**POLGREEN PANEL NOTES**

**Editorial Collaboration: Building on the Wisconsin Model**

When: 11:00-11:45 am, Thursday, Oct 13.

Media Consortium members’ powerful coverage of the Wisconsin protests created a model for future collaborations. But how can we build on that work to be more responsive and have more impact? This panel of TMC members will explore lessons learned and how we can continue to improve our editorial collaborations. Moderator: Erin Polgreen  
Panelists:

•     Monika Bauerlein, Co-Editor Mother Jones

•     Liz DiNovella, Culture Editor, The Progressive

•     Sam Mayfield, Lower Third Productions  
•     Laura Flanders, The Laura Flanders

**3-5 minutes: Setting the Stage**

Over the past 5 years, TMC has been working with members to build relationships and infrastructure that makes it possible for folks to collaborate on a larger scale across platforms. Early research into our network showed that out of a massive audience that was well into the millions, only one in 4 had any overlap. Huge opportunity for cross-pollination of audience to increase reach and more efficiently move coerage of key issues to larger scale.

You saw me mention a few collaborative efforts earlier today—well, Wisconsin was a snowballing of all of our previous work to build relationships and infrastructure. It was a phenomenal success, in many ways. For this panel, we want to talk about what worked and how we can tweak these models for collaboration to be even more effective in the future. INTRO YOUR CO-PANELISTS.

**Liz DiNovella is based in Madison, Wisconsin as Culture Editor of The Progressive. She’s an expert in Wisconsin politics.**

**Laura Flanders is XXX**

**Sam Mayfield was in Wisconsin with The Uptake covering the protests in the Capital. She’s also working on a documentary about the protests and their aftermath.**

**Monika Bauerlein, co-editor of Mother Jones, will be talking about their decision to send Andy Kroll in to report from Madison.**

Before we dive in, I want to talk a little bit about the role that TMC played in this collab.

While we weren’t on the ground, we worked hard behind the scenes to make connections and push out TMC members work to the larger sphere.

**When it became clear that Wisconsin had the potential to become the focal point of a national conversation,** I reached out to TMC members who had folks on the ground in Madison and the surrounding area and asked them what would be helpful to them/could they offer resources. At this point, mainstream media was ignoring the protests and they weren’t a part of the larger news cycle.

I then used our mediawires project as a foundation for creating a pipeline to feed headlines to non-profit partners and allies. I mentioned the headline feeds earlier, that were posted on 80 sites—I also commissioned and published three round-up blogs placing the Wisconsin labor struggle in context. Blogs were reprinted at over 30 sites—including non-profits, unions, and media outlets.

Other TMC members also stepped in to collaborate and connect. The UpTake quickly coordinated live video coverage of the protests that featured reporters from fellow TMC members. This livestream was some of the only regular video coming out of Madison, and was so popular that it crashed Livestream’s servers during the largest protests.

TMC members The Nation, Mother Jones, Democracy Now!, FreeSpeechTV, GritTV, Truthout, The Progressive, Free Speech Radio News, Workers’ Independent News, and In These Times connected on the ground in Madison. Many used local radio station WORT as a base of operations and connecting point for reporters.

SO. At this point, I want to turn it over to our panelists to talk about their experiences on the ground and what we can do to further this kind of work in the future. Liz, will you take it away?

**20 minutes: Panelist introductions**

Each panelist has 5 minutes to introduce herself and give an overview of what their organization did in Wisconsin. Please wrap your introduction up by sharing one big success and one big challenge that you met for this effort. And trust me, I'll keep you on point for timing!

**20 Minutes: Q+A/Discussion**

Our goal with the moderated Q+A portion of this conversation will be to focus on actionable outcomes for building future collaborations like Wisconsion. I'll start by posing one or two of the below questions to the panel, then we'll open it up to the larger group.

* What would you do differently if you could do it again?
* What kind of infrastructure could support this kind of work? (i.e. coordination between outlets, promotions, funding)
* How can we improve/facillitate connections between local and national outlets?
* How can we collaborate so we all benefit rather than act in competition with one another for limited resources?
* What other issues do you see opportunities for us to do work like Wisconsin around?

**Other noteworthy items to consider:**

Would be smart to make a comparison between how corporate media covered vs. independent media. Sam says that while Ed Schultz and Maddow were mentioning Wisconsin, they were still relying on sources that weren't in Wisconsin. Liz: People outside of Madison were wondering why John Nichols was the only one who was talking about Wisconsin. Fox news used footage that wasn't even from Wisconsin.

