

# Journalism MATTERS

★ A BRIEF-LIVED DAILY NEWSPAPER ★★

LIMITED  
EDITION



Asking **BIG BOLD**  
QUESTIONS and answering  
them!

John E.  
Fetzer  
Institute  
October 7,  
2005

# **JOURNALISM THAT MATTERS**

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# The Power of the Word

By Silja J.A. Talvi

Listening is a powerful thing.

For the last day, I've spent the time really *listening* to the folks around me, really *learning* from the depth of experiences and the breadth of perspectives here. I do not agree with everything that I hear, but I the vast majority of what I hear resonates – at least on some level – with my own experiences and perspectives.

And then I listen, in turn, to what my own voice is telling *me*. It's not a voice I necessarily articulate well, in person, but it's something I'm able to share here.

That voice, if you will, is what keeps me doing this thing that I do.

It's the fire that burns inside.

To be completely honest with you, this fire of mine doesn't appreciate the sentiment that business is – or should-be the primary operator, the driver, if you will, of this occupation of ours.

But it's not as though I haven't heard it before.

A friend of mine, an editor of a large circulation newspaper, smiles at me every time he hears me say this in his presence. He laughs, cocks his head in my direction, gazes at me incredulously, and then gives me a kind of sympathetic pat on the back.

I laugh, in kind. I don't mind; it's deserved. I can't even manage to work in the structure of the newsroom, much less contemplate the idea of managing a newspaper where revenue concerns are as much a part of the equation as the kinds of stories I feel compelled to tell. The kinds of stories I want to tell? They're hard for *even me* to stomach. They keep me up at night, and they honestly break me down, from time to time. The prisoner who's being raped in his cell for the hundredth time and being told by guards to just “fuck or fight;” the woman who has finally given into the power of her addiction and started to sell her body on the street for the sake of her next high; the lost livelihood of the African store owner and immigrant who's been hauled off into a detention cell at two in the morning because most of his revenue is coming in from Somali Muslims using their food stamps to shop for *hallal* meat.

I remind him that this why the world needs people like me – the storytellers, the muckrakers. Mind you, I consider myself one among thousands in recent history; neither extraordinary nor legendary, just a woman doing the one, concrete thing that compels her to move forward in life. And I remind *him*, in turn, that that's why the world needs people like him – the men (and women) who can traverse the fine line between journalism-as passion, and journalism-as-bottom-line.

I do realize that nothing in this capitalist economy of ours sustains itself, for any significant period of time, without a profit margin. I'd simply be a fool to think otherwise.

But here's where I'm coming from: there's no bottom to my line. The drive to do what I do stems from another place altogether: the power of the word. I think you all know this as well as I do: The power of the word has the ability to convey and contextualize the lessons of the past, the potential of the present, and the transformation of the future.

I came here primarily focused on something that I still think merits more conversation: the extent of the dissent, dissatisfaction and outright misery in the ranks. Those of us engaged in media work as the producers of news and information for magazines, newspapers, television and radio number now about 300,000, including 55,000 reporters and editors nationwide. That may seem like a huge number at first glance, but consider that this only adds up to 1/10<sup>th</sup> of 1% of the number of people who live in the United States, and that this nation's newsroom workforce has been cut by roughly 2,200 full-time positions in the last five years alone. It's also worth pointing out, again and again, that ethnic diversity in newsrooms isn't getting any better; in fact, it's been on a steady decline over the past three years.

Not only are professional media workers facing job and pay cuts and less diversity in the ranks, we're also facing the reality of declining numbers of pages for editorial content, and demands to make our own stories shorter and shorter.

"The vast majority of reporters will tell you that they entered journalism because they wanted to make a difference in the lives of ordinary people," contributing author Linda Foley writes in *The Future of Media: Resistance and*

*Reform in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (Seven Stories Press, 2005). Yet, according to a survey conducted for that book, 83% of those surveyed believed that there was “too much emphasis on the bottom line ... and a decrease in the overall quality of journalism.” (Another 65% of media workers believe news organizations do not give enough coverage to stories that are meaningful to average Americans.)

Speaking at the second annual Conference on Media Reform Conference in St. Louis in May, noted journalist and columnist Juan Gonzalez had this to say: “Most [journalists] are frustrated and angry ... they wanted to do something better with their lives, but they don't believe that they can do anything to change [the situation in media.]”

“But when those workers decide to [act],” he added, “they will revolutionize the entire industry.” I, for one, was gratified to hear Gonzalez say it. Journalism *is* changing. Of this there's no question. I'll embrace the change, but I won't embrace a bottom line that asks me to sprinkle water on this fire of mine. And that fire, my dear colleagues, is something I'd ask of you, as well. If you've got it, folks, keep it burning.

Even when the bottom line would have you do otherwise.

## Big-Ass Questions

By Matt Thompson

I wanted to come to this gathering, as I said, because the conversations I've been hearing and participating in about the changes happening in the media have seemed at times brilliant, at times superficial, but always familiar. I was curious what would happen when a group of people passionate about the industry got together for a lengthier, more open-ended, more abstract conversation.

So is it working? After Day One-and-a-half, I'll say I can't wait to see what happens tomorrow. While the conversations I've had today have treaded some familiar ground, some have gone just a bit beyond charted territory. It *has* been abstract, in a very fun and provocative way. I feel engaged.

It's odd to see myself type that – engaged -- at a moment when my Internet connectivity is fleeting and my cell phone is showing one bar, roaming. This from a fellow who usually feels lost after he's been away from his RSS reader for more than an hour. But part of my engagement here is probably in direct proportion to my detachment from technology. I'm not blogging this. (Not at the moment, at least.) And yes, there's something to be said for that. The biggest immediate difference between this confab and so many others is that 75% of the participants are not hunched over their laptops, always the reporters, never the sources.

Tomorrow I convene a conversation called "What is journalism?" The feeling of not knowing exactly what will happen during that discussion exhilarates me. It's, as I've said, a big-ass question. It won't be answered here. But that it has been started is something important.

## Opening Night Questions

*What question do you personally care deeply about that if explored could make a difference to the future of journalism?*

How can I inspire more curiosity and responsibility in my community through journalistic storytelling?

What are the stories that matter and how can they best be told to serve the good of individuals, communities and the whole of life?

Who is invisible?

How do we provide information to people so they can make thoughtful, informed decisions about their lives?

What will Silja be doing in 2015? (i.e. how will a healthy journalist be doing her job?)

How can we create more space for the public commons?

How can we inspire journalists to be what they want the world to be?

The media economic model is changing and will get worse, and that is scary to the personal livelihoods of journalists. What is the new economic model that will preserve the integrity of journalism that I grew up with?

Is journalism a dinosaur? Can we grow new legs quickly enough to walk on 21<sup>st</sup> century terrain?

Can journalists facilitate safe public conversations that engage our likenesses and differences in service of building healthy communities?

What does it take to establish (or re-establish) enlightened ownership of media properties?

What is journalism?

How can you engage journalists in and render as journalists the story of America's crumbling master narrative?

How can we reconcile what interests the public – with what's in the public interest? Also: How can we inspire journalists to ask questions on behalf of those who cannot.

In a society and world where journalism based in faith is in the ascendance, how do we encourage more journalism based on facts – and help people understand the difference?



Why are journalists so afraid of change?

Are truth and objectivity marketable in today's society?

Are we, as journalists, willing to do what it takes to restore the public's faith in our work?

How do you hold on to the fundamental journalistic values such as fairness and balance while forging a new path for journalism and while giving journalism back to journalists and taking it from Mainstream media?

How can we overcome our tendency to demonize our partners in journalism whether in the same media or across different mediums – is collaboration possible and/or desirable?

As media workers in a democratic society how do we tell the stories in a way that leads audiences to feel empowered as citizens – and responsible as citizens?

Why isn't journalism fun anymore?

How can we shake up journalistic paradigms, attitudes and traditions so we can stay relevant and aware? (Especially in reference to what we cover and pay attention to).

How can we support the editors, citizens and journalists who will create the journalism we want?

What is the balance between providing news we believe the public wants and will pay for with the news we feel serves the highest common good?

What interests the public vs. what is in the public interest...



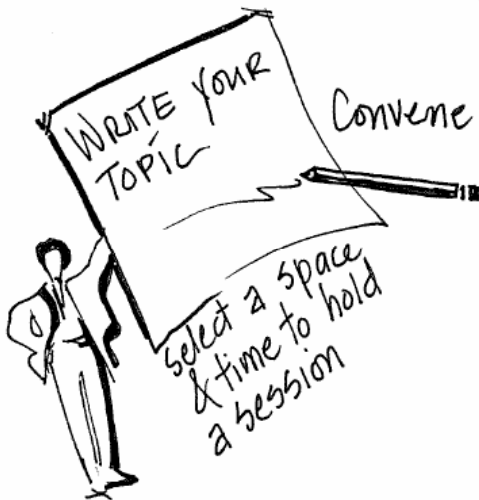
# OPEN SPACE TECHNOLOGY

Beginning our day in silence - listening to ourselves think



## Core Idea:

When we take responsibility for what we care deeply about, great things happen.



