Community Extranet Tools Expand for Rollout

by Dave Marr

Behold the Tech Teams. The wild-spirited, fire-loving, keyboard-and-mouse-in-hand Burners, who keep the Burning Man web site, database and servers running, are up to something.

As the burner community has grown and expanded across the globe, so has the interest in creating regional Burning Man-like groups with their own events and local Burner-based circles. The Burning Man Project first began to establish Regional Contacts in late 1997, now numbering over 70. In the past few years a number of Burner-centric web sites–built by Burners, for Burners–have emerged to meet the needs of the Burning Man culture. By creating regional websites, folks around the globe hope to experience a similar cultural life during the 51 weeks of the year when Black Rock City loses its corporeal existence.

Some Burning Man related sites have offered Burners such resources as event listings, event planning, personality profiles and general information. Understandably, these individual web sites require time, money, and resources to get off the ground and most people don’t have the capacity to focus on this kind of development.

In 2002 and into 2003, the Burning Man Project organizers chose regional expansion and the development of community based technical tools as a primary mission. In an effort to guide, assist and expand the Burning Man ethos the Project has initiated development to create tools that will help cultivate Burner connections, spawn regional interaction and assist others with group management using the web.

“We need to reach beyond the boundaries of Black Rock City,” said Maran Goodell, Mistress of Communication.

Plans for this development have been in the works for years, but it was only after Burning Man 2002 that things really began to take off. Now, a new digital playa is on the horizon for Burners via something called Plane. Plane is a document-publishing framework that can be used to make web sites, manage documents and group work projects. It works in conjunction with Zope, a flexible up-and-coming community server. Both are open-source applications: they can be obtained and shared for free and are constantly updated by the open-source community.

Initially, 35 different volunteer teams will use the new tools now called the Burning Man Extranet. The rollout is a phased-in approach with the first groups actively using the Extranet as the Blacktop Gazette went to press. After the volunteer teams are all up and running, the Extranet Development Team will focus on using Plane to make and test tools for broader community-based applications. Eventually these tools will allow regional groups to create user groups, maintain contact lists, share files, offer discussion groups and calendars, and eventually, offer classified ads.

Long before the work is completed, and just as summer begins to heat up, Burners can expect some eye candy from a visual redesign of Burning Man’s official website. It has been nearly three years since the last artistic change in Burningman.com. In that time the volume of website content has increased three fold. The maintenance of this 1000-plus-page site has made changing things potty-related. If you’ve got a question or a concern about potties on the playa–speak up! Excremental awareness, that’s what it’s all about. Participate before the shit hits the fan!

The Pottey List is an email forum for all things potty-related. If you’ve got a question or a concern about potties on the playa, post it to the Pottey List. Subscribe at <pottety_list_subscriber@burningman.com>. Let others benefit from the question you thought to ask.

Toilet Issues Critical to Event

by Matt Morgan

Does anyone remember the potties of 2000? The Black Rock City (BRC) supplier was Johnny on the Spot (JOTS), who reported that the potties were frequently filled with an extraordinary amount of non-human refuse. A potty trip was often an unpleasant ordeal. Many had a pyramid of poo rising up above the rim of the seat, just waiting to give you a kiss on the cheek.

As a result, the Waste Water Reclamation (WWR) facility gave written notice that unless BRC cleaned up its act, they would no longer take our shit. The WWR visually inspects all effluent as it passes through a series of filters. When these screens become critically obstructed, the folks at the treatment plant have to jump down into the pits of refuse. A potty trip was often an unpleasant ordeal. Many had a pyramid of poo rising up above the rim of the seat, just waiting to give you a kiss on the cheek.

In 2001, the Burning Man organization launched a massive campaign to educate participants in potty etiquette. The results were a drastic improvement: JOTS was able to perform its duties more efficiently without a significant turnover in personnel (in 2000, almost 50% of the pump-crews walked off the job in frustration); the potties were cleaner for Burners; and the waste was cleaner for WWR. Everyone was happy.

