

Database Integration Project

Submitted by The Media Consortium

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In today’s digital newsroom, the key to sustainability is personalization—the ability to deliver the content your user wants in the way they want it.

Publishers must know if individuals prefer delivery by phone, tablet, web, broadcast or print; if they stay connected via twitter, facebook, instagram, pinterest, google plus or the old-style enewsletter; if they care enough about the brand to recommend it to friends; if they are willing to pay for content and if so, in what form; and, if they will attend your event, participate in your auction, or donate to your cause.

All that information comes in to publishers as discreet data, all too often going into discreet databases. Fulfillment house databases don’t speak to social media analytic software; email newsletter databases don’t connect with cms managers; donor databases and event ticketing systems may work with some but not all of the above.

Large organizations can create custom systems, or simply employ data techs to sort and recombine the data. Small, independent media organizations don’t have that luxury. They need a solution to database integration.

The goal of the Media Consortium’s data integration project is to map the full extent of the problem, and begin to identify solutions. The project will proceed in three stages.

**Stage One**: We will survey participating members to discover exactly which databases they currently use, what data they collect, and how they use the data. To ensure survey results, the survey will be completed via interviews with participating publishers.

Stage One Deliverable: Vendor grid.

Stage One Benefit: Participating members will be able to use the grid to identify colleagues who share systems, to trade information about systems, and to identify potential vendors for themselves. Vendors may use the grid to identify potential sale and sponsorship opportunities within the Consortium.

**Stage Two:** We will analyze the different types of systems independent news outlets currently use. We will research and locate api’s and other software fixes that may already exist that can join these different systems; on the flip side, we will define areas data integration presents a particular challenge.

Stage Two Deliverable: Presentation of research and findings via white paper; identification of 2-5 experiments to integrate data across specific software systems.

Stage Two Benefit: Immediate benefit for those outlets in cases where api’s and other software fixes are discovered that could link their systems; opportunity for tech companies to better understand the opportunities available for new software and apis’s within the media field; outline of next steps (i.e. experiments) to provide solutions to specific challenges.

**Stage Three**: Conduct 2-5 experiments, in each case with 1-2 outlets. Experiments will be fast and inexpensive, focusing on opportunities for data integration that have been previously identified.

Stage Three Deliverable: Presentation of research and findings via white paper. Specific deliverables will depend on experiment.

Stage Three Benefit: Potential for the discovery of solutions to some challenging data integration problems; opportunity for tech companies to better understand the opportunities available.

**Project timeline:**  3-5 months for Stages One and Two; time for Stage Three will not be known until the completion of Stage Two.

**Amount Requested:** $25,000 for Stage One and Two. Cost for Stage Three will not be known until the completion of Stage Two.

**Project Leadership**

* **Jo Ellen Green Kaiser** will be project manager; she is the executive director of the Media Consortium.
* **Phillip Smith** will be the project consultant; he is a well-respected digital publishing consultant <http://www.linkedin.com/in/phillipadsmith>
* Dan Dineen (In These Times), Rod Arakaki (Yes! magazine) and Kate Lesniak (Bitch) will serve as an internal project review board.