Convene your session & be sure it is documented

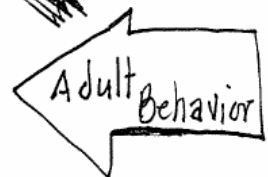


## One Law:



the Law of TWO FEET

Leave if session if you're not learning or contributing






"bees" cross pollinate



have an impact,

& have hang out conversations

## PRINCIPLES:

1.  Whoever shows up are the right people.
2.  Whatever happens is the only thing that could have
3.  When it STARTS is the right time
4. When it's over, it's over.

What's good for investors?



too \$-driven

We are constrained.

What is our mission?

- inform public
- act with high standards



oh, yeah?



ANGER in news industry

Fri 11:00

Social contract is broken

I have to look out for myself

"family feeling"

stability

MYTHOLOGY IS NOT MATCHING REALITY...

women limited, in newspaper field, % not up since '82.  
1/3 women; 2/3 men

We report, observe, don't engage in solution.

Can this **CHANGE**? can we innovate, problem-solve?

Solutions! Action! Involvement

• What motivates new journalists (Ad & PR more popular)

• Many women to "make a difference" elsewhere & rate of change is too slow

True for many minorities, too

let me out!



(easier on BLOG)



Lots of admin. & mechanical stuff required of news people.



Production?  
I'm trying to write a story

Too much time away from reporting



Why are people afraid of the Internet?



this is an opportunity

Blogs will fill in the holes that traditional journalism leaves



Need:  
CLEAR  
DIRECTION  
FROM THE  
TOP MGMT

Need:

ALIGNMENT  
• reporting  
• ad sales, circulation,  
etc.

How can we make this a BETTER PLACE TO WORK?

IT'S NOT FUN.

Limits creativity

You get what you reward - let's reward creativity & innovation



★ Good internal communication is critical

★ Encourage teamwork

★ Give specific positive feedback

★ TRUST is necessary



We don't need 100's of people...

# Our companies ourselves: our journalism

## Why are we so pissed off?

**Convener:** Dale Peskin

### **Participants**

Jarah Euston  
Stacy Lyeck  
Melinda Wttston  
Ralph  
Jan Schaffer

### **Discussion**

I hate my company, it doesn't listen to me

Who's editing this? Hating what I read.

Us/them, I'm not in control of my own destiny.

There's a disconnect between worry over the bottom line and the conversations about where journalism is going. Handwringing over what is happening and not enough looking at what we can do.

Social contract broken- no longer go to work for one company to do good work. Now have to worry about health insurance, job, always looking out for "me".

Muroch- Melinda was a media correspondent in London told to be independent and let rip and she did and it was cool. Times circ began to overtake the independent. When it didn't suit him she was promoted into a job she didn't want. Business interest of the paper vs the editorial value of the paper. Lots of editorial turnover makes everyone on edge.

Some of the news that needs to be covered is not so appealing to some journalists. Tension of mission versus professional success.

Are mission statements genuine? All are the same, are they real or are they marketing tools? Few people running companies have had few experiences as journalists at all.

Internal narrative in newsroom in conflict. Very destabilizing. Mythology of newsroom not what its cracked up to be. Causing people to say this is not what I've signed up for. Percentage of women in newspapers has not changed since 1982.

TV and radio have fared better for women. Men anchors have been pushed to the background.

What can journalism do? There's a conundrum with reporters as perpetual bystanders. We don't engage in solutions. Newsrooms need to rethink themselves as dispassionate observer- and you turn them into problem solvers?

You can try and change things from within or you can leave and start something new.

What's going on in new media, where there is a clear conversation of what people stand for. Wear objectivity on your sleeve and people can spam it discuss it or support it. Traditional news organizations very disingenuous about that. PR agencies trying to spin the story. Edlmann PR and Walmart successfully planted stories about walmart- if only Walmart was FEMA.

Read the stories with a feeling of suspicion. Part of walmarts motivation was marketing but there was also social entrepreneurship. They gave \$28m off the bat.

Why are people going into journalism. 80% of mass comm students are going into PR and advertising. Ratio of j school women/men is 2/3, ratio of newsrooms is 1/3

After three years do you really like it enough? Stacy- a lot of women are saying I can do other things. I don't have to work nights and work 60 hours to make a difference.

Dale- young people in newsrooms 80% of under 30's want out of the newsroom bc the companies don't get it. Learning newsroom survey.

Stacy-young people say the rate of change is just too slow. People just get nailed and are scared to put new stuff out there. Have to have 50 meetings to try something new

Dale- have selective memory about the past of journalism. Most of it wasn't all that great with sexists and tyrants.

How can you make these better places to work?

Ralph- is it fun anymore, how do we make it fun but not looking backward because it's not the same anymore. People forget about all the shit we had to put up with. If you're straight jacketing into rules and expectations it's not fun

Melinda- how enlightened are managements? People do better work when they're happy. Some managers are afraid to empower people.

Stacy- how much control to managers need? Administrative stuff sucks the fun out of the day. Need a new class of administrators.

Management by accounting. Detroit. 65% of all hours dedicated to administration, not reporting. Tack on administration to whoever's job

Journalism needs to innovate but is stifling innovation.

Jane- are baby boomers the problem? Are they too controlling? New gen y very optimistic- they're too jr and they aren't listened too. Not given the authority to make the difference.

Melinda that's why she went with a startup and she empowers her journalists. First two years didn't have an office just cell phones and laptops. Now with an office no one has a set desk sit where there's an open computer and it fosters a little team spirit. Teaching each other so other's can fill in

J lab citizen's initiative. Lots of anger, people feeling like they weren't covered. Dissatisfaction.

Dale- trust is a big word

Low threshold now for technology. It's cheap and easy.

Stacy- if we were starting a newsroom today are these the 450 ppl we would chose? No of course not.

Dale- maybe we don't need 450 people. Talking to a vc don't need all that, just need 2 servers.

Stacy- that's crap!

Ralph- in terms of guiding people it starts at the top. World had a total culture shift

Need clarity and certainty, it starts at the top.

Jane- You're a non union shop. You can say you're either with us or against us. What if you had a biz model with no reporters but just an editor, a magazine model.

Dale- not just newspapers, BBC has 38k employees in 25 yrs 25k.

Melinda- shrinking number of papers. People complain about one newspaper towns, lack of competition, who's watching?

Jane- vintagesoup.com

Dale- I think people are better informed now than ever before. Moved to Washington and subscribed to the post and found that I didn't need it.

Stacy- in smaller towns there is nothing- if there's not one local outfit you don't know what's going on in that town. 60% of news in the world is inherently local. The info won't fall from the sky

Dale I live in reston and I have more information than I can handle, 3 papers, 2 cj sites, blogs...

Stacy- where does news come from? What is the beginning? Conversation and the people reacting . what's going on who's here? What is the school calendar and what are their phone numbers?

Jane- added value is what does it mean to me?

Melinda- need to connect the dots, be an eyewitness,



9:00 Friday

"COMMONS" =  
Productive &  
all responsible... shared ownership  
like Boston Commons  
was for grazing



Value  
I'll pay for that.

Paying for "eyeballs"  
shows one basis for  
value: economics  
of TIME & ATTENTION

70% of readers  
want content;  
subscribe & read  
daily, but not as  
much with younger  
readers.

I'll read  
it on  
line.  
SLOWLY,  
ads might  
work better  
on line; not  
successful now.

change  
more  
Newspapers  
are  
underpriced

PRINT is  
expensive, but  
still best  
media for  
advertisers



Commons  
Models  
&  
Sustainable  
Economic models

non-  
traditional,  
evolving  
economic  
models

Wikipedia (→ a commons model)  
consumer-created  
content &  
e-Bay

put idea & then \$ will follow

\$ but... how can we  
sustain Traditional media?

