

Open Source Framework for Public-Private Partnerships in Education

Citizens of the world are united by a common desire to educate themselves, and their children, and most support a pooling of resources for public education. Likewise, commercial ventures require a well-educated workforce in order to grow and thrive. Public/private partnerships present the most viable path towards unlocking the value potential in a transformation of the education industry. Realizing this opportunity requires a business model that contemplates, and seeks to leverage, incentives across a diverse group of stakeholders with different expectations and definitions of “return on investment.” This paper proposes an “open source” business model designed to standardize the way public and private entities collaborate in a sustainable and growth-oriented framework and is predicated on three fundamental principles: (a) commercial entities need to make money and grow; (b) public and non-profit entities need to maximize the return on the investments each makes; (c) continued innovation requires robust competition and transparency.

*Leveraging the
Citizen Sector, Social
Entrepreneurship
and Cloud Computing
to Transform the
Education Value
Chain*

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Preface

This position paper intends to stimulate a dialog around the way that education-related products, services and solutions are developed for and acquired by End-User teaching and learning organizations. Its hypothesis is that a more commercially-oriented governance model - that can deliver greater competition and transparency - will benefit the public education sector, social entrepreneurs, and lead to transformational change. At the same time there is an opportunity to more directly tie the investments that citizens, educational institutions and non-profit organizations have made and continue to make in technology and process innovation to quantitative measures of investment return, while recognizing and directly rewarding the value-creation of social entrepreneurs.

While it does not address teaching, learning processes and academic achievement, it does assume that streamlining the way that end-users acquire and pay for products, services and solutions will reduce the financial risks related to the implementation of, and improve access to, new tools and capabilities that are emerging in the market, in ways that shift power from governmental bureaucracies and monopolistically-inclined legacy business models into the hands of educators and the citizen sector. Proposed instead is an “open source framework” to guide the creation of a new business model capable of enabling these important societal goals and aspirations related to public education.

Problem Statement

There is consensus among educational stakeholders that institutional improvements are needed in our primary and secondary schooling and that each stakeholder has an important role to play. Similarly, many higher-ed institutions are seeking more efficient models for commercializing IP being created from research and development work. However, there is no clear consensus on the path forward, and there remain many instances of investments - public, private and philanthropic - that do not result in a measureable return. There are a number of problems within the education sector that contribute to the lack of demonstrable and scalable progress. This paper specifically tackles a rather messy problem space that must be addressed, up front, in order to enable the downstream collaborative innovation that needs to occur.

Simply, the current state of sourcing and buying, as well as pricing and selling, in the education sector is broken. Inefficiencies in buying and selling, multiplied across multiple stakeholder groups, creates a

“Companies must take the lead in bringing business and society back together. The recognition is there among sophisticated business and thought leaders, and promising elements of a new model are emerging. Yet we still lack an overall framework for guiding these efforts, and most companies remain stuck in a ‘social responsibility’ mind-set in which societal issues are at the periphery, not the core.”

— Michael E. Porter and Mark R. Kramer, “The Big Idea: Creating Shared Value”, HBR. Jan-Feb 2011

massive cost structure that has in the past prevented the free and open exchange of value between governmentally owned or aligned entities and the commercial sector. The impact is especially acute in the IT arena, but in other areas as well, including the sourcing of curriculum and other services required to run a school or institution of higher education.

Fortunately, there are emerging examples of working models that point to a “Framework” for public-private partnering as an enabler of educational transformation. By treating the investments we all make into the public education sector truly as investments, and putting business decisions directly in the hands of those making the investments, there is an ability to fundamentally change the value chain that supports public education by directly and transparently aligning the incentives of *all* stakeholder groups and investors – both Public and Private – participating in the venture.

An emerging set of successful practices contribute to the Framework. They are gleaned from direct work with stakeholders and researchers working in the field of teaching and learning and address key considerations for stakeholders seeking to create a

sustainable and growth-oriented platform for education transformation such as guiding principles, governance model, and legal and financial structures.