Unfortunately, the etiquette didn’t last. While 2002 wasn’t nearly as bad as 2000, it was significantly worse than 2001. If JOTS has to pull a hose, a beer bottle, a glowstick, a chicken (it has happened) or whatever else out of the suction hose, they’re not going to be able to service the potties as frequently or as efficiently as required.

If we don’t get our shit together this year, if we don’t do what we can to do what we can, there might not be any potties left on the playa. Speak up! Excremental awareness, that’s what it’s all about. Participate before the shit hits the fan!

The Pottey List is an email forum for all things potty-related. If you’ve got a question or a concern about potties on the playa, post it to the Pottey List. Subscribe at <pottety_list_subscriber@burningman.com>. Let others benefit from the question you thought to ask.
Before the playa dust has completely settled and our heads have stopped spinning, many of us gather in the months after Burning Man to “decompress.” We take one more communal plunge into the depths of what we found so affirming and memorable at Burning Man. Decompression is an opportunity to dust off and share again playa art, performances, theme camps, photos, videos and stories from the playa; to reconnect with family and friends; and to collaborate to create new art. It’s a reunion. But more significantly, it is a thoroughly participatory celebration of Burning Man art and community within our larger communities. One of the more powerful ways many of us bring some of what is so inspiring about Burning Man to our cities and the rest of the year!

On October 20th, 2002, in San Francisco some 6000 participants converted Indiana Street, between Mariposa and 20th, into the “Heat the Street” Fair! At night, the Swimmers, Beehive, Radiant Atmospheres and Lily Pond installations attracted throngs.

Inside Café Cocomo, A/V team volunteers showed slides, digital imagery, and video that participants brought to share. New videos were premiered, including Timothy Chielli’s “Fadour Time,” as well as amazing new footage from the Burning Man Art Documentation Team.

Throughout the day, playas quietly came into the wee hours, and the following day, street sweepers and volunteers picked over the street and park, ensuring no trace of the event afterwords. As a public service, the street, park areas under the Indiana Street overpass and the surrounding blocks were left cleaner than they were found. There were a few minor sound complaints, but by and large the Dogpatch Community Board, surrounding neighbors and businesses, police, and fire officials, were all satisfied. We met and agreed that in many cases we exceeded their expectations as good neighbors. We have developed a reputation for honoring our commitments and for going above and beyond.

For the core Flamingo Lounge/Decompression team that organized it, The Heat The Street FairIE! was the culmination of months of planning. Further, there was two months of nearly full-time effort responding to e-mail, scheduling performers, mapping art and theme camps, filing permits, arranging event insurance, staging, lights, projection, sound equipment, and infrastructure planning for “Blacktop City.” We spent more time than ever in planning meetings and had to spend more money on permits and equipment, but it was well worth it.

We all feel a tremendous sense of accomplishment at having produced such a memorable event and having brought together artists of every shape and discipline to share and make art, to celebrate our common values, and to engage in the kind of self-expression that Burning Man is famous for inspiring. We look ahead to other year-round events, the growth of regional activities elsewhere, this year’s “Beyond Belief” theme and, of course, to Hear The Street FairIE 2003! See you there.

Thank you to everyone who participated in making this the best decompression SF has seen to date!

DON’T WORRY BIKE HAPPY
by Steven Rapo

Bikes are clearly the best way to get around Black Rock City (BRC)—at least for the vast majority of us who don’t have art cars. So nothing could be worse than if your own bike went buh-bye…as in got lost. Or stolen (gasp! not at Burning Man!?). Or abruptly borrowed by an anonymous stranger. Temporarily, of course. U-[h-Hub Can you tell yours truly had a bad bike experience in BRC? The unfortunate truth is that more than a few bikes are stolen at Burning Man every year. And many more are left behind after the event, like so many “Matter Out Of Place” (MOOP). Very uncool. For the past few years the Burning Man organizers have tried to reunite lost bikes with their owners, but most efforts have proven fruitless and require too much time and energy to continue. Never fear. In an attempt to keep all of us pedaling smoothly, the Burning Man put several BRC bike experts in one room to come up with the essential Bike Tips for Burning Man. Take them to heart and you’ll be happily playa-mobile all week long.

