Structural Planning:

Change how we think of the Media Consortium.

What we have now is a network of 80 independent regional and national media outlets. But what if the Media Consortium was only halfway built? What if regional and national were only half of what we did?

What if we think big and imagine the Consortium as a network of local media hubs that connect to our regional and national network?

If we adopt this vision, then the way to proceed is to keep the national network going but focus our efforts on building up the local hubs. That’s what we propose.

For the next 2 years, I and Manolia propose running a fee-for-service program designed to offer our services to build a robust network of at least 15 local media hubs. During this period, we will be paid as consultants rather than as staff.

As we succeed, we will bring in funding to connect these local hubs to the national network, and resume staffed positions—hopefully expanding staff. The fee-for-service program will remain as an increasing number of hubs join the network.

The model is very similar to INN. INN is a trade association for nonprofits that began by offering technical services (mainly its website Largo) and parlayed that into a foundation-funded association to serve the business needs of nonprofit news outlets.

We will begin by offering consulting services to build local hubs, and parlay that into a foundation-funded association to serve a large national network.

As we grow, we will need to look for revenue models to sustain this network as funders leave. A number of possibilities spring to mind:

* Continue the fee-for-service consulting (tho focus may change)
* Charge social justice and other NGOs to participate in the network
* Charge vendors to get access to the network
* Develop a service that organizes network members (opt=in) to use their social media to advance advocacy campaigns