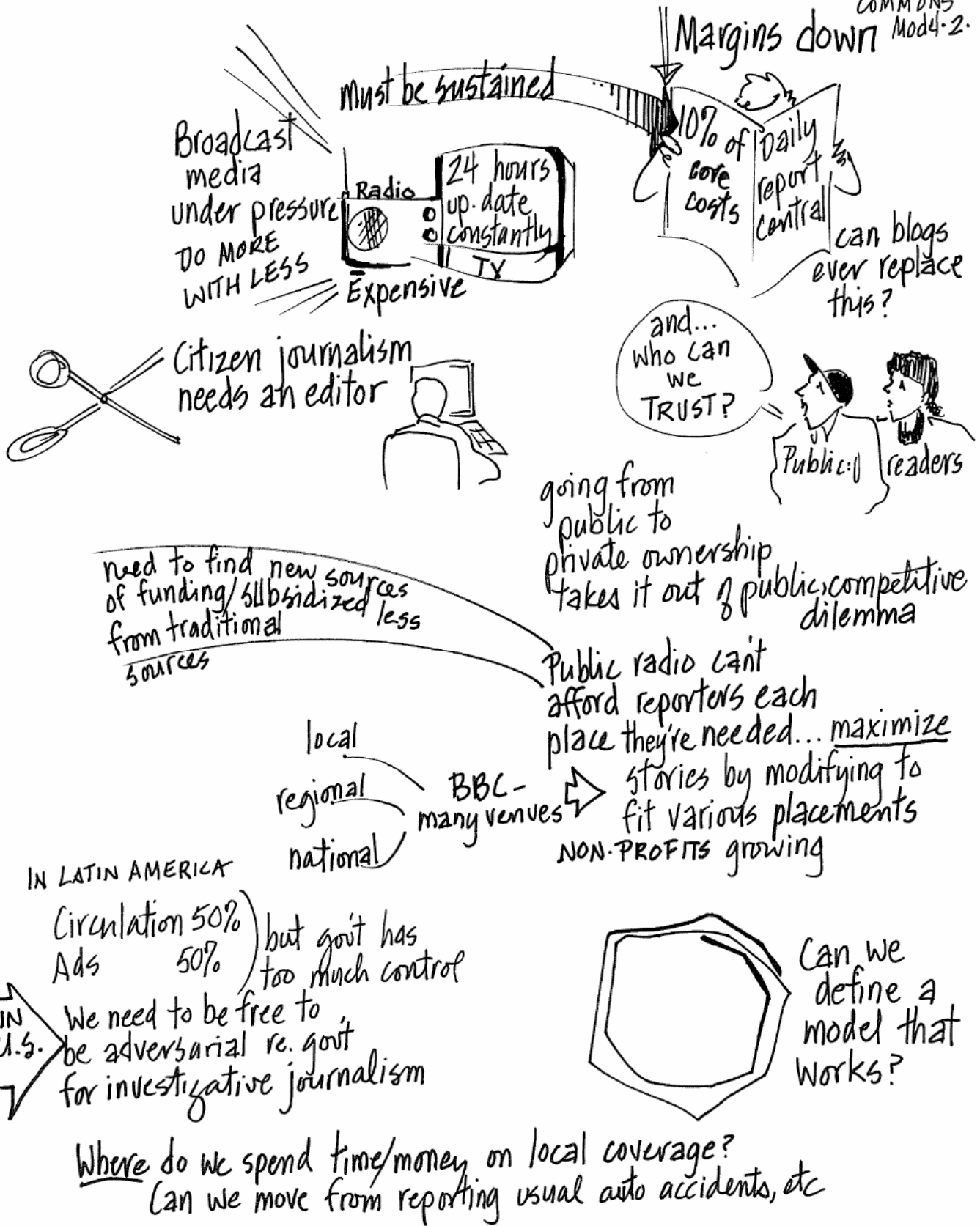
- newsprint 20%  
payroll 20% → (newsroom 10% of that)
- circulation 20% cost & 20% of revenue.  
80% advertising

CLASSIFIEDS  
hit by Craigslist etc.

Reporters NEEDED to  
keep gov't on its toes, to  
cover schools.

Must be able to file law suits  
to get information

NM



# What Are Commons Models? How they can be built and sustained?

**Exploring economic models capable of sustaining and growing relevant journalism?**

**Convened by:**

Lew Friedland Friday 9:30am

**Notes:**

Sarah Stuteville

## **Participants**

Karen Toering

Jean Min

Ken Berents

Jan Schaffer

Lisa Cohen

Jonathon Lawson

Jarah Euston

Sarah Stuteville

Stacy Lynch

Sue Ellen Christian

Bill Krasean

Lew Friedland

Melinda Wittstock

Cindy Zehnder

Stephen Silha

Peggy Holman

Jan-

Jimmy Wales of Wikipedia commented he's organized as a non-profit but now has revenues, though it's all citizen content. Someone like him Entered the arena with no aspirations for an economic model, but one has emerged.

Lisa-

Maybe we should take a vote and see if people want to keep these two topics together?

Melinda-

Commons models are a subset of larger economic issue.

If you have an idea do you throw it on the wall and see if it sticks, or figure out the economic stuff first?

Linda-

What eco models are people familiar with?

Jean-

What is the real value of journalism? What are people willing to pay for? How do we figure that out? How do you put a price on this stuff?

Ken-

Psychic income

Jean-

Isn't journalism rewarding enough? Or is it? What about fame?

Lew-

There is the economy of time and attention that readers/citizens can invest in your media. They give you time and attention which is something.

(Someone asks how Jean how OhmyNews supports itself)

Jean-

OhmyNews is 40% ad supported, 20% wire service type sales

Stacy-

I spent a lot of time on profit and loss statements, on all this stuff. I can do the nitty gritty of this stuff. I think that finding a sustainable model for commons sites is an easier question than how we can do that for more traditional journalism. Commons models are so much less expensive. The single biggest cost for papers is newsprint (20%), than payroll(20%) (and 20% of that payroll is for the newsroom). The cost of subscriptions only pays for the print paper, we spend 20% selling it. There's a lot of mechanics that goes with it.

80% is advertising. Within that a lot is classifieds. This is why the commons models are killing old papers. They can't charge for listings anymore. How can we think of cheap less expensive ways to do the basic nitty ritty fact finding that every community needs?

You need 30 reporters on local politics. Citizen journalists can't be counted on to do the less glamorous stuff like school districts, and local politics--the hard, time intensive stuff.

Ken-

Citizen journalists may not have the same access, lawsuits, ability to make requests for information. Citizen journalists can't do that.

Jarah-

News orgs should wean their readers off of print

Ken-

This is a generational issue. Newspapers should be more expensive.

Stacy-

If we could just get rid of print, it would be easier. But the number one hurdle is that print is a more effective ad medium. Ad inserts are big. It is not as attractive on web.

Somebody-

Advertisers can direct mail.

Stacy—too expensive

Melinda—What drives circulation? How much does it have to do with journalistic content and quality? How much can journalists do to increase circulations of their papers?

Stacy—In the research we do about our readers 70% want good content. The people that really make this work are the subscribers.

Lew—Young people don't read papers anymore, they read on-line. They may have the habit of reading a paper but just don't want it in print. I think this will continue to happen-- exponentially.

(Stacy)—Advertisers don't get results with ads on the web because they just don't work, people have learned how to ignore them

(Lew)—Part of the heart of this discussion is the cost of the daily report (20% for payroll 20% of that which goes to the newsroom). For those that care about journalism, the daily report is the heart of what makes journalism work. Sustaining that report economically is so important. If we lose that daily report the commons models can't fill in the need.

(Somebody)--Can they?

(Lew)--For me the argument about economic sustainability is essentially about economically sustaining the daily report.

Commons models alone (I'm building one in Madison) cannot sustain the daily report. They will never pay for the level of professionalism that we have come to expect.

(Linda)—What about broadcast the new requirements to have this stuff on 24 hrs a day? The owners expect huge profit margins from us. What we see is that the quality has decreased and we're using fewer people with less experience. Now you have to cover on LMA plus your regular station. You're covering for too many entities at once. We need full time experienced journalists that are trained.

(Ken-- you need an editor, citizen journalists don't have that.

(Melinda)—one of the reasons public trust has eroding in part is because nobody knows who to trust because there are so many sources and so much information out there. Truth has gotten lost in that. The more we get cut back economically the more we have to count on Citizen Journalists. It's a flowering of democracy to a point. But how good is it?

(Ken)--I have a solution, I follow these companies closely. The margins are going down and will get worse. These companies should go private. When you are a public company you have to compete with everyone.

(Jonathan)—What is the big picture? What is the role of media in our society? How does it help make our civic society work? Having a business model where the primary driving of the news organization is to maximize shareholder value may be able to coexist with good journalism, but it may not, and actually it probably won't.

(Jean)—What about BBC?

(Everyone Talking)—Different culture! Different eco model!

(Melinda)—BBC is a non-profit, if you buy T.V. that money goes to a common fund and some gets directed to them. Capitol New Connection has found a way to get around this. Public radio would all have correspondents on Capitol Hill if they could afford it. CNC works by being hard nosed and productive, its reporters think about how they can maximize a story. It is affordable to public radio, they get their own correspond on Capitol Hill. It is an economy of scale. Reporters are paid between 45-55 thousand a year. As we grow their pay grows.

Non-profit news. This is a trend.

(Ken)—BBC tax model v. revenue model

(Melinda)—Everyone in public radio is trying to diversify revenue models.

(Karen)—The difference between non-profit and revenue is the difference between re-investment in the company vs. divvying it out to shareholders.

(Bill)—Has anybody looked at bottom line between public and private models?

(Cindy)—One thing to be careful about is trying to define "A Model" that works. One of the good things coming out of all of this is finding a number of models that work. There are many ways to get at all of this. Listening to the different possible models may help find something new. Maybe there isn't one new model that we can find that will offer us the security we want. Maybe we should bundle models.

