**MediaWires Program Overview**

Program History, Focus and Partnership Strategy

*History:* In 2008, The Media Consortium partnered with Common Sense New Media to launch its "MediaWire" project using their existing NewsLadder platform and distribution tools. With this project, our goal is to showcase the first-rate independent journalism produced by our members, bring their work to larger audiences and build the influence of their journalism. With these goals in mind, we built a series of one-stop shops organizing and offering the best in "progressive, independent media.”

The project, which launched October 2008, is a critical part of The Media Consortium's core goal: Increase distribution opportunities for our members via new technologies and social networking applications. The Media Consortium supported five wires or NewsLadder “hub sites” including:

* Immigration: <http://immigration.newsladder.net>
* Healthcare: <http://healthcare.newsladder.net>
* Economy: <http://economy.newsladder.net>
* Stimulus Plan: <http://stimulusplan.newsladder.net>
* Environment: <http://environment.newsladder.net>

In Fall 2009, it became apparent that the program could be streamlined and run internally by TMC staff. While interns still post content to the NewsLadders, we use free tools like Bit.ly and Delicious to track clicks and archive stories. We developed internal hub sites on [www.themediaconsortium.com](http://www.themediaconsortium.com) that feature the weekly blogs and feeds from TMC members. See below for how feeds are put together using Delicious.

Using the hub sites on [www.themediaconsortium.com](http://www.themediaconsortium.com) as a base, we built a social media toolkit that makes MC member content easily accessible and available to new audiences and partners. With these free, easy to implement distribution tools, we are working to develop deeper relationships and partnerships with allies to connect and integrate the tools and reporting provided by our members. Toolkit components include:

* **Weekly Blogs** that round up the best reporting by TMC members on immigration, healthcare, the economy and the environment are published four times a week. The blogs are available for MC members to post on their own sites and are cross-posted on the Huffington Post, Open Left, Firedoglake, Open Salon, and more. For a full list of sources that blogs are manually reposted to, visit the comprehensive intern duties document: <http://docs.google.com/View?id=dfh3w4fh_4c7nczbhh>. Other organizations that are blog partners get the blogs delivered via the MediaWireBlogs listserv on Google Groups: <http://groups.google.com/group/mediawireblogs>. They repost as content pertains to their readers.
* **Headline Widgets** featuring real-time headline updates from MC members are available for members and organizational allies to post on their sites. Widgets are available for all four issues. An additional widget feature packages all MC member content, which you can see in action on [www.themediaconsortium.org](http://www.themediaconsortium.org) in the right column. Widgets link directly to MC member web sites, in order to drive traffic back to the originating content source. You can find detailed instructions for using the widgets at <http://www.themediaconsortium.org/projects/mediawires/widgets/> and more on internal processes are below.
* Our **Facebook Page** and social networking applications are bringing MC member content to new audiences by integrating our content with the social network. NewsLadder also uses Facebook Connect to feed an update into a user’s profile and their friends’ news feed whenever the user submits or votes on an article on NewsLadder. Widgets can also be embedded on Facebook.
* **RSS Feeds** linking directly to member headlines are available for partners to pipe into their sites. This takes a little technical wrangling, so TMC staff should speak to tech people at various sites.
* Each MC-sponsored ladder sends regular updates out via **Twitter** to our audiences:
  + [www.twitter.com/diasporatmc](http://www.twitter.com/diasporatmc), [www.twitter.com/theaudit](http://www.twitter.com/theaudit), [www.twitter.com/mulchtmc](http://www.twitter.com/mulchtmc), [www.twitter.com/pulsetmc](http://www.twitter.com/pulsetmc)

*Partnership strategy:* We’re targeting non-profit, NGO and philanthropic organizations that already have networks in place to help funnel this content to their engaged, invested audiences. By pooling content around key social issues, we are able to raise awareness around the quality reporting Media Consortium members are providing to the people most likely to develop long-term relationships with our sector due to personal investment in an issue. Lists of organizations we’ve reached out to is available in DropBox>Projects>MediaWires>Partner Orgs

When reaching out to a potential partner, it’s best to figure out which elements of the tool kit are most applicable to them. **Very important to note:** We do not, as a rule, include partner content in the blogs, unless they are TMC members. A rare exception is when their content helps highlight or spotlight what one of our members is up to. If you get asked about this, please redirect to the Editorial Tipsheet project. They are able to submit scoops and story ideas there.

Processes

The below list outlines the daily processes/need to knows to make the project run on a day-to-day basis.

**Blogs:** Visit the blogging process sheet for a full run down on how the bloggers compose and publish. <http://docs.google.com/View?id=dc2prvg2_18gnnqfkgs>

When editing blogs, please make use of AP style and our developing style guide: <http://docs.google.com/View?id=ddqr4vgw_6g7z4z7gf> You should also use the Editing Process sheet that is saved in Dropbox.

**RSS:** Content for blogs comes from TMC members and will be marked using the following tags on Delicious.com. Every story will be tagged tmcmedia + either economytmc, sustaintmc, healthcaretmc, immigrationtmc.

Feed addresses are below:

* Economytmc: http://feeds.feedburner.com/Delicious/tag/economytmc
* Immigrationtmc: http://feeds.feedburner.com/Delicious/tag/immigrationtmc
* HealthCaretmc: http://feeds.feedburner.com/Delicious/tag/healthcaretmc
* Sustaintmc: http://feeds.feedburner.com/Delicious/tag/sustaintmc
* TMCmedia (all member content): http://feeds.feedburner.com/Delicious/tag/tmcmedia

When tagging an article for delicious, please tag all articles with TMC and TMCmedia. Then, to make sure the article shows up in the appropriate feed, please use economytmc, immigrationtmc, healthcaretmc and sustaintmc. For the "notes" portion of the submission, please enter the first sentence or graf of the story, plus the outlet name in all caps. It will look like this:

**Rejection 101: An Excerpt from The Organic Farmer’s Business Handbook**

CHELSEA GREEN: In The Organic Farmer’s Business Handbook, Richard Wiswall shares advice on how to make your vegetable production more efficient, better manage your employees and finances, and turn a profit.

And content will be fed into the headline widgets (more info here) and onto the TMC site. For samples, look underneath the first blog on each hub page.

**Widgets:** We manage and create widgets using Widgetbox. They’re very easy to put together and design. Login: [erin@themediaconsortium.com](mailto:erin@themediaconsortium.com), password: 2000neerglop. All developed widgets should be made as “pro” so that they don’t have ads on them. Widgets can be embedded on any website or social networking page—it’s as easy as embedding YouTube videos.

**Tracking (TK in separate doc)**