Understanding these considerations and how they inter-relate makes it possible to identify, understand, align and make decisions more efficiently about each, and measure return-on-investment. The number and diversity of the relevant stakeholders, and their at-times divergent prioritization of desired outcomes, are the challenge. A new business model that confronts head-on our legacy institutional

cultures and biases and enables the kind of advancements in the learning process, with quantifiable outcomes, that will be necessary to compete in the 21st century is the opportunity.

Opportunity

The Internet and cloud-based computing are re-shaping the technology landscape. The implications for education are significant. Backed by real-world data, and mainstreaming of these new technologies, the current state of affairs - wherein every significant educational entity owns and tends to its own dedicated computing environment - is not sustainable. Simply, the amount of redundant capacity and the related cost structures to support it are enormous. Moreover, since most of it is not operated to its maximum efficiency, the level of performance increasingly demanded by “digital natives” cannot be met.

Given the current macro-economic situation, an accelerating demand for computing and data storage capacity, and the fact that technology is mission critical to the learning process, the opportunity for leverage through the sharing of resources and risks across stakeholder entities appears to be at a tipping point. This is “The Big Switch” that Nicholas Carr describes that will ultimately move all of our computing resources “into the cloud,” transforming the current IT industry into a consolidated group of vertically-aligned service-based managed utility providers, similar to the way in which the electrical power-generation industry moved from dedicated power-generation on a plant-by-plant basis to the grid-based electrical power system we have today (Carr, 2008). This is not a simple evolution, it is a disruptive transformation, the characteristics of which have been well described by Clayton and others (Christensen, 1997).

This disruptive transformation in the business of information technology – moving from localized to internet-based computing - is a key pre-requisite for realization of the high-value opportunities presented in the education sector. Most education entities, while possessing abundant intellectual acumen and innovation capabilities, do not have the scale or financial incentives to develop the necessary infrastructure and operational capabilities required. Private industry, however, is well-equipped to address these kinds of large-scale problems, given an expectation of return on investment, but the open framework being proposed is not one likely to be unilaterally embraced by the commercial sector. Given the mutual synergies and aligned incentives, along with the collaborative and research-driven cultures in the education community, partnering between visionary commercial organizations, public entities and highly-motivated social-entrepreneurs presents a tangible opportunity to “change the game.”

“We are witnessing a sea-change in the way society’s problems are solved, work is performed, and businesses grow.

Collaborations between corporations and social entrepreneurs can create and expand markets on a scale not seen since the industrial revolution.”

— Bill Drayton and Valeria Budinich, “A New Alliance for Global Change”, HBR, September 2010

The concept of public/private collaboration and consortia coming together to solve hyper-scale problems is not new. Business models similar to that proposed here exist in other industries such as oil-and-gas and regulated utilities, although typically under the leadership of the commercial participants. In the education sector, collaborations are being actively conceptualized, planned and/or implemented

across the spectrum and around the world, most typically led by citizen-sector social entrepreneurs. Organizations like Innovate + Educate, Internet2, Mimas, CULR and The Education Data Collaborative are well down the path towards creating the requisite sustainable model. However, they also face important business decisions related to governance, finance, competition, and intellectual property. Key questions for most will be: “How do I find the right place in the value-chain for my organization?” and “Where is my organization best equipped to deliver value to my constituents?” Meanwhile many commercial partners, particularly those used to competing via traditional/legacy business models, will find discomfort with the level of transparency and leveling of the playing field that these collaborations will require (and enable) in order to achieve optimal results for all stakeholders.

Balancing incentives is key for success. For instance, the profit motive cannot be allowed to dictate public policy in a manner that sub-optimizes the opportunity for all. This is a critical point as "profit" to a K12 public educator could be "learning benefit or educational advantage" rather than "profit" as a "financial benefit" in the private sector. Educational ROI is greater academic achievement, especially for those students under-performing in the legacy school framework.¹ Likewise, the universality of the mission need not necessarily lead us to another federalized monopoly subject to political partisanship. In fact, this approach is distinctly at odds with “top-down” governance, as it seeks to stimulate competition across multiple layers in the value chain that currently serves the education industry and does so under the leadership of independent social entrepreneurs in the citizen sector.

