Coordinating Committee Meeting

July 11, 2016

AGENDA

1. Welcome Manolia!

2. Main Item—**Budget Revue/ Revenue Raising**

* Six months in to our fiscal year, let’s check our financials. Our budget and a summary of our financial report is attached.
* Cash in Bank as of May 31: $133, 654
* Balance for this year (revenue-expenses): $48,831
* Current Spend rate: $11K/ month except Jan/Feb (conference)
* Future Spend rate (Manolia FT): 14k/ month
* New grant: $25K granted by MDF on June 31, 2016
* # months cash on hand: 8 months not including conference

This picture looks good, but there are several warning signs:

* Voqal grant has run out and Schwartz is not ready to put more money in.
* We are living off a reserve. If we were living off our current balance, even including the MDF grant, we would only have 4 months cash on hand
* Member dues are down; member services are in the red
* We rely heavily on 2-3 funders to run the Consortium

Proposals

1. **Dues Collection**. We need to make dues collection a priority. Proposal: CC members take this on as part of their role.
2. **Raise Dues**. If the Consortium were solely funded by dues, the cost would be close to $2500/ member. Proposal: Jo Ellen and Manolia survey members to find out what benefits would make them more willing to pay higher dues.
3. **New Member Categories.** Many individuals and non-news orgs are interested in joining the Consortium. Proposal: Create an “affiliate” catgegory for individuals to become members at $75-$150. This could replace our current “associate” member category which is abused by larger orgs. Proposal: Create a “partner” member category for vetted and selected vendors —they would get access to our new database in exchange for paying dues starting at $250. Dues of $500 would give them exhibit space at our conference.
4. **Member Category as Member Benefit**: Though our merger with AAN didn’t go through, we have an opportunity here with them and other membership orgs. Proposal: Create an “ally” member category—this category might be about barters instead of cash, for example, their members get discounts at our events, our members get discounts at their events.
5. **Annual Conference as Revenue Generator**. Netroots has descended into a union+politician=lobbyist event. What if we created a Netroots 2.0 to take place in February after each election, designed to help progressives focus on the messages and issues that will be the focus for the next two years? Proposal: Consider extending our conference by 2 days, with the 1st two days a TMC-focused conference, and the latter 3 days a Netroots 2.0 conference. Hold conference in DC and invite progressive orgs.

3. **New Item—CONFIDENTIAL**

PLEASE DO NOT SHARE THIS WITH YOUR STAFF OR COLLEAGUES.

Should we support The Nation in a lawsuit over how to define “independent contractors” in journalism?

Background: The Nation are defendants in a lawsuit by a writer who was contracted to produce a daily blog. The writer later claimed that he was an employee and was due unemployment compensation. The Administrative law courts in New York agreed with the writer. The Nation is appealing that decision to the New York State Supreme Court. They have asked TMC to support them via an amici brief their lawyer will write.

Attachments: I have attached materials sent to me by the Nation. I am trying to discover materials that would represent the claimant.

Issues to Discuss:

1. The Nation is a member in good standing. To what extent do we feel we should support members in such situations?

2. Is the Nation on the right side of this one? We just went through a few bad years where folks were defending not paying interns; we don’t want to be positioned against the rights of freelancers.

3. How do we distinguish between freelancers and employees? When does a contract freelancer become a defacto employee?

4. Should we sign on to an amici in this matter? If so, who would be willing to review the amici?