News Practice and Media Policy in the Information Age

Washington DC

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What is the role of the news media in the Information Age? And what is the role of media policy?

Several decades into the digital revolution, we find that the essential currency of democracy—the right to be informed—depends on our freedom to *access* information. Moreover, as internet companies offer to find information for us, we are learning that what may matter most to our democratic future is being able to tell our own stories and to support those who can pull data and analyze trends independently of Google, Facebook and other corporate info-monopolists.

That is why the Media Consortium, a network of 80 independent progressive news organizations, has chosen to convene media policy experts along with independent publishers, producers and editors in March 2017 in DC. Following an election in which the voices of immigrants and communities of color continue to be marginizalied, and election which has displayed the failure of mass media to meet our information needs, we seek to create a new media ecosystem that will be open, accessible and unsurveilled. We will ask these questions:

* How do we support and sustain independent journalism? What policy mechanisms are required to ensure that such journalism can be distributed to the public without having to pass through corporate barriers? What funding mechanisms do we need to support the expensive investigative, data and beat journalism we need to keep watch on corporate and government actors?
* How do we support and sustain community journalism and grassroots acts of journalism—particularly acts of journalism by people and communities of color? How can community journalism be funded and supported at the local and state as well as federal level? What kind of public/private partnerships can we imagine to fund journalism? What are the policy mechanisms required to ensure that such journalism can flourish free of the surveillance and interference of the state?
* How do we ensure that all people living in the United States will be able to freely and affordably search for information on the open internet? How do we make the internet accessible to those in prisons, in rural areas, and on native lands?

To participate in this convening, or to provide in-kind or monetary support for this convening, please contact:

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