Despite the obvious complexities behind the creation of a model as proposed, there are real value propositions associated with the primary objectives:

- Infuse transparency, competition and capitalism into today’s high bureaucratic process
- Reward and incentivize Social Entrepreneurs for innovation, IP creation and leadership
- Reduce the impact of governmental influence on decisions that could be made equally well or better by citizens and the commercial sector
- Address the business/transactional inefficiencies inherent in many existing public-sector procurement processes

Implementing the kinds of changes that are necessary to positively transform public education will not be easy, given pervasive and firmly entrenched institutional cultures and expected public entitlements associated with education such as free day care, summer vacations, etc. Without the right strategic approach it will be much harder.

Proposed Framework

Peeling the educational onion will reveal that there are a number of “frameworks” at play – one might describe it as a “framework of frameworks” model. For the purpose of this document, the “Business Model Framework” is focused on the overall business model, with sub-frameworks around the legal,

¹ This point regarding “profit” and “return on investment” from a K12 perspective was provided by Tom Ryan of Albuquerque Public Schools

financial and organizational aspects of the business. Other frameworks, such as those related to technical architectures and operational or go-to-market models, would be expected to plug into the standardized Business Model Framework on a modular basis.

This Framework can be considered “open source” due to the fact that it is intended to be - is required to be - completely transparent and open for inspection by any party wishing to do so. Likewise, if adopted across a sufficiently large population of related collaborations, the user community will be highly incentivized to continue enhancing the business model in a manner similar to the way that open source software communities (including private entities who contribute and add value) maintain freely available application code for usage and extension under existing open source licensing constructs. The network effects from a standardized and modularized business model, in place and supported by an engaged user community, are potentially enormous.

Key to the design of a viable Business Framework is a common vocabulary/taxonomy. For simplicity, the term “Collaboration” will be used to represent the entirety of the participants in the envisioned collaboration, and “Hub Entity” will be used to represent the specific independent non-profit entity at the center. “Constituency” refers to the learning communities and extended stakeholders served by the Collaboration such as parents, students and teachers and the term “Stakeholder” refers to all Collaboration participants with expectations of quantifiable benefits to be derived from the implementation of the model.

Stakeholders

It is important to understand the types of stakeholders that will populate the Collaboration. There are different types of public and private entities, for instance, and each may have a different view of its particular mission and potential return on an investment related to the Collaboration business model.

Examples of Stakeholder groups and subgroups:

Constituents

- Teachers, Schools and School Districts
- Faculty, Staff and Higher-Ed Institutions
- Learners, Parents and Caregivers
- Regional Communities
- Small and Emerging Businesses within a Regional Community
- State and Federal Governments (note: will primarily fund End-User organizations and will not be expected to hold “equity” in the Hub Entity)

Private Partners

- Workforce Consumers – companies requiring an educated workforce in order to compete in the market
- Product, Service and Solution Providers – companies providing products and services that are consumed by Hub constituents

Public Partners

- Hub entity – independent non-profit entity that acts as the transactional enablement engine for public/private engagement around a core set of targeted capabilities
- Philanthropic partners – private foundations that fund education-related innovation and transformational efforts like The Ford Foundation, The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and Students First
- Investment partners – organizations like Innovate + Educate New Mexico that target and direct funding to specific education-related initiatives
- University and College Departments – contribute physical resources, grant funding and research capacity that leverages Collaboration resources
- University Endowments and Investment vehicles

Foundational Stakeholders

- Small group of Stakeholders involved in the Hub Entity start-up, charged with establishing the start-up business/governance models
- Provides for seed funding/capitalization and populates the initial Board of Directors

Note that there will be overlap among the subgroups in which the Stakeholders are categorized. For instance, some Private Partners will participate both as Workforce Consumers and Service Providers, and Public Partners may participate both as an End User - a buyer of Hub Entity services - and as an investment partner , for instance, providing the seed capital, via grants and public funding sources, to finance the start-up capital for a new shared service. This concept should present no issues that compromise value creation, given the proper dose of transparency. Implemented properly, it should drive additional incentive alignment and synergies.

