

Current game changing trends or emerging disruptive innovations that could transform independent media
(no particular order, and often paraphrased & consolidated from survey)

- **Mobile SMS & Short form Video** reach diverse voices who are not engaged in independent media. (David Michael)
- Distribution is king, but **disintermediation** is big and new. Direct-to-reader. (Johanna Vondeling, Ann Friedman)
- **Convergence of various distribution systems** into more interactive, mutually supporting systems (Frank Emspak) The convergence between social networking and news sharing is already happening (the 'Share' function in Google Reader) How to best harness this? (Emily Douglas) Consortium members may have come to the party identified with one particular medium, but we're all multi-media now. (Jay Harris) Interactive capabilities of the web allows us to develop real communities of interest. The merging of platforms creates opportunities as well as enormous challenges. (Kathy Spillar)
- **Users customizing their web experience** – increasingly people devote more time to RSS feeds and niche writers' blogs. General interest publishers are challenged to keep people coming back. (Emily Douglas)
- **Systemic dysfunction** - With the economic meltdown, continued war, and the dysfunctional health care, housing, education, retirement (etc) systems, there is an opening for answers that work for everyone. We can collaborate in seeking out (from our audiences, grassroots leaders, think tanks, academics, visionaries, etc) and publishing/posting ways we as a nation could move forward. (Sarah van Gelder) We haven't acknowledged the big gamechanger of the financial crisis, greater need for safety net. (Kim Spencer, Sandy Close, Kevin Weston) An attitudinal shift: 'Fessing up to the true nightmares in society more often -- widespread workplace slavery, empty lives, white supremacy, etc. (Jan Frel)
- **Post-growth society** - Japan is a model for where we're going. (Kim Spencer, Sandy Close, Kevin Weston)
- **Tightening philanthropy.** As resources get tighter, I suspect that funders will be looking for ways to do more with the same or fewer resources (Jay Harris)

What if...? — **Specific gamechanging ideas or projects that can be acted upon** (no particular order, and often paraphrased & consolidated from survey)

- **What if we organized crowd-sourcing better?**
— if multiple people are reporting one story, putting what they find in one organized source. People seem to respond very strongly to link-sharing in a highly personal context (e.g. in your gchat away message, on your facebook page, etc.) Automate these to post links to several different locations at once, without taking away the personal touch. (Emily Douglas) **Online Editorial meetings with our audiences** — tips, story ideas. How do we do that as individual orgs and on a grand, collaborative scale? (Tracy Van Slyke)
- **What if we started a coordinated editorial initiative?** — Editorial Partnerships to decide on a HOT issue that requires some big resources to track, investigate. Editorially, each media outlet takes a different segment of the issue and does their own investigative work (each putting together their own piece of the pie). Then coordinate some big roll out, publicity, plan, create a huge splash, get everyone's brands everywhere, acquire new readers for our lists. (Tracy Van Slyke) Use TMC network to generate new issues — e.g. editorial brainstorming and agenda setting — and use content partnerships to amplify issues such as NAM & Link TV has done. (Kim Spencer, Sandy Close, Kevin Weston) A few ideas to set the agenda for a more just and sustainable world: 1) Newsladder on solutions, 2) Have an agenda item (eg healthcare solutions) as a focus for each TMC meeting, 3) Contract with a think tank, 4) create a think tank, 5) convene a conference on a specific agenda item, 6) develop a wiki on solutions (Sarah van Gelder)
- **What if there were smart mergers?** — There is obvious duplication of resources in some areas and, IMO, not enough market development talent in general. et's get in the business of facilitating smart mergers -- and by that I mean really understanding, beyond what a deal looks like on paper, what it takes to pull off a successful merger and bringing that knowledge into the sector. (Jay Harris)
- **What if we built a collective list and coordinated targeting?** — TMC members' use collective constituent lists — professionally segmented & analyzed. Coordinate the lists use as effectively as possible. (e.g. Obama) (Johanna Vondeling, Ann Friedman)
- **What if we challenged prevailing media policy and weighed in on key legal battles?** — Change the legal arrangements to break the monopoly of broadcast media (e.g all broadcast should be a public utility between 7-9AM and 4-7PM and open to anyone through some sort of democratic allocation

system. (Frank Emspak). Grow TMC to wield powerful influence on media policy & reform (Linda Jue). Potentially looming gamechanger: impact of \$1B Viacom-YouTube suit on copyrights.

