington DC
- 2007: *Best of Breed or All In One, What's in Your Software Future?* Beaconfire Webinar
- 2006: *A Birds Eye View of the Content Management Landscape* with Jeff Herron in Idealware
- 2005: *Getting it All in One Place: Data Integration Strategies* NTEN Regional, Washington DC
- 2005: *Online Publishing & Content Management with Open Source Software* NTEN, Chicago
- 2004: *User Needs Evaluation* Penguin Day, Philadelphia

Select Trainings:

- 2012: *Websites with Wordpress: Software Development Academy*, Coimbatore, India
- 2011: *Regional Institute for Training of Women Trainers in Information and Communication Technology (ICT) for Advocacy*, Association Démocratique des Femmes du Maroc (ADFM), Rabat, Morocco; with Abdul Khan
- 2010: *Connect! Using Facebook & Ning to Create Solidarity Networks*, World Movement for Democracy, Jakarta, Indonesia; with Sean Ang
- 2009: *Youth Tech Festival*, Amman, Jordan
- 2008: *Civic Spaces in Cyberspace: Amplifying Our Voices with Blogs and YouTube Videos*, World Movement for Democracy, Kyiv, Ukraine; with Ginger Richards
- 2008: *Openings in Closed Spaces: Effective Email and Web Communication in Restrictive and Non-Restrictive Environments*, World Movement for Democracy, Kyiv, Ukraine
- 2007: *Regional Institute for Training of Women Trainers in ICT for Social Change*, Beirut, Lebanon
- 2007: *National Women Trainers Institute on ICT for Social Change*, Amman, Jordan; with Munir Idaibes
- 2004: *Information Technology Training for Women's Empowerment and Capacity-Building*, Kabul, Afghanistan

Programming:

- Package solution implementations include CommonSpot, data warehouses, Drupal, RedDot & WordPress.
- Hands-on experience includes ColdFusion, MySQL, PHP, and SQL Server.
- Certifications and technical training include Oracle, SAP, eXpressroom, FatWire, Visual Design, Information Architecture, Multi Media Authoring, and Dynamic Website Development.

Others:

- **Networks:** Co-organizer, DC ICT4D Learning Network; Co-host, Mobile Technology 4 Social Change Camp 2009 in Bangalore, India; Member, Nonprofit Technology Enterprise Network (NTEN)
- **Volunteer:** Technology advisor for Sisterhood Is Global Institute, Women's EDGE, and International Gender & Trade Network. Instructor. Adult education class on Internet and World Wide Web at MLK Jr Public Library, Washington DC. After-School Mentor, Bancroft Elementary, Mt. Pleasant, Washington DC.

EDUCATION

American University, School of Communication, Washington, DC

MA in Film and Video, 1995-1998

- Dean's Honors List and Merit Award (Fall '95), Hall of Nations Scholar (Spring '96-Spring '97)
- Nominated for the King Hu award for Most Promising Asian American Film Maker at the Los Angeles Asian American Film Festival for documentary "*Smoke / Smoke Screen*"

PSG College of Arts and Science, Department of Mass Communication & English Literature, Coimbatore, India

MA in Mass Communication, 1988-1990

- Ranked second in the University

BA in English Literature, 1985-1988

- Ranked first in the University

Writings at [Appropriate IT](#), [WLP](#), [Beaconfire](#) | References available on request