**The Media Consortium 2010 Annual Member Meeting**

**February 25 – 26, 2010**

**Hudson Hotel, NYC**

**Meeting Goals**

* Kick off a year of incubation, experimentation and collaboration by sharing concrete how-tos, and best practices and skills-building presentations and mini-labs
* Support ongoing networking and deepening of working relationships among TMC members
* Provide info for members on 2010 TMC initiatives and membership and receive feedback on The Media Consortium

**Major Takeaways:**

*“Collaboration is Queen.” – David Cohn*

From shifts in technology and platforms to new and significant role community plays in the funding, production and dissemination of content, it’s a brave new world out there. These changes are creating the space for media organizations to reimagine their roles. Some top line items to consider as we move into this new future include:

* **Implications of Changing Landscape:** This Journalism Landscape Analysis created by TMC and the resulting self-placement of TMC members in the journalism landscape (LINK TO PICS AND PRESENTATION?) demonstrates a dramatic shift in how Media Consortium member organizations want to be producing and distributing journalism in the next five years. This has major implications on what support media organizations need to evolve over the next few years to reach their goals as well as on the shape of The Media Consortium membership itself.
* **Editorial Collaboration:** TMC members are excited and committed to identifying editorial collaboration models. This sentiment has dramatically changed from just a few years ago when the idea of collaboration was determined to be non-feasible. At the meeting, we heard about successes and lessons learned from a recent editorial collaboration among TMC members (Cop15). TMC members also convened and agreed to explore future collaboration opportunities.
* **Moving into Mobile:** TMC members are excited and committed to moving into mobile - the question is how to do this strategically. Content delivery and engagement opportunities through text campaigns, the mobile web, apps and more were all discussed at the meeting. Each tool (or combination thereof) has different strategies, implementations, goals and costs. TMC members asked: Are there options to work together to share on these costs and opportunities? TMC members agreed to work with TMC and each other to test and identify correct mobile platforms, revenue opportunities and ongoing marketing opportunities throughout the next year.
* **Community-building/engagement** is a necessary move for independent media outlets in the coming year. Members acknowledged the need to move in that direction when they placed themselves across different sectors of the evolving landscape (SEE LINK). Community engagement is a new role for TMC members to play in the evolving media sector. It is also a critical value added for TMC members’ users and potential new community members. Community engagement can include media outlets working with their community on a range of opportunities, including: content creation, production, and distribution or other opps for self-organizing, discussion, funding, and more. This is a new opportunity that TMC members and TMC will be committed to exploring this year.
* **Business models/revenue generation:** Where to find the money to support this work? There will be no one size fits all model. Instead TMC members must test and explore a variety of traditional and new opportunities to bring in support. More and more of those opportunities will be moving online and in mobile. Moving into mobile, community building/engagement and editorial collaboration all have implications on sharing or deepening funding resources as well. This is another large area for TMC members and TMC itself to explore and experiment with this year.

**Future Landscape**

See slideshow [EMBED BELOW RECOMMENDATIONS] The presentation integrated big picture recommendations for TMC and its members to consider including:

1. Change internally
2. Increase experimentation
3. Leverage unique role of a consortium
4. Build audiences as communities

Each of these areas and subsequent examples were discussed and highlighted throughout the two-day meeting in panels, small group conversations and brainstorming next steps for both The MC and its members.

**Media Landscape Analysis**

In the past few years, there has been a dramatic shift in journalism landscape and the progressive media sector itself. The Media Consortium was founded by a certain set of legacy players. But the landscape is continuing to change, bringing in new models of media production, revenue, impact, list building, community and action. This analysis is an attempt to define the current and emerging sectors.

See Slideshow (EMBED?) for definitions and examples of the four sectors. Groups placed themselves in one of the four sectors for the year 2010 and where they want to be in 2015. The change was dramatic. Many groups were in pure play journalism in 2010, none were in that sector by 2015. Organizations self-selected into focus on journalism and community, journalism and action and becoming Hybrid Media Makers. SEE VIDEO OF THE TRANSFORMATION?

