Open Focus Group

Kim Spencer, Lisa Graves, Susan Gleason, Maureen

Kim: Bring progressive publications together with New America Media, FSTV, Link, --the idea that we could get some sort of synergy out of getting together was exciting. We were always looking for ways to partner with journalists and to promote to their audience. The sense of creating a support group was the big incentive.

Over the years, I put less time into it, but brought other staff in, with the goal of making sure there was more collaboration. Now some really great projects have been happening.

Lisa: We intended to join a few years ago, but we were just too busy on ALEC. I was intrigued by the idea of having greater collaboration and sharing of ideas, and working together on some projects, in addition to sharing some of the internal lessons learned from similar organizations. Facilitate greater relationships and partnerships as peers and allies.

Susan: We’ve seen benefits—from the business side, being able to consult directly on nonprofit media, print magazine; we’ve been able to benefit from what’s happened at the annual meeting, as well as conversations faclitated by TMC relationship, and we’ve participated in the labs, and gotten benefits from working collectively. We’ve taken part in a couple of editorial collaborations, most recently investigative work in Kauai, and the Occupy May Day protests. In those cases, what we did was greater than what we could do individually.

Maureen: We collaborated with Making Contact on corporate spying—I believe there is a lot more of this kind of work we can do, and we see TMC as a great platform to do that.

Coffee house

Church—faith-based; we pray for money

**Anything you’d like to see us do that we are not doing now?**

1. Stitch together the story of how powerful independent media can be when different elements work together, and make that pitch to the biggest available funders

2. The Hawaii work, with quick response, was great. That’s an important part of the organization. There needs to be a hub to facilitate potential collaboration opportunities

3. We need more projects

Along with the peer relationships, it’s important for the Consortium to build impact through collaboration. But it’s about more than that, it’s about building sustainability into the sector.

WE’ve given visibility to the role of media policy and reform;

Opportunity to promote the work of the Consortium members as a sector—there was a feeling after the wisconsin uprising, that you could see how strong storytelling was needed for political action. We have several examples of that now. We are building a case, story upon story.

We need to see more money for media, whether via policy change, or recruiting more donors.

It’s a very diverse group now, with different business models,

Media Conosrtium is not a trade group. It’s more like a coalition or constellation that’s about trying to support each other, and share with each other.

**What is the common ground for this network?**

Progressive. Even if public-facing portion focuses on independent, we really are progressive and we need to know we are progressive to be able to trust each other.