Proposed Guiding Principles

A common set of Guiding Principles will be crucial to the collaborative decision-making that is necessary to conceive, start-up and operate an impactful Public-Private Partnership. While each specific Collaboration and Hub Entity should create its own set of guiding principles around the specific goals and objectives that it is trying to achieve, there are some basic principles that embody the key requirements we believe are necessary for success in a complex collaboration:

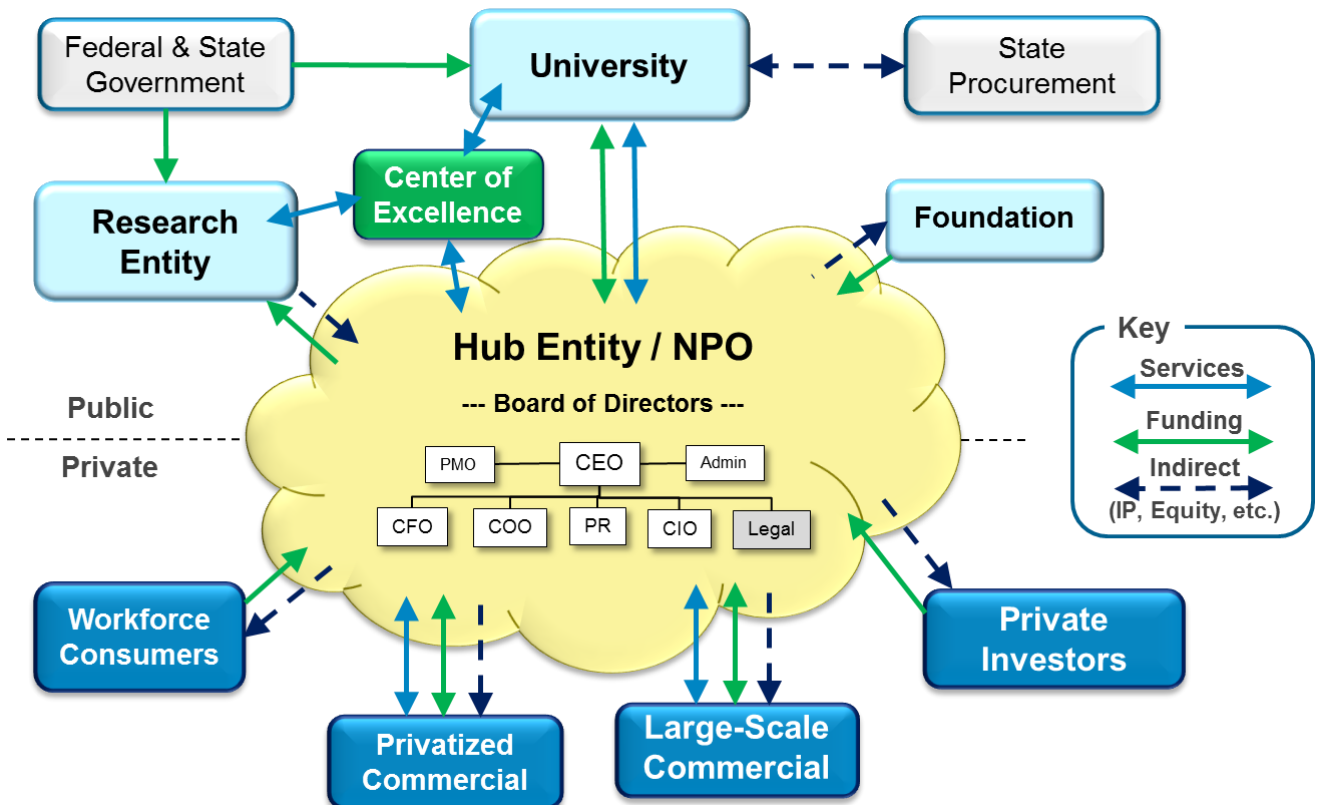
1. There should be total transparency in the business dealings by and between *all* Stakeholders in the Collaboration.
2. Competition between commercial providers should be embraced and barriers to competitiveness eliminated as encountered.
3. New intellectual property (IP) created in the course of any Hub Entity business should be owned by the Stakeholder(s) leading and investing in, by way of dollars or labor, its creation.
4. Non-proprietary IP should be shared through open-source and open-content channels whenever possible.
5. Commercial business partners should be expected to create tangible economic value (i.e. financially profitable revenue streams) through business dealings with the Collaboration.