Do NOT buy just any old bike for use on the playa unless you know something about bike repairs.

Being a patch/repair kit, including a spare chain, chain-oil, one extra tire and TWO extra tubes.

Inspect your tires carefully long before you get to the playa. If they’re not road-wort-thy, they’re sure as hell not playa-worthy!

Get a lock! More importantly, use it. Even when you’re camped in your own little corner of the desert, lock it up.

Outfit your bike with a light for midnight adventures.

In a theme camp? Provide a bike rack for visitors. There are many simple and cheap designs you can devise and your visitors will love you for it.

Consider using communal bikes in your camp for all to all share. You’ll reduce both the number of bikes on the playa and the chance of having some “getting lost in the crowd.”

Decorate your bikes with big flags and signs that make them easily identifiable.

Try to keep your eye on the bike.

Appoint one person in your posse to be the bike mechanic for minor repairs like flats and broken chains. As for major repairs, refer to rule #1.

Talk to anyone who seems to be acting suspiciously around any bike; thieves act when they think no one’s watching.

Take your bike back home! Bikes are not an exception to the Leave No Trace mantra. The Department of Public Works (DPW) and the Black Rock City planners cannot use them and they will go to the dump! And it’s just plain sad to see bikes literally go to waste.

If you fear your bike was stolen, check with Playa Information in Center Camp on the Monday after the Burn. It will be your last chance for recovery.

For more information on bikes at Burning Man, see<br>http://www.burningman.com/preparation/articles/bikes.html

Editor’s LeG’ note: In 2001, I grabbed a stranger’s bike by mistake after a potty call; the stranger actually found and stopped me an hour later while my own bike was left unwashed alongside the pristine, waiting for its owner’s touch. And a friend of mine did have her bike temporarily borrowed by an anonymous stranger who quietly returned it to me.
Every year, thousands of citizens of Black Rock City (BRC) decide to participate by volunteering. The 2003 Volunteer Recruitment Town Hall Meeting in San Francisco is your opportunity to meet and greet all the major volunteer teams. Peruse the opportunities listed here—it’s your guide to teams that may interest you. Whether you can attend the meeting or not, all interested volunteers can fill out the Volunteer Questionnaire. Visit <http://www.burningman.com> and select the “Volunteer” link under “Participate.”

**Art Team/Artery**

We're looking for help registering and placing artwork on the playa. You'll need to attend regular meetings in San Francisco. Contact<br>cart@burningman.com.<br>For curatorial and archive work, please contact<br>clayteeb@burningman.com.

**Black Rock Gazette**

Work on the first and only daily community newspaper in BRC. We are looking for writing editors, producers, reporters, photographers, editors, and other general and specific help. Email<br>crgazette@burningman.com.

**Burning Man Information Radio (BMIR 94.5FM)**

BMIR invites you to help program Burning Man’s official, rumor-free radio station. Get the word out about your Thema Camp happenings and contribute to the safety and civility of BRC through public service announcements. Share your original music and spoken words with other denizens of the desert. Best of all, participation in BMIR is easy, go to<br>http://www.burningman.com/curtain/whats_new/news_broadcasts/radio.html and follow the directions to upload your recording in MP3 format and the station will then consider it. On playa, BMIR needs volunteers to record public service announcements and Theme Camp updates from 12-5PM each day. Contact Carmen at<br>curtain@burningman.com.

**CampArctica**

The ice must flow, and as the “soil” outlet for this essential element, CampArctica is vital to the health of our community. Help us distribute this sacred resource to playa folk in a fun, friendly environment as we create our own frozen oasis on the desert floor.

E-mail: <camparctica@burningman.com>.

