**TMC 2017: Transformative Media Conference**

Overview:

Each year, the Media Consortium holds a conference designed to support the continuing work of its network of 84 progressive independent news outlets.

In 2017, we must do much more. The 2016 election highlighted the many weaknesses of our current news system, the greatest of which is a lack of public trust in journalism. Media Consortium outlets know how to build trust—we do it all the time. But we also know that to build trust in journalism, the news system cannot just be patched. It must be transformed.

Trusted journalism is built upon these practices: accuracy in reporting; a demand for accountability from ourselves as well as from those in power; and a deep, equitable engagement in a wide diversity of communities.

The progressive news sector has a significant opportunity to help forge this transformed news system because our outlets already possess many of the key strengths we need. Progressive outlets provide accurate news that inspires trust. Deeply engaged with our current communities, we hold the powerful to account and showcase new solutions.

The goal of this conference will be to build on our strengths and diagnose our weaknesses, to assess our threats and figure out how to take advantage of our opportunities in order to support the public’s need to be informed.

**Conference Flow**

**Conference Goal:**

Inspire journalists currently working in independent progressive news media to think bigger about how they become more significant players in the news ecosystem.

Solutions may range from an individual outlet deciding to reach out to one or more new communities to a consensus among a number of outlets to work together to market content to a mass audience.

The conference will be a success if participants leave with concrete ways to deepen the transformative power of their work, either within their own outlet or in the field as a whole.

**Conference Flow**

**Wednesday evening**

Goals: Bring people to the conference Wednesday pm so we can start early Thurs am

Inspire attendees so that they are willing to consider thinking big

Setup: Three highly respected, charismatic individuals in conversation with each other about the potential for transforming the news ecosystem

**Thursday morning 9:30-11**

Goals: Inspire attendees so that they are willing to start thinking big

Provide examples of strategic thinking around what a transformed news ecosystem would look like, and what role independent journalists could play

Set-up: Inspiring talk or conversation as a kick off, followed by a roundtable of communicators, academics and journalists who are actually doing the work of

--equitable and deep community engagement (Sarah van Gelder, Kai Wright)

**--**forging new ways of amplifying content (Opal Tometi or Shanelle)

--institutional transformation (Tressie Cottom, Nina Turner)

**Thursday mid-day 11-1**

Goals: Move from passive to active participation;

Connect with others at the conference

Set-up: Facilitator takes over, maybe moving people into a world café where small groups can share their thoughts about the talks with each other. Then let people continue in those groups or join others for lunch.

After lunch, facilitator helps people organize into working groups.

**Thursday afternoon: 1:15-4:00**

Goals: Participants think concretely about how to transform their own outlets and the media system.

Set-up: Self-organized groups around specific topics/ questions/ issues.

Organizers will have 5-8 groups ready to go in advance

**Friday morning**

Goals: Dig deeper into solutions that will lead to transforming the news ecosystem

Set-up: Start the whole thinking process anew, since repetition is often the key to learning and doing. Instead of passive roundtables, however, start with a set of interactive sessions set up to highlight particular threats and opportunities. Most of these should resonate with discussions from the previous day.

* Threat: “Sued, Surveilled, Doxxed and DdoSed”
* Opportunity: “Racial Equity Case Studies”
* Opportunity: “Connecting with Community Media”
* Threat: “Working With/ Fighting Against Facebook”
* Opportuity: “What Engagement Really Means”
* Opportunity: “Collaboration Partnership Models”

**Friday Mid-day**

Goal: Emerge with concrete commitments

Set-up: Working groups from Thursday will continue and/or reorganize.

As relief, and to provide more concrete solutions, we will also offer a “speed dating” event with vendors and organizations that can address specific questions and concerns.

**Friday Afternoon**

Goal: Public commmitments

Set-up: Facilitated large group meeting designed to enable participants to vote on concrete steps we can take as a group and a sector to ameliiorate threats and pursue opportunities.

**Saturday**

Goal: provide deeper support that outlets may need for their work throughout the year, focusing on workshops. Groups attending the conference are invited to use the conference space to set up their own meetings during this time.