6. The Hub Entity should remain lean, with a small number of expert administrative and operational executives at any one time, rotating on a yearly or bi-annual basis as specified in the Governance model.
7. The Hub Entity should generate “profits” that are re-invested in the core business model and the Constituent communities that the Collaboration serves.
8. The Hub Entity management should be fully dedicated to the Collaboration business and should share in economic upside as the business model generates commercial value.
9. The Collaboration should seek to create viable businesses that can be privatized/commercialized at a future date.

The founding Stakeholders participating in the creation of Guiding Principles should seek to understand and articulate the implications of the Guiding Principles for each Stakeholder group that will participate in the Collaboration. This will assist in identifying potential conflicts between the mission of the Hub Entity and individual Stakeholder expectations as early as possible, while adjustments can more easily be made to account for (or eliminate) the potential conflicts.

Figure 1 below provides a graphical representation of an example Collaboration Framework and relevant interactions (transactions) between the Hub entity and Stakeholders. The hub and spoke type model depicted was initially developed based on conversations with and input from Jim Bottum and his team at Clemson University.

Figure 1 – Business Model Framework and Stakeholder Interactions



Getting Started

The specific steps required for execution in the real-world are many and will vary depending on the specific needs of the targeted Constituents, the resources available from Public Partners and the capabilities of the founding Private Partners. For instance, in some cases the obvious Hub entity will already exist and in other cases it will have to be created. In all cases, negotiation of legal terms and conditions will be a significant effort although beyond the scope of this document. Well defined and comprehensive program and project management plans should be established to effectively manage the multiple work-streams that will be required for a real-world implementation; however the steps listed below represent a reasonable overview of key tasks.

Organize

1. Identify the Foundational Stakeholders who will implement the initial framework, stand-up the initial solution-set and fill the initial set of executive board seats; efforts should be made to keep the Foundational team small, but representative of the following stakeholder groups:
 - a. Constituent partners – represent end-user stakeholder groups; *Foundational Constituent partners should bring committed demand for initial product and service offerings to be provided via the Hub entity.*
 - b. Private “Workforce Consumer” partners – represent the long-term and regional requirements of the private sector.
 - c. Private “Product, Service and Solution Provider” partners – represent the partner community that seeks to provide products and services to End-Users.
 - d. Public educational partners – K12 and Higher-Ed entities that participate as End-Users for the products, services and solutions; certain entities may seek to participate strategically and invest in Hub Entity formation and start-up, and input to the initial offerings.
 - e. Outside investors – foundations, commercial entities and other organizations that provide direct funding for innovative efforts to improve education ROI.
 - f. Legal team – retain outside legal counsel to support and oversee the Hub Entity formation and contract standardization
2. Establish a single point-of-contact (SPOC) as Program Manager for Hub Entity design, build and launch.
3. Identify/Establish the Hub entity. This may require the incorporation of a new non-profit entity (which can run in parallel with other first steps); whether an existing entity or a new entity is to be utilized, *competent legal support will be required to ensure applicability for purpose and non-profit status*
4. Identify and formally document goals and guiding principles for each Foundational Stakeholder and for the Collaboration as a whole.
5. Document and prioritize initial product and service offerings, including a realistic estimate of Hub revenue from the provision of these products and services to Constituents (determine the target date at which the Hub Entity will become “self-funding”).

6. Develop a formal program plan and timeline for the Hub Entity formation and launch activities (determine the target date at which the initial products and services will be made available to Constituents).
7. Develop public relations plan and begin messaging to Constituent communities as appropriate; *leverage Private partner public relations capabilities to extend reach.*

Determine Financial Requirements

8. Develop a three-year budget plan that captures both start-up and early-stage operational costs, identifies existing funding sources and quantifies current and future investment requirements.
9. Formally and explicitly attach a value to ALL known contributions provided/to-be-provide by Foundational partners (if it can't easily be valued, or the contributing partner does not wish to relinquish some level of control over it – as with early-stage IP with long-term value-creation potential – then keep it out of the capital contribution bucket).