(Jonathan)—Multiplicity of models. Public media has a pressure to diversify fund sources. This is an opportunity to think about moving the other way. We should increase

and celebrate public subsidies for media. Every broadcast company is hugely subsidized. Postage used to be subsidized. Why can't news be so too (print)?

(Stacy)—I want to counter argue that. In Latin America they don't have the advertising base. In many ways they all started off in highly subsidized situation. But they are highly controlled by the government. Their number one advertiser is the government. and if they pull their ad because they don't like what is being printed they can destroy papers.

(Cindy)—I am government. subsidized. 80% of our operational funds come from state funds. We are also governed by an independent board of directors. I am acutely aware that what we do is not the kind of investigative journalism that would be too challenging to local government. You would not see us suing local legislature for information. We want to be wholesaler and retailer for other organizations (getting out good info).

(Linda)—The critical thing to me is that there are many ways we can get our national and international news. We can't outsource local though. As I watch and read our news, it seems to me we have gotten off track, as far as content. It's like a crow looking at the shiniest thing and following it around. Is there a desire for a new thoughtful newscast? The market share is decreasing and all of the stations are going for a tiny piece of the pie.

(Jan)—You build your model on trust in the community. How do you leverage your trust in the community with other things that are of value. (target info, target ads)

(Ken)—target ads that's were everyone is going.

(Jarrah)—Wouldn't it be great if your news source targeted ads to you as well?

(Jan)—Can you monetize an affinity group (the way blogs are affinity groups)

(Lew)—There is no way that you can monetize trust around something like the local school board. No one will pay me to cover the local school board. Here's the problem, what broadcasters are doing, they used to have State Capitol correspondents now they've dropped them. Now papers are dropping them so they can rely on state spans, but everyone here is talking about how state spans are limited in what they cover (see Cindy's comment from earlier).

(Lew)—small local papers are being set up to cover their communities. That's what is happening.

(Stacy)—Advertisers aren't the only problem here, there are many ways that advertiser can continue to be the primary funders. Advertising is not the root of the direction journalism is going.

(Lisa)—Maybe we can set something up so that advertisers understand or see how supporting high quality reporting is in their interest.

(Cindy)—People need and want to info, (even if trust is low). I want to throw out another model, KEXP, Paul Allen supported radio station. They want to create a tribe around the music experience that they show and create. The music is just stream, there is concerts and all kinds of things they do. They are building an affinity group around the music experience.

(Lew)—translate that to journalism

(Cindy)—people that are tied to certain concept journalism might be willing to pay for it. I want to organize people so that if they want to look for quality reporting. Starbucks model, people that pull together around the Starbucks experience, music, etc.

(Jarrah)—Starbucks hasn't been that successful with that

(Stacy)—People would have to pay like \$600 a year to subscribe to a good paper is we get to the point where readers pay for all this themselves.

(Melinda)—Local coverage with NPR. Morning edition audience nationally is huge. And it's a huge audience that advertisers want to reach.

(Lew)—There is only a very small niche of people that want NPR. What about wi-fi? I' in S.C. and it's a wi-fi as soon as you turn your computer on the first thing you see is the website of the local paper. Google announced that they are giving out wi-fi free. Basic level will be free and then you pay up for the other levels (like cable). What about Times Select? They only restrict 2% of their content. (Columnists Friedman) and archives, but people will pay for that stuff and you can increase revenue. Broadcast could do this too.

(Cindy)—The distinction between all of these mediums is beginning to go away. Think about convergence (not just print, broadcast, radio, etc)

Point of clarification on the Goodgle Wi-Fi deal

(Lew) the way this works. A company just signed up to put wi-fi all up

Supporting media without advertising?

(Karen)—We need a low barrier for participation in this information. I am concerned with levels and qualities of information for the haves and the have nots. I really can't see this



FRI 9:00 AM

Can management model having **FUN?**

Mid-week Free Time

FLEX-TIME

bring something to work that you can share -- from your "free time"

Google free days result in new ideas

How can we move forward & have fun again?

**FUN**

Even under pressure, some find FUN in the challenge.

Celebrate each other!

**But** can we afford time away from WORK?

meet off-site more often; even staff meetings are **More productive**

What stands in the way of FUN?

Put Matt in charge... he's got the KEY



enthusiasm  
optimism  
connected!

**HUMOR**

add some "Generation Y" Who are less formal (Gen X more serious, dark)

taking it in a lighter, & less serious way.

NM

# Is the fun gone?

**Convenor:** Ralph Gage

**Reporter:** Matt Thompson

**Participants:**

Nora Paul  
Matt Thompson  
Chris Peck  
Dale Peskin  
Mike Van Buren  
Ken Sands

**Discussion**

Assume everything below is rough paraphrase.

Question (Ralph Gage): Is the fun gone?

Nora Paul: In some ways, now that convergence is making everyone have to be buddy-buddy and share-and-share-alike, the fun of competition is gone.

Dale Peskin: Outside traditional newsrooms, it seems journalists are all having fun.

Matt Thompson: It feels like everyone's looking for a template -- what story form/new technology/etc. can I replicate in my newsroom?

DP: Organizations like API, with our "best practices" mindset, may perpetuate this.

Chris Peck: As journalists have gotten older, they lose the willingness to experiment with which they entered the field. They start to fear that the techniques and skills they've developed over time no longer apply.

NP: The advent of computer-assisted reporting seemed to get people who were willing to try it excited again.

CP: There's a downer element in many newsrooms. Maybe we need to address those folks?

DP: Journalism is so much about self-worth, which is diminishing across the industry.

CP: Many journalists are convinced their craft actually isn't that important anymore, that few people are really paying attention. Furthermore, the economic and other pressures within newsrooms are squeezing down even on the young, new journalists.

DP: During Katrina, journalists seemed to be having fun.

NP: It was like after 9/11. Everyone was thinking, 'Oh, they really need us.'

NP: The early online doomsayers have contributed to the sense of un-fun, telling traditional journalists they're so out of touch, they're irrelevant, etc.

Ken Sands: People begin to worry they're becoming untethered from their values. But maybe the quality they need is the ability to appreciate change.

CP: Maybe the sense of fear that's squeezing the fun out.

MT: Seems like a lot of wonderful, creative young people aren't excited by the possibility of journalism. We need more of the dyed-hair, crazy film geeks who are out doing documentaries for pennies a day.

DP: I describe myself as a "recovering journalist." I'm having a blast right now.

RG: You hear so much about staff cuts and layoffs, it's really dampening the mood of the industry.

DP: We had a session at the WeMedia conference with Jessica Cohen (of Gawker Media) and some other media professionals. Jessica's getting like \$30k a year and having an awesome time, while these loaded media pros are totally depressed.

RG: Part of what I see is that the folks who are working on the cool new media stuff seem to have fairly regular hours, while the people doing the business of putting a paper out every day are working odd shifts, ruining their social life, being completely unhappy.

CP: That's a symptom of the culture of the newsroom that needs addressing.

NP: Is the newsroom a maze of cubicles? That's another symptom and cause of all the depression.

DP: Because of our 'best practices' mindset, every fresh new perspective that comes into our newsroom ends up becoming the same stale, old perspective very quickly.

KS: Everything matters less than journalists' perception (or lack of it) that what they do matters.

CP: You have to talk more about the fact that it does matter. That kind of explicit encouragement makes a difference in the newsroom.

NP: Does having a hyperlinked byline (so people can shoot the reporter an e-mail) help?

CP: It's hit-or-miss, because people respond unevenly to stories, regardless of the reporter's effort or passion.

NP (joking): Maybe we should send people e-mails from anonymous fans raving about their stories ...

DP: Do you get the sense that mid-level editors are being dumped on?

CP: Yes. While there are personality types who enjoy middle management, a lot of folks in that realm feel dumped-on. Big managers who've come up through the ranks from an earlier era get a whiff of these new happenings and ideas, and tell their underlings, 'Go do something new!' But these folks have to concern themselves with putting out a paper every day.

KS: We have to make more room in our organizations for even mid-level editors to exercise their creativity.

NP: Not allowing them to be an integral part of our change (even in matters like redesigns) hurts the whole organization.

Michael van Buren: How much of a chill is there from the threat of lawsuits?

DP: The legal aspect is a big question.

CP: And unions, while I appreciate their role, are a big part of it.

RG: Another legal element is the amount of paperwork and bureaucracy needed to do anything. We drown in FOIAs.

MT: Might it just be that our organizations are too big? Too corporate? Part of my sense of fun comes from the perception that I'm part of a small, scrappy team, fighting together for a common cause. Should we need mid-level editors?

NP: I remember when editors used to lunge at reporters in the newsroom. There was passion and anger and messiness. Is there something about that mess we miss?

RG: So is the fun gone?

CP: In many, perhaps most, places -- yes.

DP: Maybe it's time to go back home and start asking that question in our organizations.

KS: I'm having more fun than I ever did. But this is a rare thing. I'm not sure how many people are able to embrace creativity and innovation. They find those things scary.