**Storytelling Pioneers: New Tools, Trends, and Techniques in Visual Journalism**

When: 7-8 p.m., Thursday, Oct 13.

From data visualization to hand illustration, today’s journalists are utilizing new tools and techniques to depict the news on the visual spectrum. During this panel discussion, editors and reporters who are breaking new ground in journalism content will discuss the plusses and pitfalls of experimenting in the visual space. Moderator: Erin Polgreen, The Media Consortium

* Dan Archer, Comics Journalist
* Tasneem Raja, Mother Jones
* Hatty Lee, Art and Production Manager, Colorlines.com
* Leslie Thatcher, Literary Editor, Truthout

**3-5 minutes: Setting the Stage**

Thanks so much for coming tonight. Glad to see so many friendly faces in the room. We’re really excited to be talking to you tonight about how news organizations are innovating with their reporting on a visual level. Our panel tonight is going to cover several aspects of the visual space to talk about what works, what doesn’t, and what kinds of best practices we’ve discovered along the way.

I’m going to talk a little bit about what we mean when we talk about visual journalism, but first, I want to intro our guests. I’m very excited to have such a variety of experts in the room, all of whom are working on different levels to explore how to engage audiences around visual content.

Leslie Thatcher has been working to include comics and illustrated journalism in Truthout’s regularly scheduled programming. She’s going to talk about Truthout’s experiences publishing visual journalism, and how they’re looking to do more in this space in the future.

As a knight news fellow at Stanford, Dan Archer has been experimenting with multimedia comics journalism that makes it easy for the reader to control how they interact with a story, and on what level. He’s published interactive timelines, and recently produced an animation for American Public Media.

Hatty Lee creates infographics that put critical issues related to race and the economy into sharp relief for Colorlines.com. She’s able to pare down complicated data into well-constructed, easy to read snapshots that augment Colorlines’ coverage.

At Mother Jones, Tasneem Raja is LOOK AT BIO. She’s going to dive into interactive data visualizations and web applications, specifically in how Mother Jones has been working to cover Occupy Wall Street.

**So, before our panelists get started, I talk a little bit about what visual journalism does.** When done well, this form of media represents a new landscape for engagement. Why is it effective?

* **It’s incredibly shareable**—esp infographics and comics. This type of media is quick to consume and primed for social sharing. It’s easy to repost a smart infographic on facebook, twitter, or tumblr. I can’t tell you how many screenshots and visual media I’ve seen posted related to OWS over the last two weeks. It’s stunning to see, and this stuff really stands out in a feed. **Susie Cagle** (POINT HER OUT) has done a wonderful job creating comics-form explainers for various members of The Media Consortium. She put together a great piece on for-profit universities for campus progress that was shared copiously on facebook and twitter, so much so that the comic was republished at both LifeHacker and HuffPo.
* **Visual Journalism arms your audience.** World on a page, or screen. Be it illustration or an interactive map, this form of journalism encourages the reader to go beyond words to engage with this data in a new way. They are able to arm themselves with data that is critical to them, be it finding out more about zoning requirements in your community or what kind of legislation your state rep is involved in.
* **Looks great on many devices.** Tablets offer a whole new level of interactivity, and this work can be profoundly effective in that space. Applications like Flipboard also make it possible to share this content in an attractive setting.
* In short, visual journalism is **often the perfect primer for complicated issues**. You don’t have to read a 2,000 word article to understand EXAMPLE HERE. Instead, this represents the opportunity to educate yourself.

We also convened this panel because we want to kick off a conversation about how news orgs can learn from and utilize these journalistic styles internally. TMC is developing a lab focused on visual journalism for 2012, and we’re starting the conversation here. We want media organizations to be innovators when it comes to news delivery, and want to make it possible for folks of all levels of resources to use comics, data visualization, infographics, and interactive applications to really transform how their audiences engage with and understand the news.

I’m going to turn things over to our first panelist now. Leslie, take it away!

**25-30 minutes: Panelist introductions**

Each panelist has 5-7 minutes to introduce themselves and give an overview of their work. Ideally, you will each share something that has been very successful--and something that didn't perform so well. I know it's not fun to spotlight something that didn't work, but it can be incredibly valuable to talk about challenges constructively. I want us to get a sense for how this is a field in flux and what kind of learning curve exists. And trust me, I'll keep you on point for timing!

**20 Minutes: Q+A/Discussion**

* Want to talk a little bit about workplace culture--how can you support working visually at your organization? Staffing?
* What developments in tech are you interested in?
* Who else is doing this kind of work right?
* Can you attract new eyeballs/demographics via visual journalism?