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## International Policy Network AUGUST 2009

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### Eureka! The Ideas for a Free Society CD

Thanks to the generosity of many authors and philanthropists, IPN has just produced 75,000 copies of the [Ideas for a Free Society CD](#). Most of these are currently stored in a [barn at the back of our Chairman's house](#) – but they are eagerly awaited by colleagues in dozens of countries from Afghanistan to Zimbabwe. Over the coming months, students, teachers, journalists and others across the world will have access to [105 key texts](#) containing ideas about political, social and economic freedom. We hope to inspire thousands of Eureka! moments.

You may know the story of Archimedes, who sought to solve a problem posed by King Hiero of Syracuse: how to establish whether a gold crown is really made of pure gold. Upon entering his bath one day, Archimedes noticed that his body displaced a specific volume of water. Upon realising that gold, like his body, has a unique density and that any specific mass of gold would displace a specific and identifiable amount of water, he leapt out of his bath and ran through the streets shouting "Eureka!" (meaning "I have found it!").



Many of today's prominent advocates of the free society had their own "Eureka!" moments. The insights of a single book or essay – Bastiat's "The Law", Ayn Rand's *Atlas Shrugged*, Karl Popper's *The Open Society and Its Enemies*, for instance – caused them to dedicate themselves to spreading ideas about freedom. Today, people everywhere are hungry for ideas about how to organize society so as to achieve peace and prosperity. But in many poorer countries few - if any - copies of these and other works are available. As one of our colleagues points out, "without books you can only influence people as far as you can shout – and that is not far enough."

So, at the instigation of our Chairman Linda Whetstone, IPN set out to make amends. We pulled together a [collection of 105 influential and inspirational texts](#) – but far too much material for a single book, or even a small collection. So, we decided to produce a CD called *Ideas for a Free Society*. Why a CD? Surely the Internet has made CDs irrelevant? you might think.

Well, if you can recall how slow and expensive Internet connections were in the early 1990s, you'll have a sense of what people experience now in many poorer parts of Africa and Asia. Indeed, the speed and cost of an Internet connection is more or less proportional to economic freedom – because freer countries have more competition in telecommunications. So the very places these texts are most needed are the places they are least accessible online.

Another challenge is that many influential texts are still under copyright. The Ideas for a

Free Society CD contains materials by Ayn Rand, Milton and Rose Friedman, Friedrich Hayek, Julian Simon, Peter Bauer, and others which the owners have very generously licensed to us – but which are not (and may not be) published online.

Finally, CDs are much easier and less expensive to transport than books – and seem to be subject to fewer restrictions on content. We successfully distributed 5,000 copies of a pilot edition of this CD to many countries around the world. One of the recipients of those CDs, a colleague who lives in a Central Asian country subject to severe censorship restrictions said, “It is one of the easiest and most practical ways to disseminate ideas”.

We hope you too are inspired by Ideas for a Free Society and will join IPN in this critical effort. Here’s how you can get involved:

- **Join the Facebook fan page:** Read more about the CD project, share your own story and interact with CD recipients around the world.
- **Maybe you know people** who would like to distribute the CDs in their country? Let us know!
- **Donate to the project:** We currently only have enough funds to cover the cost of shipping around 50,000 of the CDs. To send the remainder (25,000), we need to raise an additional \$10,000. Every dollar you give to the project will enable IPN to send more CDs to more worthy recipients in far flung places. Once the CDs arrive with our partner organisations, there is then the challenge of local distribution – to schools, libraries and opinion makers. This will only be possible if we raise additional support. And we want to produce more CDs! We have actually paid for copyrights on 100,000 CDs. The remaining 25,000 will be produced by partners around the world – if we can raise the funds (approximately \$25,000). But it won’t stop there. Once we’ve used up all the copyrights, we want to purchase more. For **specific sponsorship opportunities**, please get in touch!
- Please forward this newsletter to anyone you think might be interested – and encourage them to contact us.
- Our email: **ideasproject //AT// policynetwork.net** (replace //AT// with @)



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