MVB: Yep, the fun's gone.

MT: What was it like when everything was fun?

DP: We've sort of got a selective memory of that time.

NP: There were a lot of zany, idiosyncratic characters. Maybe for me it was even a nostalgia for that '40s-era style.

DP: But I also remember characters who were tyrants, sexists and drunks.

CP: It might be that we just plain need an infusion of new people. People who are at that early, experimental stage in their careers. You have to work at getting them. Then you have to celebrate those experimental moments when they do come. If you're going to frame and highlight something, highlight those awesome moments.

DP: In the military, they call it, "One 'attaboy,' for every five 'aw shits.'"

MT: So how do we get that infusion of new people?

CP: Hire them. Bring 'em in through new media. Bring 'em in through citizen journalism. Just hire them.

NP: Then give them actual room to work their magic.

CP: It's not just youth. Many old-line journalists are also seeking change. Find them too! Find these 'fun nodules,' the elements who will inspire creativity and enjoyment, and put them in key places around your organization.

RG: Let's bring it back. When we leave here, we'll go back to our organizations and ask, "Is it fun?" If the answer's no, we'll ask, "When was it fun?"

CP: There's a danger in "going back," in reminiscing about the days when. We need to explore forward.

RG: Ken, why are you having fun?

KS: A lot of it is your perspective. We need to begin appreciate the moments and possibilities for change in our own careers.

MVB: Management often sets that tone.

DP: This is bigger than management, though. It's culture, how people related to each other, their work, and more.

NP: If managers want to create a learning organization, they need to keep learning themselves. They need to go out and play golf.

MT: Could we try thinking small? Of course, we imagine ourselves being soooo big, we've got aaaall these responsibilities, we're stretched to the limits. But somehow, giant Google is able to give every employee a day a week to just indulge her own passions.

DP: Yep, but part of the deal is they have to bring something back. Some companies offer flex time, which is literally time to be inspired whichever way works for you. Take a walk if you need to.

CP: There's something to that idea.

KS: You also have to create an organization where people feel that freedom organically. That's what Chris did. But people are going to resist that, because of the pride they feel in their work, and their sense of constant need to do, do, do.

DP: At the Media Center, we have a policy of no meetings inside the building, to get a regular shift in perspective and tone.

KS: Again, part of this is in having fun yourself.

Nancy Margulies: What are ways we can help people have fun?

CP: There's this whole stiff atmosphere about news organizations we just need to puncture sometimes. Make jokes.

NP: That's the role of those idiosyncratic characters. Does your newsroom have any, Chris?

CP: We have some. But some of them are throwbacks. We maybe need some new characters.

DP: Sociology has looked into this from a generational perspective. Something about Generation X, the folks who are now mid-level managers in a lot of our organizations, they're just kind of depressive, as a group. Gen-Yers, the youngest generation in most of our companies, are for whatever reason optimistic, creative, appreciative of change.

CP: Could we have some fun around that tension? Even dark humor.

DP: There are a lot of these folks out there. It's a matter of finding some sparks. I'm optimistic.

CP: We need to find an alternative to some of the big, traditional journalism organizations. The mentalities plaguing our newsrooms have gotten ingrown there. We do need to find sparks, then nurture them where they exist.

MT: At the Fresno Bee, I had the good fortune of heading up a committee of young folks from in and out of the newsroom, these sparks with outstanding ideas who were thriving in an unlikely place.

DP: One of the questions we'd ask some groups of newspaper readers was, 'If the newspaper was a celebrity, who would it be?' The folks from the newspaper always wanted to hear they were Tom Hanks. But what every single group would answer, in meeting after meeting, was "Walter Matthau." Either him or Walter Cronkite.

# **Faith-Based Media vs. Fact-based media / Advocacy journalism**

**Convener:** Dan Gillmor/Jonathan Lawson

**Reporter:** Jonathan Lawson

## **Participants:**

Dan Gillmor, Jean Min, Karen Toering, Jane Stevens, Sue Ellen Christian, Jonathan Lawson...

## **Discussion:**

### **Framing comments/questions:**

Dan: Much contemporary journalism (Fox news may be the most prominent example) presents “faith-based” journalism, in which reportage complies with established pieties. For good journalism, facts must be the fundamental, not faith.

Advocacy journalism is useful, but there is a danger that journalism advocating for a particular point of view may overstate (or ignore) facts that help support an argument, while leaving out other relevant perspectives.

A terrifying statistic emerges from a PIPA study a couple of years ago that demonstrated that a large percentage of people who get most of their news from Fox News believed that Saddam Hussein was responsible for the 911 tragedy and that weapons of mass destruction had been discovered in Iraq. How can we get people to distinguish between faith-based and fact-based journalism?

Jonathan: Fox News is an example of what is actually the dominant form of advocacy journalism—advocacy for the political and economic interests of the wealthy and powerful. Now that citizen faith-based reporting seems to be on the rise, helping produce more fragmented audiences, is there a positive benefit for “advocacy journalists” to develop something like professional standards upholding the pursuit of truth and (elusive) objectivity, while at the same time being self-conscious advocates for democratic values?

## **Discussion**

Can journalists be political citizens? Sometimes, at least, no... policies against attending demonstrations, etc. There is a reasonable distinction to be made... if someone's beat involves covering an election, that reporter perhaps shouldn't attend a demonstration against a candidate. A legitimate concern.

Can you combine journalism and advocacy? Sy Hersh, Ida Tarbell and the whole tradition of muckrakers would say yes.

What is the distinction between civic and citizen journalism? Civic journalism is trying to open journalism to the public's interests—community advocacy. Created some angst at newspapers; reporters and editors asking: why are we letting the people tell us what to do? Citizen journalism bypasses the newsroom entirely. Citizen journalism also often includes critical engagement with mass media.

JM: As citizen journalism, OhMyNews is open, but also has a distinct editorial focus created by the founder's intention to provide progressive perspectives. In South Korea, OhMyNews is one of very few media outlets providing an alternative to a monolithic mainstream.

DG: How do we get kids to grow up understanding the difference between straight news and, for example, Jon Stewart's commentary on The Daily Show?

KT: What is most important to maintain: the daily news core of stories from credible media institutions.

JS: Re. Credibility: The web creates the opportunity for reportage that includes, as sidebar links etc., detailed sourcing and information about stakeholders in a particular story... mapping of key players, opinions, etc.

JL: That in itself doesn't solve the question of credibility—a highly ideological site could produce its version of such a map as well as a more fair outlet.

The problem to solve is less about the unavailability of reputable information—the Internet provides great access to plenty—than about the perception of mainstream audiences. There was tons of information available online, including from establishment news organizations, demonstrating that no WMDs had been found in Iraq, for example.

DG: There are sites such as sourcewatch, etc. that provide good info on current in-the-news topics. We need smarter readers. Is this primarily a media literacy problem?

We also need laws that require greater transparency about, for example, the funding support for ideological think tanks.

KT: 'smarter readers make better journalists.' We do need media literacy.

JM: Today's media consumers approach media with the expectation that there will be opinion and bias. News outlets need to take sides—make apparent what their political slant is and use that to build an audience.

JL: We need a wide variety of news sources. Google news is useful simply in that it provides quick access to multiple outlets, although it doesn't do any apparent political/ideological sorting for you.

KT: People often have limited time to consume media—a limited window. For me, I first get the basic stories from balanced, nonideological sources. Later if I have time, I'll seek out advocacy/opinion sources on the same topics.

SEC: If we agree about what constitutes good journalism, why is there still so much unbalanced reporting?

JL: Part of the reason is the journalistic bad habit of privileging a lazy version of “balance” over truth-seeking. Present two opposing views about, say, global warming, and forego the task of evaluating based on available evidence.

DG: Practically speaking, journalists under deadline aren't always given the option to go deep.

DG: During the buildup to the Iraq war. Guardian UK web readership spiked—much from US readers hungry for substantive, independent reporting. This fact gives me hope for American media consumers. People can increasingly take advantage of the ability to “roll your own” news report from Internet resources... choose the kind of journalism they want, get substantive reporting from trustworthy sources.

JM: With RSS, readers become their own editors.

JL: But left to their own simple preferences, people won't necessarily select what's best for them, but rather entertainment, sports, ideological news, and whatever the most powerful new corporations spend lots of money to promote. Journalism is a public trust—in order for our culture and democracy to work properly, the public needs to be presented with a level of quality coverage whether they know they want it or not—in fact, good journalism creates the public sphere that enables people to identify valuable journalism in the first place, and understand why it's important.

JS

DG: A CBS exec recently noted that mass media conditions people to believe that everything is simple, whereas in fact nearly everything is quite complicated. How do we ensure that everyone gets access to that basic daily news report? At the end of drug commercials, you get that quick fine print. We need even basic news reports to explain that there's fine print, and help people get there.

