



## OVERVIEW

Information Technology, the use of systems (internet, computers, tablets, phones, etc.) to store, retrieve, share, and manipulate information, can be a powerful tool that can be harnessed to efficiently and effectively provide resources to those who need them. In recent years, the technology boom has provided ways to help communities plagued by unemployment, deliver life-saving and life-improving services to communities in previously out of reach areas, and enable all children to benefit from high-quality instruction and instructional materials. As information technology spreads globally, the opportunity to share and utilize information widely to solve pressing social problems grows.

## THE CHALLENGE

The challenge for this category is to describe an innovative project that would demonstrate the capacity of IT to help address a major societal challenge. The goal of this category is to stimulate new thinking on a broad range of social benefits of information technology in areas such as: open data, health, education and learning, democratic governance, disaster response, transportation, delivery of government services, economic opportunity for low-income communities, arts and culture, and organizational effectiveness.

Examples of proposals include (but are not limited to) the following:

- A mobile application that crowdsources criminal activity to promote safety in neighborhoods.
- A repository of recorded agricultural extension audio content that allows hard to reach farmers to apply modern farming techniques on their fields.
- A tablet application that enables teachers to measure student performance and analyze learning

# BIG IDEAS PAST WINNERS

## TRANSCENCE (NOW AVA)

*Honorable Mention, Information Technology for Society (2014)*  
*3rd Place, Scaling Up (2015)*

Transcense makes group conversations possible for 360 million people with hearing loss. With Transcense they can freely communicate with their hearing peers again. Current solutions are unreliable, unaffordable and not adaptable to situations where multiple people are talking in professional or personal gatherings. By connecting smartphones in a room through a mobile app, and using cloud-based speech recognition and speaker identification technologies, Transcense is able to show to the hard-of-hearing person who says what, in less than a second.

**Status:** Transcense renamed itself Ava, and participated in multiple Silicon Valley incubator and accelerator programs. Ava recently secured funding to grow their team and software.

<https://www.ava.me>



## POP-UP RADIO ARCHIVE (NOW POP UP ARCHIVE)

*Honorable Mention, Information Technology for Society (2012)*

Independent radio producers like the Kitchen Sisters record thousands of hours of sound, but have no system for digitally preserving or providing access to this material. The Pop Up Radio team built a free, open source archive system with partners at SoundCloud and the Internet Archive, for easy use by producers who lack funding and technical expertise. Pop-Up Radio Archive offers an invaluable opportunity to diversify media access in an era of consolidation.

**Status:** The team has pivoted their platform to focus on organizing and searching digital spoken word by processing sound through automatically generated transcripts and tags. Their transcripts help producers log and search their raw tape, repurpose audio stories into text posts faster, add text content to stations' websites, and ensure that audio and video get indexed by Google for the most innovative digital media properties. Current clients include the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, New York Public Library and The Moth, and National Public Radio.

<https://www.popuparchive.com>



## LIFTED

*1st Place Winner, Information Technology for Society (2016)*

LiftEd makes life easier for special education professionals and accelerates learning outcomes for students with disabilities (preK - 12). The team's tablet application enables special education teachers, therapists, and behavior specialists to measure student's performance on personalized academic and behavioral learning goals, analyze learning trends to make real-time modification to teaching methods, and ultimately share students' progress with parents and district administrators on demand. LiftEd provides Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) based data collection and flexible, non-ABA techniques catering to the needs of each special education professional role.

**Status:** LiftED is currently preparing for its launch by testing its product with 20 schools in New Jersey.

<http://www.liftingeducation.co>