**Center Camp Café**

A community of over 600 volunteers, artists, musicians and builders come together every year to create the Center Camp Café. Located in the middle of Center Camp, the playa’s largest coffee shop operates twenty-four hours a day for the entire event. Performance and Spoken Word stages call on Burning Man participants to showcase their talents. We need artists, entertainers, decorators, builders, electricians, lighting designers, baristas, counter people, sound technicians, stage managers and recycling help to bring to life this array of color and beauty. The Center Camp Café invites everyone to create participation and community to help share in this truly amazing endeavor. If interested, please email<br>cafe-volunteers@burningman.com.

**Department of Public Works (DPW)**

If you are available to help build BRC at least 2 weeks ahead of time, and you have carpentry, plumbing, electrical or building skills, please contact the folks who construct the city via<br><http://www.burningman.com/dpw_burners/accessories/zip.html>.

**Documentation Team**

A diverse group of talented individuals, photographers and videographers with their own equipment willing to contribute to ongoing documentation projects for the organization are welcome. Email<br>editor@burningman.com.

**Earth Guardians**

The Earth Guardians inform, inspire and encourage the citizens of BRC to apply Leave No Trace principles to life in our temporary desert home and beyond. We also visit the desert on weekends throughout the year to assist the Federal Bureau of Land Management and other desert users with restoration and conservation efforts. Email<br>earthguardians@burningman.com.

**Emergency Services Department (ESD)**

ESD provides BRC with Emergency Medical Services (EMS), Fire Fighting, Crisis Intervention and Emergency Dispatch services. We are currently looking for professionals from all areas of service. If you have specific questions or want to volunteer please email<br>esd@burningman.com.

**Exodus**

People of Black Rock City! You are invited to pitch in and help make Exodus a true participant event. The Exodus team is responsible for ensuring a safe and timely trip out of BRC as well as giving all our beloved participants their final farewell for the year. It’s truly a special feeling to see every smiling face leaving the city and screaming from the windows of their vehicles "See you next year!"! Exodus volunteers are looked up to and well taken care of—so c’mon kids, line up, sign up and re-enlist today. We need more volunteers for a better Exodus for Burning Man 2003! Volunteer at<br>http://www.missionburningman.com or send email to<br>exodus@burningman.com.

**Gate & Perimeter**

At BRC’s initial portal, the primary role of Gate staff is to ensure that all those entering Burning Man are entitled to be there. Perimeter staff finds “lost” vehicles outside the City and directs them to the Gate. For more information, email<br>gate@burningman.com or Shiloh, Manager, <shiloh@burningman.com>

**Greeters**

We are the face of the event and form a newcomer’s first impression of BRC. Our mission is to orient and educate arriving citizens while spreading wit, whiny and infectious enthusiasm to all combers of the playa. Email<br>greeters@burningman.com.

**Lamplighters**

Illumination! Navigation! Celebration! Don a robe, grab a lifting pole, and jump on the new Lamplighter mobile art car as we’re off to light more of BRC than ever before! Email<br>lamp@burningman.com.

**Legal Team**

Burning Man has a stellar team of legal help. If you have legal experience and would like to work, pro bono let us know, email your skills to<br>legal-volunteers@burningman.com.

**Media Mecca**

The Media Mecca Team manages media policy on and off the playa year-round. We need people willing to connect and create relationships with the media. Email your skills to<br>media-volunteers@burningman.com.

**Office Squad San Francisco**

We can always use dedicated souls to help out in the Burning Man office in SF on a regular or irregular basis. Email<br>officesquad@burningman.com.

**Playa Commissary**

The construction, maintenance, disassembly, and cleanup of the BRC infrastructure requires the Herculean efforts of a small group of incredibly dedicated people. The Playa Commissary provides them with basic life: food, water, sanitary supplies, plentiful fluids, and a safe and warm refuge after a long day spent achieving the impossible. If you’d like to support these efforts, and you have food preparation, serving, or cleanup experience, please contact us at<br>commissary@burningman.com.

**Playa Info**

In Center Camp, under the blue “i” in the sky, you’ll find the central point for getting information, communicating, and being helpful; this is a great volunteer opportunity, in a very lovely and fun environment. We need people with all levels of experience to volunteer in our service areas. Contact us via<br>playainfo@burningman.com.