Develop Legal Framework

10. Document legal/procedural terms and rules related to governance of the Hub (i.e. articles of incorporation).
11. Develop a simple valuation methodology for the Hub Entity as well as a “share” or “unit” ownership mechanism for allocation to eligible Stakeholders according to investment contribution (note that federal and local governmental funds would not be expected to be used for “equity” investments).
12. Create termination, succession planning and end-of-life distribution agreements
13. Set an end-date of several years in the future at which time the Hub Entity will be planned to dissolve and assets liquidated and distributed to active stakeholders via a formula defined upfront (and re-visited for update on a yearly basis); this does not necessarily mean that the Hub Entity WILL dissolve at the defined time period, but it should be assumed that it CAN by all parties
14. Attempt to uncover, as early as possible, any legal terms and conditions that might represent a challenge in the contracting process *such as indemnification clauses in service agreements with commercial partners.*
15. Assume that the Hub entity owns the legal relationships and liabilities with Constituents; the Hub entity also owns the legal relationships and contracts with Private Partners; as a result, end-user Constituents do not need to negotiate contracts with multiple suppliers, and gain buying/pricing leverage for the Collaboration as a whole; Private Partners need only negotiate a single-set of contracts with the Hub Entity and can share risks across the Collaboration, significantly lowering business transaction costs and “de-risking” the innovation process.

Implement Operational Business Model

16. Define exactly the business that the Hub entity will mediate; i.e. what will the Hub sell? Stick to only a few offerings at start-up to narrow focus and improve chances for success.
17. Develop solution collateral, pricing guides, service catalogs and sales engagement models.
18. Launch, validate offerings and adjust as necessary.

19. Track, measure and act on end-user satisfaction surveys and retention
20. Execute on stakeholder communications plan, including targeted public relations

The task list above is only an example - each collaboration must create its own sufficiently detailed launch plan and milestone schedule. A dedicated program manager with experience driving complex change programs should be identified to own the planning and execution management processes.

People

The Hub Entity executive team must be a team of highly skilled and passionate social entrepreneurs who also possess the talent to launch and operate a complex and lean business model. The key to success will center on having the right people in place to lead the collaboration and run the Hub Entity. This does not mean that the team needs to have years and years in business (public or private). In fact, this model, given an experienced Board of Directors, should be a good training ground and growth opportunity for less experienced people with the requisite passion and leadership potential.

A primary role of the executive team is to own and enforce accountability up and down the value chain, to enable competitiveness, to create quantifiable value and deliver on the goals and objectives which the venture was established to achieve. The Hub CEO is a critical “hire” but does not have to be in place at start-up given a well-aligned founding team. Critical also will be pre-formation collaboration between a small team from the Public side of the house and a small team from the Private side of the house – the “Founders”. Facilitation of these early efforts should be driven by a person close to the overall effort, with the leadership and experience to successfully drive a complex change program, and accountability primarily to the growth and success of the Hub Entity.

Private Partners, especially those with a direct revenue opportunity from business with the Hub Entity, will be incentivized to participate financially and through in-kind investment due to the “Round One” nature of early investments in the Hub Entity as the venture is instantiated. Public Partners will generate equity ownership and capital contributions through the licensing and resale of specific educational Intellectual Property developed and/or funded by the Public Partner or otherwise owned by a related educational entity (public or privately held).

Expected Outcomes

This Framework is designed to expeditiously advance a public/private partnership from concept to a functional and financially sustainable (i.e. growth oriented) entity that generates quantifiable value for stakeholders. Rapid start-up, combined with realistic prioritization of potential solution offerings, will reduce up-front investment costs (risk) and shorten time to realization of expected benefits (return).