- **What if we developed a technologically easy combination of multiple venues?** — designed so that there could be as much interactivity, feedback, and horizontal communication as possible (Frank Emspak)(David Michaelis) and **harness the social networking/news convergence** — (e.g. a homepage that delivers news and social info in one stop – a google/facebook hybrid (Emily Douglas)
 - **What if we formed an innovation "testing group" w/ TMC members?** This sort of TMC innovation sub-group would develop viable new distribution mechanisms and other technologies to reach wider market and bypass problems with current distribution system, especially for magazines. (Linda Jue) While small, independent entrepreneur may innovate at a higher frequency, there are ways to design innovation tactics into more complex organizations. Google still innovates and they have tens of thousands of employees. (Tony Deifell) TMC has a role to play in bringing members together with experts and innovators in use of new technology/internet and to provide a forum for sharing ideas ... as well, the MC could play a role in attracting capital for investment in our sector for making this transition. Providing a forum for sharing ideas on evolving economic models in independent media also a critical role for TMC. (Kathy Spillar) Test piloting -- a relatively contained cluster. Small-scale experimentation. (Johanna Vondeling, Ann Friedman)
 - **What if we created our own platforms and tools to eliminate need for intermediaries** between the thinker and the reader (publisher, sales reps, vendor, etc)? Create direct experience. Publishers can fight it and cling to old, crumbling distribution models, or they can get in the game themselves by offering content producers (aka writers) sophisticated ways to reach/observe/respond to reader behavior, directly. (Johanna Vondeling, Ann Friedman)
 - **What if we started and grew businesses to support social missions**, which would supplement current funding. Is there a collective business we can own and manage, but is aligned with our mission? The earnings can be housed in a fund and distributed as an agreed-upon return to investors, with profits going to TMC members that participate in marketing/support? Opportunity to tap new sources of venture capital that might not otherwise go into non-profit media. (Tracy Van Slyke) Another idea: micro-financing operations like revolving loans to help indys with biz operations, especially with marketing and promotions (Linda Jue)
 - **What if we expanded nationally the models of *The Guardian* or Poynter Institute?** — What makes
- them viable is that the families that owned them poured their assets into trusts that give both operations a key degree of freedom from short term profit shareholder pressure. (Steve Katz)
 - **What if we were early adopters of using cheap electronic paper?** — if it's cheap enough, e-paper could be the new technical basis for media. In the future, the user owns the appliance, and the media outlet delivers the content. That frees up the outlet from the overhead burden, drops costs way down, distributes those costs in manageable bite-size chunks to consumers. At the same time, it gives us a platform with more flexibility and utility than an LED screen. (Steve Katz)
 - **What if U.S. indy media had concerted effort to go global?** — organizing ourselves to serve international audiences, which are now looking for high quality info about US politics. (Steve Katz)
 - **What if we created a rapid response system** to mobilize constituents to respond to attempts by big media or powerful right wing forces to undermine influence of indy media? (Linda Jue)
 - **What if TMC focused on providing consultation services & funding to members?** (re: different distro options). Develop a tiered program of services that would address the different levels of business and editorial needs among TMC members. (Linda Jue) Funding the less resourced groups to pay for the time to brainstorm this will be a disruptive innovation perhaps. (Lisa Rudman) How can TMC help members in the coming years as layoffs and even bankruptcy of some of its members put sector at risk. Specific idea: set up a fund to address this problem in advance. (Kim Spencer, Sandy Close, Kevin Weston)
 - **What if we produced widespread in-person events?** — for constituency building. People deeply hunger for the opportunity to get together with the people who care about the same stuff. (Johanna Vondeling, Ann Friedman)
 - **What if we specifically set out to create one or more additional channels to reach greater scale?** (Jay Harris)
 - **What if we adopted a venture capital structure for some of what we do.** (Jay Harris)
 - **What if we collectively conducted customer research?** — Figure out what's motivating people to read. Hire outside expertise in direct marketing. Interview readers at the nexus of our lists. Let the data drive decisions. Test piloting with TMC sub group. (Johanna Vondeling, Ann Friedman)
 - **What if there was significant rural broadband?** — will open up the ability to be living in the woods while still tied in to the world. Native and land-based people will soar. (Nicole Sawaya)