**TMC 2017 Transformative Media Conference**

**March 1-4, Washington Square Court, DC**

**http://tmcmedia.org**

**Goal**

Independent news media are the first defenders of free speech in the Trump Era. Our mission—to tell the truth, to be the voice of dissent, to be the conscience of the nation—is critically important. When the public has lost trust in corporate news, ours is the trusted voice.

At this moment, to serve the public, we must transform how we see ourselves. No longer merely the "alternative" to mainstream media, can we start seeing ourselves as the most trusted and valued news outlets in the nation? Can we seize the opportunity to transform our media system?

Yes we can. We believe there is an opportunity with the failure of corporate media to create a new media system that is mission-based and values-driven. Among the values this new media system will share will be the journalistic values of accuracy and accountability, and the social values of inclusivity and equity. It will be a news media that puts communities (rather than journalists or politicians, etc,) at its center. Our democratic values are at stake. We must seize the moment to ensure the voice of all the people is heard by those who govern.

**Top Objectives**

1) Develop concrete ways to further editorial collaboration and partnerships

Independent news outlets own niches. In order for them to transform the media system, they will need to work together and work with partners in local and community media..

2) Develop concrete ways to collaborate on marketing/promotion/distribution

One of the primary threats independent news faces is a duopoly on distribution created by Google and Facebook. In order to transform the media system,independent news outlets must be able to "show up" on the radar of influencers and the public. We need fresh thinking on how to get our content into the larger marketplace.

3) Renew our commitment to racial, geographic and class equity within our organizations

Last year, the Media Consortium devoted our conference to racial equity, with a full-day workshop led by Race Forward. Over 65 individuals attended that workshop--about half of all attendees at the conference. We need to continue to emphasize that we will not be living our values unless all our outlets are racially equitable. And this election demonstrates that we must also be geographically equitable. We need a renewed commitment to these values.

**Method**

This moment is Not Normal. A regular conference format won’t help us organize to face the new threats of this moment, nor will panels and speeches help us formulate strategies for transforming the media space. Instead, we will organize this conference by centering our own voices using interactive, participatory format facilitated by Chris Michael.

Chris is a communications professional and human rights advocate who headed trainings at Witness and has organized for Global Exchange and Rainforest Action Network. He has facilitated events for Open Society Foundations, the Internet Society, and the Association of Independent Radio Producers among other—and also is launching his own community radio channel. He knows media, he knows activism and he knows facilitation.

Set up along the lines of a SWOT analysis, the conference will open with a roundtable Wednesday night frankly assessing this sector’s strengths and weaknesses. We will being an interactive conversation Thursday morning with round robin discussions of the threats news media face, but also the opportunities we can grasp. Groups will then begin to focus on specific areas where the sector can address threats or develop opportunities. Because we want to come up with solutions, we are inviting a number of vendors and experts to bring their solutions into our space on Friday afternoon. We anticipate groups may visit with these vendors or invite them into their spaces.

We will end this part of our conference on Friday evening with specific initatives and actions those present can take. Saturday is dedicated to providing Media Consortium members with content they need for the next year, although it is possible—and welcome--that some groups from Friday may want to continue meeting Saturday.

**Expectations for Attendees**

We hope and expect that speakers at the plenaries and on the Friday panels will particpiate fully in the open space groups.

We hope and expect that attendees will be with us from Wednesday evening until at least Friday evening.

The Media Consortium will produce a report by April 2, 2017 to provide those unable to attend with a sense of the gathering.

**To Register Go to http://tmcmedia.org**