Memorandum of Understanding

April 21, 2014

**I. Participants:**

1. The Media Consortium (“TMC”), a project of the Foundation for National Progress
2. Center for Media and Democracy, Earth Island Journal, and Making Contact (“Members”)

**II. Definition:**

“The researchers” are Professor Gary King and Harvard graduate students Ariel White and Benjamin Schneer.

**III. Project Purpose**

The Media Consortium has received restricted funds from the Vocus Fund and several anonymous donors to regrant to Media Consortium members participating in our Metrics Impact project. The goal of the funds is two-fold.

1. To create new editorial collaborations that would not have occurred without these funds (what researchers call an “intervention” in public discourse).
2. To track the Twitter conversations resulting from these collaborations in order to determine whether the intervention has created a quantifiable impact on public discourse.

**IV. Responsibilities**

The Collaboration

1. The “Members” have proposed the following editorial collaboration (“the collaboration”), designed to meet the purposes of the project:

The proposed media impact project is an investigation of how the transnational corporations that both manufacture pesticides and develop genetically engineered crops (GMOs, 85 percent of which are engineered to withstand more of a particular pesticide) are impacting public health, the environment, and democracy -- through heavy lobbying pressure at the state and federal level as well as hard-nosed litigation at the local level.

Reporting will focus on the effects of several corporations’ aggressive experimental GMO growth and heavy and mixed pesticide use for Kaua‘i, Hawai‘i, including its near-shore marine environment, as well as the corporations’ lawsuit against Kaua‘i for its ordinance limiting GMOs and pesticides, and corporate efforts at the state level to preempt Kaua‘i’s local control over its environment, as well as on related struggles on Hawai‘i’s other islands.

Related reporting will focus on the state-level preemption of Oregon county-level attempts to put a moratorium on GMO crops and how groups like the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC) helped push for such an override.

Reports will also update audiences as to the status of struggles for local control over pesticides and GMOs nationwide.

2. “The collaboration” will include 6 never-before published feature length works created by the following outlets:

Earth Island Journal (digital story): alternatives to BigAg

CMD (digital story): money in politics—Big Ag legislation

CMD (digital story): money in politics—Oregon Big Ag legislation

CMD/ The Progressive (print story): money in politics—Oregon Big Ag legislation

Making Contact (radio story with transcript)—pesticide legislation

Cascadia Times (digital and print story): impact of pesticide GMO seeds

3. “The collaboration” will include 8 reprinted/reposted/repurposed versions of the works named above by the following outlets:

Earth Island Journal (TMC member) will crosspost CMD, Making Contact audio and Cascadia Times stories

CMD (TMC member) will crosspost Earth Island Journal, Cascadia Times stories on its PRWatch.org site

Truthout (TMC member), repurposed Cascadia Times story

Grist (TMC member), repurposed Cascadia Times story

Orion (TMC member), repurposed Cascadia Times story

The Participants

1. “Members” must be a member in good standing of the Media Consortium (dues for 2014 must be paid in full).

2. “Members” must agree to allow “the researchers” full access to “Member’s” Google Analytics account.

3. All other Media Consortium outlets participating in “the collaboration” must be members in good standing of the Media Consortium.

Marketing

1. “Members” define the impact sought by “the collaboration” as follows:

We aim to tell the stories of real people about food systems and the effects of pesticide-ready GMOs on human health, the environment, and democracy in order to rebalance the conversation towards citizens and away from the pesticide and GMO industry talking points that are currently dominating the mainstream media.

2. “Member” will market “the collaboration” using the following twitter hashtag(s):

NewsCred, which produces content marketing software, will help these news outlets distribute our important, interactive narrative. Each outlet in the editorial group will also participate in marketing the group’s content, using the shared Twitter hashtags #BigAg and #WTFork to highlight, promote, and track the reach and impact of our stories.

Timeline

1. Works created for “the collaboration” will first be published on May 19, 2014

2. All works created for “the collaboration” will be published by June 15, 2014

**IV. Consideration**

In exchange for fulfilling the responsibilities outlined in this agreement, Member shall receive a sum of $6,000.

CMD/The Progressive: $1000

Earth Island Journal: $300

Making Contact: $2100

Cascadia Times (on behalf of Orion, Grist, Truthout): $2,600

**V. Indemnification**

Each party agrees to indemnify, defend and hold harmless theother party, its officers, directors, agents, employees and other related parties from and against any and all liabilities, damages, losses, expenses, claims, demands, suits, fines, or judgments that include reasonable attorneys' fees, costs and expenses, incidental thereto, arising out of the indemnifying party’s negligence, willful misconduct, and negligent performance of, or failure to perform, any of its duties or obligations under this Agreement. The provisions of this indemnification are solely for the benefit of the parties hereto and not intended to create or grant any rights, contractual or otherwise, to another person or entity.

**VI. Modification**

**This Agreement may be supplemented, amended, or modified only by the mutual agreement of the parties.**

**VIII. Concurrence**

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Jo Ellen Green Kaiser, Executive Director, TMC Date

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Earth Island Journal Date

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Center for Media and Democracy Date

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Making Contact Date