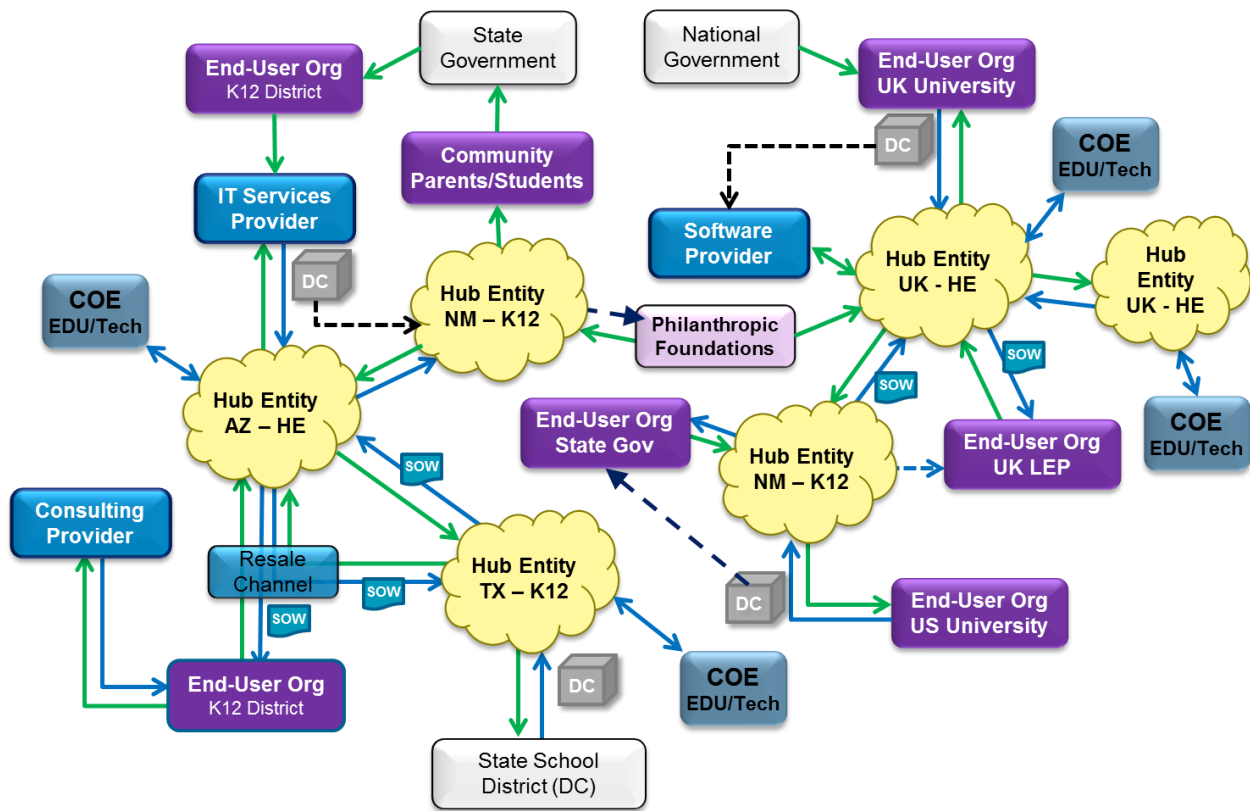
One expected outcome that may not be especially obvious, from the perspective of a single collaboration in the process of trying to get a business model off the ground, is that there will likely be many Hub Entities established, each around a community (physical and/or virtual), a set of core competencies and the specific needs of the collaboration Stakeholders. While there are benefits of scale in many situations, the objective of the proposed business model is to leverage an “open source”

business model to accelerate the start-up process and mitigate operational costs, allowing even very small and highly specialized collaborations to create sustainable businesses in partnership with larger commercial entities.

“How big should a Hub Entity be for optimal performance?” The answer to this question will vary based on the specific mission of the Hub, but in general the answer is, “as small as it can be and still serve its purpose.” A network effect is clearly in play, if the business model framework can be standardized, such that Hub Entities will also be able to interact with one another, buying and selling in an equally transparent and streamlined way, allowing each to focus on its own specific core competencies. Ultimately, this network effect, combined with a structure designed to stimulate competition and growth, will provide the greatest value proposition for stakeholders, although realization of this effect requires adoption to reach a certain level – a tipping point.

Figure 2 below is an attempt at graphically illustrating the way in which Hub Entities should be able to interact regardless of geography, given a common business model for commercial engagement and complimentary goals and principles. This “network integration” ultimately drives the most significant value propositions for constituents.

Figure 2: Network of Hub Entities Generates Network Effects for Participants



While the open-source and standardized nature of this Framework creates the opportunity for network effects to drive value optimization, more tangibly, there are a large number of potential benefits for

each stakeholder group related to implementation of a single Hub Entity, demonstrating the power behind multi-stakeholder incentives alignment.