Time for  
a new  
world  
of Journalism



Fri 11:00  
Older &  
Newer  
Generations

We need  
citizen journalists: we can gather, direct,  
edit,

We are  
story-tellers  
for  
community

not the  
"Experts"

NOT PROFESSIONALS like  
doctors who are the  
only ones who can  
practice their craft.

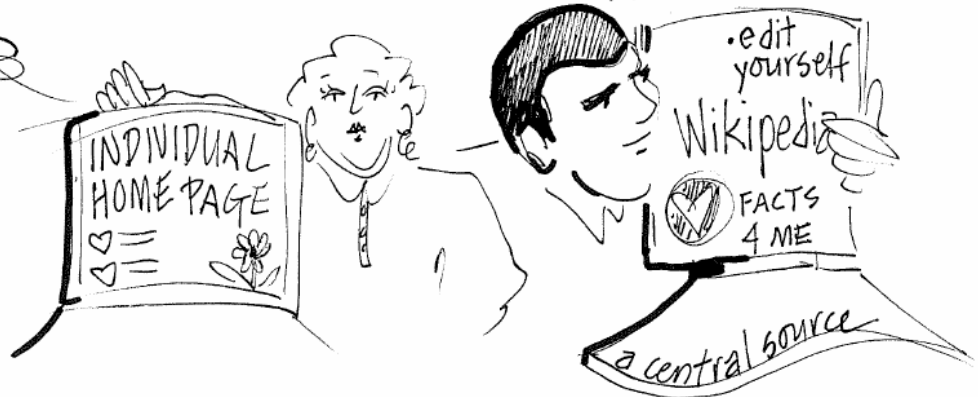
FACTS.  
STORY.  
ACCESS.

Make  
sense of  
STORY

- There is no "typical" reader anymore
- There are alternative narratives spinning around core narrative



We need to let  
go





# What can the elders in journalism and the newcomers in journalism learn from one another?

**CONVENOR:** Chris Peck

**PARTICIPANT LIST:** Chris Peck, Bill Krasean, Sarah Stuteville, Ken Sands, Matt Thompson, Duane Stoltzfus, Florangela Davila, Silja Talvi.

## DISCUSSION

Chris Peck: So, what's different about the journalism expectations and practices of those who have been in the business a long time, and the expectations and practices of those who are new to the business?

Matt Thompson - Well, for my generation (younger Gen Y) there is an expectation that we can get the news on our terms, where we want it when we want it, not just once a day from a newspaper or a broadcast TV site.

Sarah Stuteville - I don't think the difference is that young people don't care about the news and older people do. But I do think that young people think the old news, and old media, are dinosaurs. The newspaper seems old.

Ken Sands - And, I think young people sometimes read the newspaper and feel stupid. They haven't been following things day-to-day, so they pick up the paper and start reading and can't follow stuff. Online, they can go, find out the background, the context, and they can feel smart.

Duane Stoltzfus - I think some people are tired of the news driving people apart, instead of bringing people together. It's very one-way. For a new generation of journalists, I think that there has to be more of an effort to make a connection with people.

Sarah Stuteville - I'm thinking of the recent series in The New York Times about Class in America. It's got context. It is a series that helps me understand the big picture. I think my generation will read that.

Matt Thompson - The biggest frustration I have with the older generation of media is looking at the Web sites. They represent an utter failure of imagination. I think the digital media world give us an opportunity to offer a variety of perspectives, many points of entry to a story. But newspaper Web sites continue to just stories from the newspaper. There is no serendipity in newspaper Web sites, no way to make connections, link one idea with another.

Ken Sands - One of the mistakes that today's journalists make is thinking that once a story appears in the paper that's the end of it, that's the end of the story. Online, we know that people come in waves to explore, to learn. They go back to read stories, find the whole pictures.

Chris Peck - And, we often keep telling the same incremental story, again and again. The War in Iraq becomes one story after another about how many soldiers or civilians were killed today. The eyes of our readers begin to glaze over, even though we need to be connecting the dots between the war, our reliance on oil, our politics, etc.

Ken Sands - People want something new every day. An example: in Spokane we ran a page one story on the Iraqi constitution last week and got 20 hits. On that same day we ran a story about local policemen who stopped a drunken 19-year-old girl as she was speeding at 90 miles an hour through a school zone. He didn't ticket her because she agreed to have sex with him. That story got 50 times the readership. People already had heard about Iraq, they were more interested in something new.

Sarah Stuteville - I agree, there are stories that people don't want to read because it just seems like the same old negative stuff day after day. Sometimes I think people of my generation just want the media to give the negativity a rest. I find myself going to [worldchanging.com](http://worldchanging.com), which is all about people who are making a difference around the world. My generation wants to know about people who are doing amazing things, but there is not much in the mainstream media that tells about these things.

Matt Thompson - And, many young people get their news and politics from entertainment and culture. From music and movies they decide what they care about, that's what the news is. When Green Day sings American Idiot, for many people that's enough of politics - through arts and entertainment.

Chris Peck - I think what this suggests is that much news is now a commodity. Think of Harriett Meirs, the Supreme Court nominee. Two weeks ago, no one knew her. Today, everyone knows a little bit about her. So what becomes interesting are the different takes on her, from The Daily Show, or blogs, or other sources outside the mainstream media.

Matt Thompson - Young people are very savvy at getting the nut of information these days. We know the basics. What is interesting to us finding out how others are responding to the news, challenging the master narratives, going against the grain. These alternatives narratives can be funny, absurd, angry, off-the wall. But they need to be included in the future practices of journalism.

Ken Sands - For the next generation, the readers really are in control of content, and the traditional journalists don't like it. They want to be the keepers of the news, control the flow of the news, and be the gatekeepers. And, when they see that begin to slip away they get scared. They don't want to change.

Matt Thompson - The idea of a central journalistic authority playing to a common denominator is gone. An example: Wikipedia has replaced The New York Times as the newspaper of record in this country.

Chris Peck - So, we need to find a way to get more voices, more varied perspectives into the coverage of news and in the very definition of news.

# CITIZEN Journalism

Civic participation media

A FIRST STEP, AN ENTRY POINT,

for Citizen Participation

➔ BBC offering ideas, help for organizing civic participation: "I can" is not perfected yet.

how do we frame a story...?

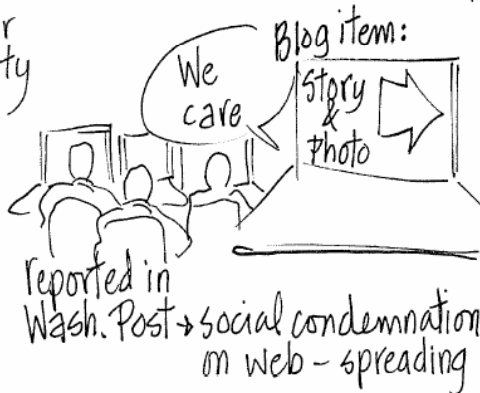
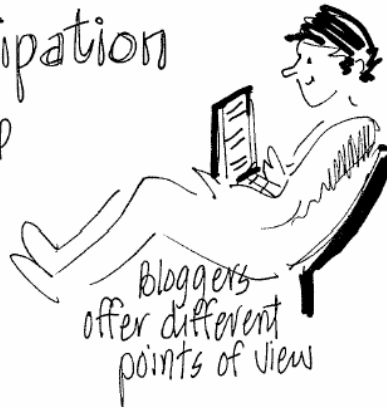
Kids out of control!

Fri 2PM

Inter-generational conflict

Billy reports...

Program offered...



Interview people in neighborhood

Develop skill & confidence



3 WORKSHOPS in Madison offered for CITIZEN Journalist Training

(Lew Friedland)

# Citizen Journalism

**Convener:** Eric Nelson & Linda Grdina

**Participants:** Dan, Sue Ellen, Jan, Jean, Lew, Stephen, Dale

## Discussion

Questions:

What is required to pilot a dialogic and deliberative form of citizen journalism?

How does new media build and sustain community?

How does citizen journalism prompt community action?

## Discussion Notes

There are thousands of citizen journalism experiments in progress in the U.S..

Therefore we need to track what is being learned and use this to develop new models.

Everyday citizens state that no one in mainstream media is covering the issues of

the common person on the street and want a mechanism for share and learning about this news.

What do we mean by the word community that is used in the questions for this

conversation? There are many sub-communities but is there one community?

How do we really know if citizens want citizen journalist?

Anecdotal evidence shows the citizen journalism has increase citizen engagement on

issues, facilitates development of new social networks, and supports two-way communication between citizens both on-line and face-to-face.

Editors can provide a critical role in maintaining credibility and quality of

citizen submitted stories but does this homogenize the approach to reporting.

It is important to monitor what is emerging naturally from various social networks

and how they are using processes and technologies to support and grow their

networks. Based on what is emerging, new models of citizen journalism we could development.

Citizen journalists will tell their stories in unique ways that are unlikely to replicate

tradition journalism styles. The web and its capacity for linking and two-way communication will form citizen journalism in unique ways.

