Midyear MPREP meeting 2012

Present: Jo Ellen, Catherine, Komp, Alan Searle , Mark Scheerer, Mike Ludwig, Susan Mernit

AGENDA:

**1. Quantitative Summary of Program to Date**
5 outlets: FSRN, Oakland Local, In These times, Public News Service, Truthout
6 reporters: Barbara Grady and Irene Florez (OL), Alice Ollstein (FSRN), Ken Rapoza (IIT), Mark Scheerer (PNS), Mike Ludwig (Truthout)
8 Briefings since March 2011
23 Stories produced

**2. Qualitative Evaluation of Program to Date**
--Is MPREP achieving its goal of educating participating reporters?
--Is MPREP achieving its goal of increasing reporting of media policy stories?

Briefings are really helpful for giving reporters a starting point to go out and gather more data. I’ve seen the impact in the final reports—FSRN

Being able to call up the experts has helped; I’ve been able to learn the ins and outs of these issues, esp. the political files for television and the wireless deals—I didn’t realize how broad an impact that issue was—Truthout

Briefings are very helpful; the challenge at PNS is to find a statewide angle; it’s great to be handed contacts on a silver platter that will give you soundbites—PNS

Reporters are extremely enthusiastic. What’s a struggle is that we are doing one-off stories, but I would like to go forward that we are collaborating to do a joint push, or time stories or do some packages—Oakland Local

**2. Move Forward for Next Six Months**

Elections coming up—is there a media policy story that we could all work on related to elections? There’s the FCC disclosure story—other non-TMC outlets are doing that. Problem is that there is not really an original angle here on the media policy story.

Nonprofit media outlets impacted by IRS ruling about status—who is able to speak—that is an interesting topic. Not only, where is the $$ going, but what kind of support are organizations getting—how alternative media is supported.

**Media deserts** or independent/progressive media deserts—where are people getting their media from? Also look at large markets that are monopolies or oligopolies and thus act like media deserts (i.e. if Clear Channel owns 50 channels in a market). A bit problematic for PNS because some of their material goes out to those channels. Focus on freedom of speech/multiple voices –could focus on immigrant voices as well. We could do a mapping project too. We could do briefings on media consolidation, on spectrum. Many of our allies have done some of this mapping work like MDF and Free Press.

$ for mapper but also someone we hire to do the research to pull the information. We could use a grad student intern for that.

FSRN could speak to citizen journalists and then embedded those conversations into the map. Truthout could also contribute color, but not hard data crunching. If we could centralize data collection and then people could use it to build their own stories.

Identify 5-6 states (regionally). Have intern get data on those states, get policy briefings

 **3. Use of Remaining MPREP Funds**

No comment from participants in call. Feeling seems to be that if we can pay for/ obtain data cruncher and mapper, we can release the rest of these funds for project management around the media desert project.

**4. Ideas for Future Media Policy Reporting**
Here are some ideas:

--Continue a briefing series, but focus it on connecting media policy to specific issues (i.e. health care, education, environment)
--Create a high-impact collaboration around net neutrality, which looks to be the main media policy issue next year (FCC may be gutted)
--access to broadband and internet in rural areas—it’s hard to tell that story without visiting those communities. Finding a way to give voice to those communities wed be great. Digital divide issues—looking at poor urban communities and better internet access to those communities.

--great to connect to groups in Washington DC. Some way to strengthen that connection would be great. That’s how sopa and cispa were stopped.