**What would it take to build a progressive media infrastructure?**

1. An annual conference for progressive media and allies

2. Network infrastructure—including database, communications tools but also in-person support

3. Public relations and marketing for the field

4. Field research—on policy and donor as well as tech developments

5. Advocacy in conjunction with media policy and legal policy/defense organizations

Total investment required over 5 years:

**$5 Million dollars**

Ongoing cost if no related business can be found after 5 years:

$700K/ year

Ongoing cost if a related business can be found:

$250K/year

**What do we mean by a philanthropic investment?**

There are at least two kinds of philanthropic investments:

* Those seeking only a qualitative return (usually measured as “impact”) –this return can be specific to a project (for a restricted investment) or general to the project (for an unrestricted investment)
* Those seeking to create organizational sustainability

The progressive media requires both kinds of philanthropy. We require venture capital-style investments to experiment with building businesses that can support the network.

However, even if such businesses are built, the progressive media infrastructure will require ongoing unrestricted and restricted funding.

Investors are needed who are willing to commit to both kinds of investments.

**What already exists?**

1. Conference: Netroots Nation, Allied Media Conference, Facing Race (biennial) and Common Bound (biennial) are conferences that could be homes for progressive media. All would require additional support to host progressive media.

2. Network: The Media Consortium has built a database, listserv and has in the past provided in-person support. That capacity will disappear on June 2018, however, without new investment. There are no alternatives for progressive media currently available.

3. Public Relations. Nothing ongoing to support progressive media as a sector in a robust way currently exists outside of current Media Consortium efforts and the efforts of individual outlets.

4. Field Research. Research on the progressive landscape has been conducted recently by Project South, and to some extent by Jessica Clark at dot.connector. Considerable research is conducted on the media landscape by foundations (Democracy Fund and Knight preeminently), think tanks (Berkman Center, Park Center), and universities.

5. Advocacy. A number of media policy and legal defense organizations support media in general. These organizations do not always recognize progressive media issues.

**Where is investment most needed—and how much?**

Conference—Venture funding required:

A progressive media gathering and track run in conjunction with another conference would require an investment of $50,000/year:

$20,000 Conference Planner (program mostly, but also logistics)

$50/day/person Catering (lunch, coffee/tea/snacks)

$10,000 Travel for Speakers

$15,000 Travel Scholarships for low-income journalists

Revenue realizable from the conference would be small if it were connected to another conference., as registration/sponsorship would flow to the home conference. At most, we could tack on enough to cover catering.

Conference run on its own would require an initial investment of

$100,000, but that investment would decrease by $25K each year until no investment was required

Above Costs plus

$25,000-$50,000 Space rental if stand-alone;

extra catering/equip cost if at hotel

$10,000 Marketing costs to attract 500+ attendees

Conference revenue achievable:

75/day/person Average for a 3 day conference

Sponsorship $$ dependent on # of people:

Under 200: $10,000

200-500: $30,000

500-1000: $75,000 (est)

Bottom line: Conference is feasible only if 500+ people attend and pay a minimum of $150 for 2 days. Investment required over 5 years: $275K

Network—Ongoing Support Required:

The network is the fundamental backbone of any progressive media infrastructure. A functioning network is all about the people who run that backbone.

Expenses: Note:”members” are individuals

Overhead $50,000-75,000

100 members 1 FTE: $125,000

100-300 members 2 FTE, 1 PT: $250,000

300-500 members 3 FTE: $325,000

1000 members 5 FTE, 1 PT: 550,000

Revenue

Member Dues $25/$75/$150 per member

Partner Dues $250/500/1000 per partner (partners=5% of members)

This never reaches break even in a progressive media ecosystem where there are no more than 3000 individuals. At 1000 members, assume revenues of $125K and expenses of $600K. The network either needs a related business that will throw off 500K a year or it needs year after year philanthropic support. Even if a business is found, it is likely that it will only meet half of the network’s general support needs.

Public Relations—Venture Funding Required

Ideally, the network would have 1 FTE or would be able to hire the services of a PR firm, at a cost of $150K/year.

However, there may be an opportunity to build a PR business that would serve the progressive news space, and would be paid to do so. That would require a business plan that we don’t now have.

Field Research—Venture and Ongoing Support Required

If the organization achieved a membership over 500, one of the FTE would be able to handle field research. Otherwise, an additional PTE or consultant would be required at a cost of $50K/year

It may also be the case that a business could be built based on field research. Again, a business plan would be required.

Advocacy—No Support Required if Network is Funded

There is no additional cost for advocacy, as a 501c3 would not lobby. What the progressive media needs is a champion to ally with other orgs, and any FTE could fill that role.