The Media Consortium & The National Alliance for Media Arts and Culture

Two-pager for Video-Match proposal

July 15, 2014

*“Bringing documentarians and independent news outlets together, one b-roll at a time.”*

**The Need: How can low-resourced independent news organizations serve the video news market? How can documentarians find audiences for their films?**

The last few years have witnessed an explosion of easily accessible breaking news video tools (like Storymaker). Independent news outlets, however, specialize in long-form journalism, explainers, and other kinds of features, not breaking news. Creating high quality video for feature news is resource- and time- intensive.

Likewise, documentarians may receive grants to produce films, win awards at film festivals, but not be able to find general market distribution. To reach a general audience they must engage local communities, yet filmmakers generally are not equipped with the outreach tools necessary to even inform audiences about the existence of their films.

**The Solution: match independent documentary filmmakers to news outlets.**

The Media Consortium (TMC) and the National Alliance for Media Arts and Culture (NAMAC) have found that independent documentary filmmakers are willing to cut and edit original video from their existing footage to serve the needs of news organizations. This footage can provide the visual storytelling independent news organizations need.

The news outlets, especially independent news outlets, have deeply engaged communities. In exchange for the filmmaker’s product, news outlets are willing to promote the film to their audiences via social media, enewsletters, and digital ads. This kind of advertising is invaluable for filmmakers seeking community screenings.

*Example: In December, High Country News (HCN) was seeking rich video content to illustrate the complex story around tar sands drilling. NAMAC and TMC introduced High Country News to filmmaker J. Christian Jensen, whose “White Earth” had just made the rounds at film festivals but had not yet gone into distribution. Jensen agreed to edit a 4-minute cut for High Country News for a mutually agreed upon sum. The result? A HCN Facebook post promoting this effort received 90+ shares and Jensen received several requests to host community screenings. To see the HCN story:* [*http://www.hcn.org/articles/two-north-dakota-kids-explain-the-bakken-boom?src=feat*](http://www.hcn.org/articles/two-north-dakota-kids-explain-the-bakken-boom?src=feat)

**Proposed Platform**

We believe a simple Match.com-style platform with clear project templates will be sufficient to broker most relationships between outlets and documentarians. For more complex projects, either participant could pay a premium for a human curator to make and manage matches.

**Appendix:**

**What makes a great match?**

The filmmaker:

* wants or needs the audience that the particular news outlet reaches
* is willing to cut an original 3-4 minute video piece from pre-exiting footage for the news outlet (i.e. a content share rather than new commission)
* is willing to work with the outlet’s timetable
* is willing to work with the outlet on tone and content

The news outlet:

* recognizes the filmmaker as an independent creator/producer
* is willing to lay out specifications for the short video in a requirements format
* is willing to work with the filmmaker’s timetable
* is willing to promote the filmmaker’s actual film via social media

The matchmaker:

* a robust Match.com-like platform will work for many outlets
* the matchmaker audits news outlets to ensure they have stated audience reach, and evaluates documentarians for video quality, bonafides. A thorough vetting process is critical to ensuring successful relationship building.
* for a premium, a human curator can make and manage matches

**Models:**

Match.com

* detailed templates for participants
* high-powered, easy-to-use search
* easy way to initiate both on and off site contact
* monthly fee

Catchafire

* detailed templates for participants, one offering a service, the other requesting a service
* both service providers and service recipients vetted by company
* professional matchmakers available to initiate matches and manage projects
* one fee for three matches

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