**ALL OF THE ABOVE SHOULD GO ON THE MAIN WEB SITE PAGE**

**Expert panels**

**Journalism models and the future**

*As media makers navigate this new media environment, they are developing and implementing creative new strategies to produce high-quality and high-impact journalism. What are these cutting edge opportunities and what do TMC members need to know about them? How can these strategies be used for audience expansion and engagement? What are examples of success and lessons learned? In this session, we’ll look at two main models: editorial collaboration and interactive journalism production.*

*Moderator: Ann Friedman, The American Prospect*

* *Monika Bauerlein, Mother Jones and Jason Barnett, The Uptake (Cop15 collaboration)*
* *Aron Pilhofer, Interactive Web Editor, New York Times*

COP15 Collaboration: Successes and Lessons Learned

The changing media landscape is reflected not just in business models, but in editorial strategies as well. Collaboration has become a desired mode of operation for many outlets.

Jason and Monika shared the importance of how to pool some of the work that journalists do for their organizations – this past year (as a result of TMC) people were open to collaborating. **COP15 was easy to pull together because it was time limited and event-bound.**

Successes:

* The COP15 group used Publish 2 [LINK OR PUT IN RESOURCE LIST], any time a reporter filed an article and puts the article into a newsgroup that all members were a part of, they were able to export content bookmarked according to the organization and then the widget appeared on everyone’s site.
* The group worked with people that were interviewing sources to spread out the contact list as wide as possible. They shared interviews and spread the net wide and make sure they got video and tech stories out through a multimedia platform.

Challenges:

* One of the issues facing collaboration and media in general is, where does advocacy end and journalism begin?

Future focus:

* Jason would like to spend more time **developing communications strategies beyond just passing of contact information and sharing of technologies**.

Aron Pilhofer: Interactive Web Journalism

Aron works with a team of 10 journalist/technologists in the creation of interactive news technologies. They are a news desk using data-driven applications or “web development at newsroom speed.” They’re focused on journalism, not just news products.

There is a “data vomit” approach which lacks context and lacks a nut graf. **Throwing data online is what machines do, not what journalists do.** Everything that his team produces still works off of the basic journalistic tenets of: Who, what, why, when & where.

Aron provided different lessons learned/successes (examples in slideshow)

* Tell a story and provide context.
* Immediate search capability but also gives you a place to browse.
* Overview, but not dense
* Provides top-level numbers w/some charts and graphs, and a lead.
* And all of these features are shown in a one-page view for the reader.
* Good interactives should be steeped in data analysis. They should provide context to your reporting. The NYT has built numerous API’s, which are mostly available open source, and they will be open sourcing their program that helps you document and annotate your information soon.
* Data should be useful but not ubiquitous. Many interactives have a minimalist feel, but you’d never know it. The program should invite exploration and discovery.
* What you do should be portable.
* They should be useful intuitive and productive. **We all need to think like a start-up. Ask yourself: Where do you begin?** Bring known journalism forms to the web.
* Start asking why. What is the story? Think broadly about what constitutes data.

To Aron: How much can a 10 person shop be scaled down to? Virtually every project that Aron pointed out was created by small teams of one or 2 people. Part is developing the right tools –(Jengo? is popular, can work great and scale for large traffic.)

Folks might need to shift perceptions of what tech people are and blurring more with journalism and expect more from tech people. Reframing ideas with tools that will provide context, pairing people together and be willing to spend money on people to do that.