Citizen journalism increases citizen involvement and understanding of the complexity of issues, even if people are reporting from an advocacy position.

What is the role of the citizen journalist in convening or facilitation public discourse?

Will citizen media become a new form of civic engagement?

Can there be a role for journalist and new organization to create the container/infrastructure to enable citizens to share concerns, tap critical information, and solicit public discourse on areas of interest, concern, hope? What would such an infrastructure look like and who would maintain it?

How do social networks use computer networks?

Is it possible to support online discussion between advocacy groups?

J-Lab grant to Madison. Using a web site, they'll form a broader common space for community discussion, informed by reporting, not blogging. They did an open call for "journalism 101" workshops (\$35/workshop) to train people to be citizen journalists. Issues they focus on will bubble up from reporter interaction in the community, not online forums. Phase two or three of this work will include convening community conversations.

Once you train citizens to be journalists do you homogenize their approach to reporting?

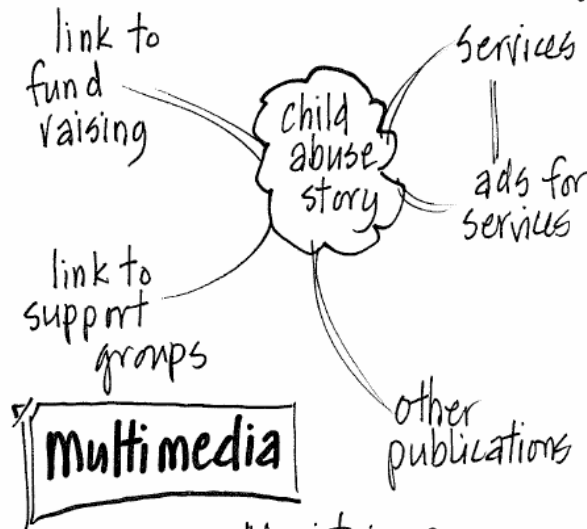
There are models, like J-Lab, that create entry points from citizen journalism and other models that wait for entry points to emerge organically. This area is still forming; it's too early to evaluate the impact of citizen journalism.

Book: Smart Mobs, Howard Rheingold

Web Sites: BBC Act Now - provides tools for people to take action and informs journalists about what people are interested in so they can cover those topics/areas of interest.

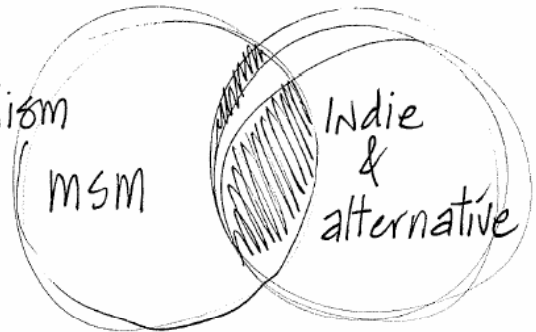
# HEALTHY JOURNALISM

FRIDAY,  
9:00



People speaking / telling their own stories are impactful

see: [www.silencespeaks.org](http://www.silencespeaks.org)



FUN

Making a DIFFERENCE



- being a GUIDE, not just an oracle.



Healthy Journalism

# Healthy Journalists/ What does a day in the life of a healthy journalism organization look and feel like??

**Convener:** Jane Elle Stevens

**Reporter:** Florangela Davila

**Participants:** Dan Gillmor, Eric Nelson, Stephen Silha, Linda Grdina, Florangela Davila

## Discussion

“News orgs. aren’t connected/aware of the community/public.

“So how does a community become part of the journalism organization?

“Calls to a newsroom from the public don’t even/always get answered.

“What about an ombudsman?

“News orgs. are too motivated by the bottom line. Can we persuade management to accept lower profit margins??

“Yes. Look at something like the Center for Public Integrity that’s doing investigative work and is non-profit funded.

“Look at the Lawrence World Journal.

“High profits don’t necessarily translate into good journalism.

(But money matters).

“The reality: It’s a lot more fun to be part of something that’s growing vs, something that’s breaking.

“Look at the pay of journalists. They can’t even live and function in the city/ies they cover.

“News org. talk about their “readers.” But ‘readers’ doesn’t necessarily translate into The Community.

“What is a healthy organization? Is academia healthier?

No. J Schools might as well be microcosms of traditional newsrooms.

“A colleague once said: Journalists are all insecure and they all want to have fun and make a difference.

“What about nurturing one another? Finding people who share your spirit/mission/goals. Cultivate “healthy pods” in the newsroom. Maybe that’s how an individual journalist might grow.

“The only resource we have might be each other.

“Until there’s a culture or acceptance of taking a risk nothing is going to change (in news orgs).

“Look at Silicon Valley where if you fail and you fail well, it’s still attractive.

“Look at how Silicon Valley has incorporated/accepted Change as part of its culture.

“There’s no Research and Development in newspapers.

“There’s no risk taking.

“Look at what’s happening at the Oakland Tribune. We took 14 people and we’ve changed it into a webcentric newsroom. Journalists are taking cameras out, which forces them to get out of the newsroom, to talk to people face to face. It’s like a bolt of electricity. They’re out there now and they’re engaged.

“You can still have depth in multimedia.

“I don’t believe journalists need to be bloggers but the community needs to be bloggers.

“Newspapers are still reluctant to point to elsewhere (link to other websites).

“Look at BBC. They link to everything.

“Look at how there’s a divide: alternative media vs. indie vs. mainstream. There ought to be something uniting everyone. We all have a common purpose.

“Print and TV has been problem oriented.  
Look at the Internet: It’s solution oriented.

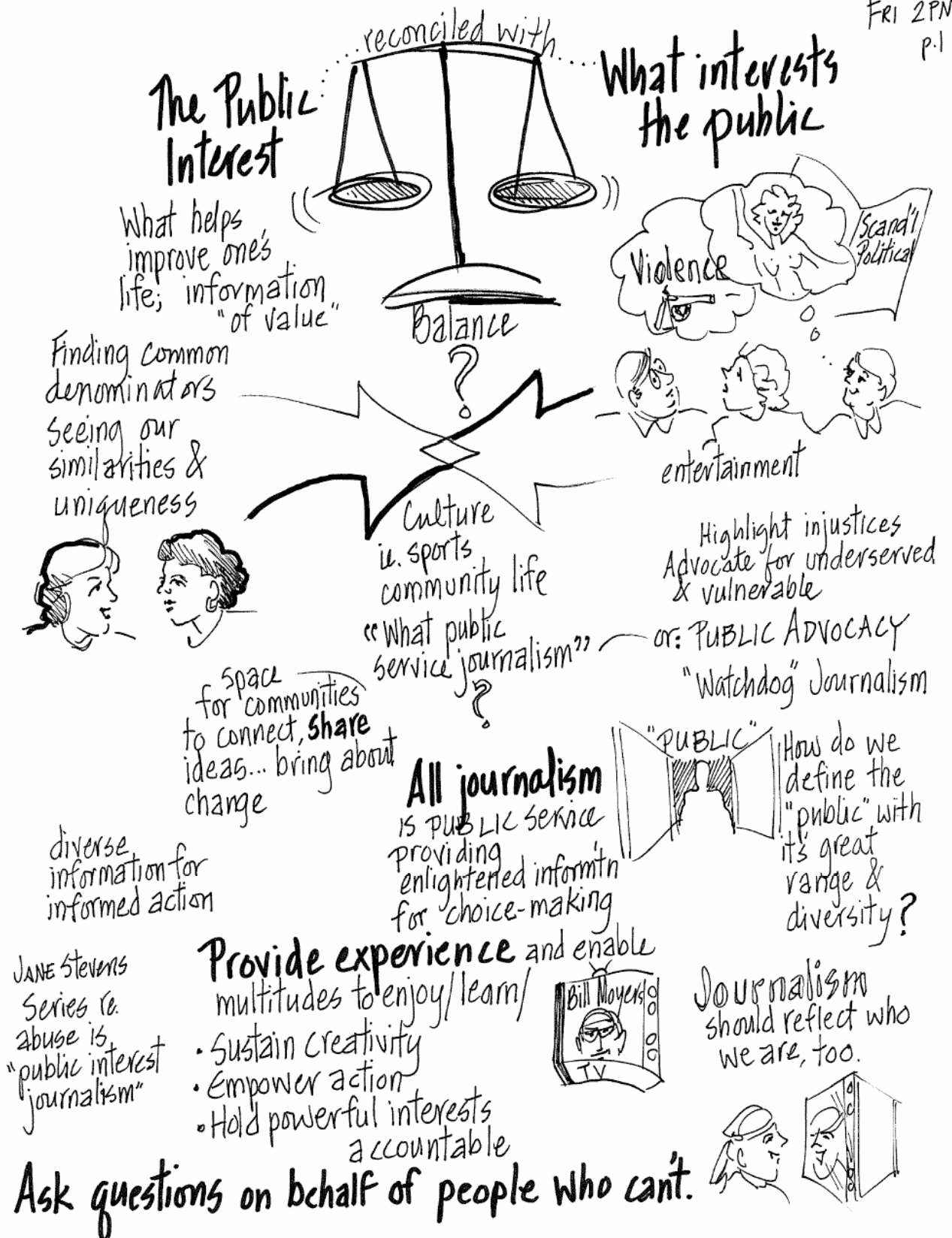
“Journalism is a guide, not just an oracle.