Benefits for End-Users

For end-users of Hub Entity services, the model is designed to increase access to innovative products and services while streamlining the buying process. Other benefits include:

- Standardized legal terms and conditions and pricing transparency
- Reduces the cost of technology-based solutions that can leverage a utility computing platform that is shared amongst all end-users
- Increases communication of transformational activities and best practice uses between end-user entities , creating natural synergies to improve practice
- Enables access to solutions and services for small-scale end-users
- Allows for more straightforward budgeting with better alignment between technology-related purchases and End-User population growth/shrinkage (i.e. scale up/scale down)
- Reduces risk associated with “going it alone” implementation of new business or teaching/learning initiatives
- Reduces or eliminates end-user project capital start-up costs
- Reduces dependence on in-house technical experts, training and support services
- Provides access to a much richer resource pool of domain experts and solution components and a simple way in which to engage these resources locally

Benefits for Commercial Providers

For commercial providers, the model simplifies and reduces costs related to the selling process, allow for direct and sub-contract sales to end-users. Once a “mutual master services agreement” has been formalized for the Hub Entity and Providers, with mutual indemnification and standardization of legal terms and conditions that applies to all providers, additional value points accrue:

- Opens access to the entirety of the Public entity and Commercial provider eco-system
- Shifts a share of start-up risk from Commercial Provider to the Hub Entity
- Allows for full protection of existing IP while expanding the potential market for this IP
- Provides a secondary incentive to grow business with/through the Hub Entity for Foundational Providers *given the opportunity for equity ownership in the business*

Benefits for Early-Stage Commercial Entities

Early-stage commercial entities, such as newly privatized and incubating businesses created from research-institution IP and start-up companies, can benefit considerably through greater access to customers, partners, investors and eco-system participants. Other benefits include:

- Increased credibility, visibility and perceived stability due to co-branding and/or association with large-scale Providers
- IP ownership and rights protection through mutual standardized agreements with other participants and stakeholders
- More predictable revenue flow to finance growth opportunities
- Access to alternative sales channels opened up through the Hub Entity provider eco-system

Benefits for Philanthropic Organizations

Philanthropic Organizations benefits considerably, as usage of funding can be more easily tied to measurable economic value, including the possibility of acquiring equity positions in a Hub Entity. These benefits include:

- Provides for full transparency in usage of funds donated-to/invested-in the Hub Entity and ecosystem participants
- Allows for more direct participation in the Hub Entity business model, providing for an economic return as Hub-supported business are privatized and IP is monetized

Benefits for the Social Entrepreneur (and Society at Large)

For the citizen-sector and those attempting to drive systematic transformative change, the value of a model as described here is significant and nearly infinite, as the necessary scale can only be created through the right commercial relationships and transactional structures with large-scale private enterprise. Specific value propositions include:

- Provides access to resources and capital to fund start-up activities
- Allows Social Entrepreneurs and Hub Entity management teams to participate in and share economic incentives tied to growth in transaction volumes and valuation of the Hub Entity itself
- Enables a platform larger than any one person or independent team could create unilaterally

Conclusion

Implemented in an open and forthright manner, the open-source Business Framework described here addresses the key concerns that should be top-of-mind for social entrepreneurs and public entities in general: (a) providing commercial entities with a profit incentive, (b) enabling the public sector to more directly tie investment decisions to measurable outcomes; and (c) facilitating competition and transparency to drive innovation up and costs down.

The potential to create a new playing field that optimizes collaboration, open competition and a blooming of innovation across all stakeholder groups, is real and demonstrable. The pay-off to society in the form of a better educated citizenry and real economic value creation in both the public and private sectors will be maximized by those who can embrace the concepts from an abundance mentality and fearlessly lead the way. Finally, while real-world examples and learnings from others drove the ideas and concepts presented above, the devil is clearly in the details. In practice much of what is presented here will evolve and change, as it should. However, if we can create a structure that addresses the big-picture opportunity and leverages the disruptions in the businesses of IT and education, while also paying attention to the details and making adjustments along the way, a viable platform for meaningful transformation of the education system is within reach.

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