**Strategies and tools for community building:**

*Journalism and high-impact media is no longer just about the content that you deliver, it’s about how you build an engaged community. Community building impacts opportunities for creating new models of journalism, revenue generation and list building. This session will build on the previous session and dive into strategies and tools around community building and what they mean for your organization.  
Moderator: Joe Baker, Care2*

* *Ben Rattray, Change.org*
* *Susan Mernit, Consultant & Founder, Oaklandlocal.com*
* *Elena Haliczer, Adaptive Semantics*

Elena Haliczer, Adaptive Semantics

User-generated content and community generates more traffic and more engagement with your content. But once you get the popularity and engagement then you must deal with management/engagement issues.

Elena debuts the program JuLiA – [INCLUDE SHORT DESCRIPTION, WHAT IT DOES AND LINK}

The system has been trained on comments submitted, especially politically focused sites. She recognizes abusiveness in content and automatically deletes or publishes comments in real time. So you’re eliminating the back logs that people complain about on popular sites. Used by Huff Po and Cnn.com.

Concern could be: how do you discover good content in your community.

1. Engagement – people are participating and sharing.
2. List-building – they get new members with each new story
3. Revenue – they connect activists to major non-profits, as we’re engaging them, we’re also making money off of them.

MIGHT WANT TO PULL A COUPLE HIGHLIGHTS FROM SLIDESHOW

Ben Rattray, Change.org

Ben - Change.org is here to help. If there is a story that is breaking, they’ll help start a campaign on something. The direct actors can come from them, not from the news organizations, themselves.

SEEMS SHORT-DO WE NEED HIS NOTES? OR ASK HIM TO SEND 3-5 HIGHLIGHT BULLET POINTS FOR US TO ADD IN? JB to pull

Susan Mernit, Oakland Local

Oaklandlocal.com: hyper local journalism site that combines reported-quality journalism with community-oriented stories. They’re a hybrid, community site and a quality journo site, partnering with pure journalism site.

Oaklandlocal put a lot of effort into building relationships:

* talk to people in the community.
* have a database of local non-profits, ones relevant to the area, and spoke with them to see what they needed before launching
* present themselves with a wide range of views.
* See themselves as doing things *with* the community, not for the community.
* Use social networks but also talk to people in person often. Everyone is a partner, which provides them all the space to allow impact.
* They are not an advocacy group, but they support and work with advocacy groups.

**If you say you want community and you don’t have a community manager, you’re not equipped. You need volunteers trained to help you.**

You have to be relevant, look at your stats and comments and if it’s not working, then you have to do it better. Not only about engagement but also about engaging relevancy.

Q&A:

They use community guidelines – that prohibit hate speech, etc.

Adaptive Semantics works with Discuss.

Sentiment analysis, driven by intelligent systems and semantic text and discover useful. Behind the system is an algorithm that you train with text.

**Moving into Mobile: Should you go there?**

*Should your organization be moving into mobile? This session will help guide members through the what-to-knows, best practices, and 101's as they develop a strategic plan for audience expansion, content delivery, citizen engagement and revenue generation through mobile.   
Moderator: Noel Rabinowitz, ColorLines   
Special Guests:*

* *Jed Albert: Mobile Commons*
* *Prabhas Pokharel: Mobile Active*
* *Noah Kunin and Jake Brewer Sunlight Foundation*
* *Kate Rados, Chelsea Green Publishing*

Noah Kunin, Sunlight Foundation

1. Yes you should move into mobile.
2. What is your vision? Don’t clone yourself – there’s no reason why you should be replicating you in your mobile space.
3. Uses the example of the difference between accessing news sites on their site via your mobile phone vs. using their app. Do not make an application just to serve as a platform for their site.
4. Structure the information you’re presenting your audience by using a different platform. Actually change the way that your audience engages with your content.

ANYTHING WE NEED TO ADD FROM NOAH’S PRESO?

Jed Albert, Mobile Commons

Mobile web is more of a strategy than applications. People will generally download an app, use it briefly and then never use it again. Mobile Now [IS THIS THERE TOOL?] integrates with all of your media, free media live events, press, print.