**Rangers**

The Black Rock Rangers ride the edge of civilization. The Rangers are non-confrontational mediators and providers of information, devoted to public safety and the quality of participant experience. Rangers also serve as a buffer or interface between participants, the Burning Man organization, and outside agencies. If you have specific questions about the Black Rock Rangers or would like to volunteer to be a Ranger, please email<br>ranger@burningman.com.

**Recycle Camp**

Dedicated volunteers are needed to promote recycling to the citizens of BRC. Spread the word, collect aluminum cans for the Gerlach School, have fun and Leave No Trace. Email<br>recycle@burningman.com.

**Tech Team**

The Tech Team develops, manages and maintains the technical infrastructure that keeps our administrative environment functioning. This includes our network, integrated FileMaker Pro database, extr/intnet/anet, and the public web site. Email your skills to<br>volunteers@burningman.com.

**Web Team**

A diverse group of talented individuals, this team includes Tech Team members, writers, graphic designers, information architects, project managers, photographers and Photoshop experts. Email your skills to<br>volunteers@burningman.com.

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**THEME CAMP COMPETITION FOR PLACEMENT INCREASES**

Theme Camps and Villages are one of the most unique aspects of Burning Man. Groups of people plan both their living and public space to be interactive with others, communal not commercial. The giving, sharing, and participatory nature of Theme Camps make them a very distinctive group of interactivity; general camp aesthetics; number and size of vehicles; sound systems; and, one of the most important, past project history. Did the camp really pull off what they said they would in the past? Did they clean up after themselves? The importance of Theme Camps filling out the Burning Man questionnaire prior to the event as thoroughly as possible cannot be overstated. In 2002, Burning Man hit a new hurdle—the space we had set aside on the playa for Theme Camps was not adequate for the number of camps and the requested space for their projects. The size of the average camp had grown. We had a big dilemma: do we take away space from the rest of the city for Theme Camps? If so, would the trend continue and, somehow, down the road, would almost the entire city be mapped? If it is not possible to continue to use more and more open camping area for Theme Camps, how do we disqualify some camps from receiving the reserved space they’ve been counting on? For 2003, Burning Man organizers are making it clear that Theme Camps must be interactive and welcome everyone to participate. Theme Camp organizers must complete all aspects of the Theme Camp Questionnaire on time and be available to discuss plans with Burning Man in July. Camps that have plans to build only a “chill zone” most likely will not be placed. We do not mean to discredit the effort it takes to build a beautiful space to relax, however, the bar has been raised concerning what the camp is offering to the community at large.

The qualifications necessary to be a registered and placed Theme Camp have increased. We will be looking specifically at a camp’s creative projects and its interaction with participants. Theme Camps requesting placement that don’t fulfill the criteria will be informed in advance and will be welcome to create their space in any open camping area.

Please complete the questionnaire when all plans have solidified. It is much more important to your placement that your questionnaire includes all the activities you are planning than for it to be submitted early.

Are you thinking about creating a Theme Camp? See the Burning Man web site for further information. While planning your camp, read the Theme Camp and Village Resource Guide which offers many answers to your questions and will help logistics on the playa:


Every year the Artery members, Burning Man’s on-site art placement team, refine the installation questions to ensure we receive as much information as possible from artists. The questionnaire is preceded by our guidelines, and reading through them should assist you in bringing and removing your art to and from Burning Man.

We have also added more detailed sections this year to our questionnaire for art that deals with fire:

**Open Flame**

(includes items such as candles, torches, fire barrels or any art that is to be set on fire);

**Flame Effects**

(includes all flames that are automated, switched, pressured or have any other action than simply being lit on fire, as well as projects using propane or liquid fuel).

Dyes (fireworks).

**Dust**

**Pyro**

(fireworks).

**Types**

(fires, oil, liquid).

**Fireworks**

(fireworks). The argument that “neither are children or animals” is invalid. As fellow participants and animal lovers, the organizers of Burning Man thank you for understanding this new policy.

If you need further information or have any questions, email [questions@burningman.com](mailto:questions@burningman.com).