“A new model to explore: mass media going hyper-local, largely written by the community. It could be a good business model. You could give people some training. Give community the tools by which it can cover itself.

What’s the bridge to these solutions? The journalist, I think.



FRI 2PM  
P.1



We Make choices about what we focus on:

Cat in tree ✓  
Bi-polar dis ✓  
Political mef ✓  
Entertainm ✓

WHAT INTERESTS THE PUBLIC...

Transparency

Shine light on stories

Fri 2 PM

p.2

ACTION

information I can TRUST



Journalism...?  
In public interest...?

Does INFORMATION LEAD TO Appropriate Action

Cat in tree could be about community rarely in the news.



Can we expect TRUTH to lead to action?  
Do we know what right action is?

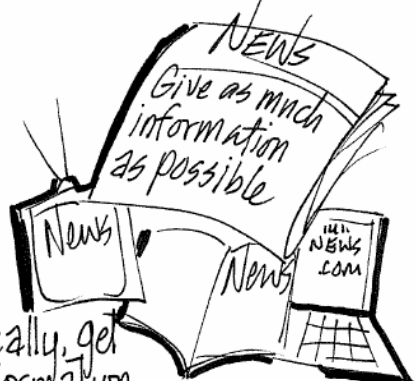
Now... people in journalism fear for jobs

Q. Is there a crisis in journalism?  
A. always

are we giving up in-depth due to \$ pressure?



don't give up on quality as funding becomes tighter & tighter



Ideally, get information from many sources, directly from source when possible



Are we looking at local news closely enough? We will if there is a multiplicity of news sources

# How do we reconcile what's interesting to the public with what's in the public interest?

**Convener:** Melinda Wittstock/Jan Schaffer

**Participants:** Linda, Jonathan, Matt, ?, Lisa, Sarah, Stacy, Silja, Karen, Diane, Ken, Cindy, Ralph, Sarah, Florangela, ?

**Reporter:** Florangela

## Discussion

“The highest traffic websites are porn sites.

“Look at the appeal of sports.

“Prurient news vs. what is valuable

“I’d argue sports is just as important. It’s part of our culture. It’s what makes us a community.

“When we get into trouble is when valuable information gets left out and it’s just entertainment.

Question: What is public service journalism???

- Journalism that helps us see ourselves as human; to see our uniqueness and our similarities with one another. We need to know we’re not alone. Journalism that helps stitch the culture together. Sometimes we’re just holding a mirror to ourselves.
- It’s creating a space for communities to work. It’s giving them information, giving them a way to exchange ideas. It also serves as a watchdog, cultivating fairness and justice.
- Our job is to provide information for residents. To allow as many people as possible to participate in civil society.
- Providing a diverse amount of information for informed action
- It highlights injustices.
- The term “public” is way too broad.
- We can’t commit journalism from on high.
- All journalism is public service. Providing information that helps us to make decisions. It’s broad, deep, has depth.
- Provides a window into civic life. IE giving access to public events.
- It supports and sustains creativity and culture in communities in which it operates. It empowers audiences and it does hold powerful interests accountable.
- Look at the work done by Jane Elie Stevens (at the San Jose Mercury News). Look at how the paper reported on individual instances of domestic violence. And then it pulled back, looking at the overall problem. It wasn’t just routine crime reporting. It became a public service

- We are charged with asking questions on behalf of people who can't, who don't have that access
- Transparency. Shining light into dark corners.

Question: Does public service/public interest journalism have to be cod liver? (dry, boring).

There's an assumption that if we give people the information that they'll do the right thing. But I'm not sure that's always the case. (WMD, Iraq war)

People hear what they want to hear and they see what they want to see.

Do we do things for the outcome?

The best way to approach truth is to have as much information as possible.

There needs to be a forum where all ideas can be debated and really, that is way more important than a specific outcome.

I would hate to lose an institution that gives out good information.

Watch a speech on TV and then read all the news sources and compare how they interpreted it.

Individuals now have a multitude of sources. We should remember that access to C-Span, etc came about because of public policy decisions.

You can do a story that's well, that's captivating, interesting and relative.

Is there a crisis in Journalism? I'd say yes. And No. Some of these same questions were being asked in the '70s.

It's the profession: we're always critical, we always have two halves to every story. But I'd argue that morale is worse today. People are worried about their livelihood.

Question: Why is news focused on process of politics instead of the issues.  
How do you create a demand for that stuff?

A key is to reverse the drive towards ownership consolidation. (And look at how the media wasn't even covering that subject). Bigger corporations have increased economic pressures and are more distant from the communities they cover.

Is public interest journalism ratings-adverse?

You gotta have the bottom line because otherwise you won't have the newspaper/station, etc.

I've never had someone dictate what I could/could not cover.

Financial pressures retard good journalism.

There's no One public.

Beat reporters are very process driven but our whole structure of journalism is to document incrementally.

Journalism needs to be much quicker to connect the dots, to give context of a story.

Be aware of where the public interest is and contextualize it.

But ability to think in a larger way (different entry points, different way to cover a story, an issue, etc), is constrained by production deadlines.

## Continuation of the discussion on potential sustainable economic models for various media

**CONVENOR:** Lisa Cohen

**PARTICIPANTS:** Ken Berents, Cindy Zehnder, Lew Friedland, Nora Paul

### Discussion

Ken is concerned that citizen journalism doesn't provide for a gatekeeper and gatekeepers are necessary.

For 40 years profits steadily increased for the broadcast owners, but with the economic pressures today, he believes broadcast companies would be better off if they were *private*. He also thinks *cross-ownership* should be allowed because it can allow more profitability. He says public broadcast companies are expected to have the same profit margin as all other publicly-held companies, which puts a strain on the amount of money actually allocated for newsrooms.

Television news takes the easiest way out right now... covers the easiest no-brainer stories and don't make any attempt to do more in-depth because it's too time-consuming given the needs for feeding the beast with 24-hour news.

Ken says *duopolies* are very profitable.

Cindy suggests finding a successful way to *connect with people will lead to profits*. Is there a way that the *product can drive the profit*? For example, the Google model.

Walled Garden vs. NYT approach for extra profits.

*Wall Street Journal* uses the "walled garden" approach...charge everyone to use any part. That leads to a finite number of subscribers. *The New York Times* is using a different approach but offering 95% of its paper online for free, but just now is beginning to charge for access to its columnists and its archives. *Archives* are a great source of revenue.

Lew asks still "Who is covering the school board" How do we make money enough to cover local news? It's valuable in the aggregate, but not in the disaggregate.

Ken looks at Weekly looking at local news issues ... profit is 15% as opposed to dailies who's profit is closer to 30-percent or higher. So there is an approach that is possible if we are willing to accept a lower profit margin.

Lew talked about the *Commons Model* he is creating to train citizen reporters in the basics of journalism so they can collaborate with local papers and, possibly,

other mediums. It is currently grant-supported, though that's not what he envisions in the future. This is not blogging, the student journalist must learn to report accurately. This can take objective cost-effective journalism down to the local level. They're trying to carve out space by creating a city news model... citizen journalists pitch stories to city desk at local newspapers and can possibly follow up by providing more research or even reporting. He is still determining whether you can create something of value for journalists with this model, and is still working out the revenue model.

Ken doesn't like the gifting model because it ebbs and flows according to the economy.

Cindy --- for TVW, legislature hasn't cut funding yet, even in tough economic times. They're trying to diversify --getting a few private contributions. They're beginning to increase their revenue with underwriting by large companies with stakes in public awareness, i.e. Boeing, Microsoft, etc. They're beginning draw underwriting to new edited programs, though these don't involve "reporting" in any sense.

Lew is concerned that sponsors will slant the programs editorially which can crowd out true reporting.

The *Commons model* has to be a rigorous training model --University center training--that would possibly charge papers and/or other media to have access to the story ideas and research. It also stimulates more interest in the model by building relationships with reporters.

Lew is also developing a *civic mapping system*, a software model that maps community networks of social pathways. It extracts content about "who's working with whom... audits, reporting, and community leaders. It's designed to be combined with traditional reporting as a tool to enhance and deepen storytelling. He hopes this model could help build an appetite for public journalism. It's designed to curb the negative impacts of high newsroom turnover. A huge issue as older people leave and institutional memory is lost. It also can be a valuable reader/watcher tool... leading to a virtuous cycle rather a vicious cycle.

Cindy is trying to effect and enable direct representative democracy as TVW moves to the second generation of Public Affairs programming.

Lew suggests there are two possible newspaper models...

1. Sell subscriptions to people who can afford it.
2. Keep publications partially subsidized