* Ex: Get people to act, via text, then they are engaged people moved to action. With their action then you are also building profile data that people are actively giving you.
* Mobile should integrate with every kind of social media. If you have a call to action that’s text driven, then there usually is a 325% rate of response. If someone got a text then supporters were 77% more likely to donate. Using mobile as a resource to reach out and get information.
* Do not think of mobile as a separate item. It makes things more accessible and also measures your existing media.

Prabhas Pokharel, Mobile Active

Social change actors with mobile technology. Mobile media tool kit, coming soon.

Mobile is different for different people. Think about what your audience is doing on their mobile phones. Some interesting SMS applications that others have built up – send out SMS alerts or to directly soliciting commentary.

Mobile web – the numbers on mobile web are around 30% of people in US are using it. **Which is not as big as might strike you, but is growing, and that by 2013, mobile will be the primary web access.**

One of the best mobile web sites is Facebook, but also have 3 versions of themselves. They provide Facebook for low end phones or mid range phones who don’t have a rich experience, and then there’s TouchFacebook that allows for iPhone – all of which is to say, that you must understand, when moving into mobile that there are different levels of accessibility for people, and you want to make sure that as many people as possible as able to access your mobile site, so contemplate the diverse communities you’re trying to access.

Kate Rados, Chelsea Green

Trans-media – how do we expect the reader to access your content?

Once you move into mobile, you must have a marketing strategy, must determine if your audience even wants this and how.

Where are they accessing this information and how can you reach them?

If you’re going to spend a lot of time on – aggressive long-term marketing plan for your reader

SEEMS SHORT-DO WE NEED HER NOTES? OR ASK HIM TO SEND 3-5 HIGHLIGHT BULLET POINTS FOR US TO ADD IN? JB emailed

Q&A

Developing an iPhone App can cost anywhere from $100K – 15K. If you’re not going to make it for every platform, make it for the dumbest platform and you can do it cheaper for a few thousand dollars. The lowest amount they charge is $500/month and then based on number of users, etc.

Strategy around timing for text – as well as how can you access these numbers? Everyone who is part of your mobile program has opted in. Integrate it not your website, your magazine, etc. It is not a channel in and of itself, if is a supplement to your channel. Editors note: [JEANNE WE CAN TALK ABOUT HOW TO PHRASE THIS]

**The right recipe for revenue generation**

*Business models are the most important and complex issues that media organizations are dealing with today. But there is no one business model that fits all. Instead, media organizations will have to find the right combination of revenue generation opportunities that fits their organization, audience and goals. In this session, we’ll dive into some of the most critical revenue generation areas that media organizations need to be aware of as they continue their quest for sustainability.   
Moderator: Bridget Gallagher, Center for Public Integrity/Development consultant*

*Special Guests:*

* *David Cohn, Spot.us*
* *Steve Outing, founder & director, Digital Media Test Kitchen at CU-Boulder*
* *Susan Mernit, Consultant & Founder, Oaklandlocal.com*

FOCUS ON SLIDESHOWS AND PULL OUT BULLET POINTS

Steve Outing, Digital Test Kitchen

Pay walls are not a good idea. Metered pay walls- are not necessarily bad, but are also not that good.

Premium memberships offer a service that is so good that users will want to buy it.

Journalism models:

There are many models – pure journalism, pro am models and user-generated content. Each one of these models can and should concentrate on the niche community they’re focused on. Diversity and focus on what you do best. Want to be able to combine the different models into collaborative projects. How do we take all these diverse voice and join forces for specific things. Ex. The elections. Focus on taking all the unique models and bring together in a collaborative model and strengthen thru partnership they have.

David Cohn, Spot.us

JB emailed

Susan Mernit, Oaklandlocal

**Diversifying your audience**

Kety Esquivel, Latoya Peterson, Joe Baker

ASK EACH TO SEND 3-5 BULLET POINTS HIGHLIGHTING WHAT THEY WERE TALKING ABOUT? JB emailed