Panel 1: The New Genre

Have we really created a new genre or just a new delivery system for traditional journalism genres? Is there a new narrative structure for news on the Web? Is shovelware disappearing or is it still the basis of most journalism on the Web? What is online journalism good for? What role have multimedia resources played thus far and what is their promise in the future?

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Panelists:
Doug Feaver,
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Carin Dessauer,
Cross platform consultant, former CNN executive and recent George Washington University Fellow

Bob Sullivan,
Senior Writer, MSNBC.com

SHAWN McKINNEY: This first panel we're going to have is - well I guess. we might call it The New Genre. Have we really created a new genre or just a new delivery system? Is shovelware disappearing or is it still the basis for much of online journalism? And that's what we're going to attempt to address. My first speaker is Doug Feaver and he's the Vice President and Executive Editor of washingtonpost.com. And just one little thing: Christopher Schroeder of the Washington Post Music Interactive describes him as "the rarest find. A veteran of the best in news and a veteran of the best in the Internet." He's got many years of experience. He started at the Washington Post as a copy editor in 1969 and let me go ahead and turn it over to Doug.

DOUG FEAVER: Thanks very much. I'm going to go through this list of questions that is in your program here and provide some smart-ass answers as we go down the list. "Have we really created a new genre or just a new delivery system for

traditional online journalism?" Well, we have created a new genre and we have created a new delivery system. The answer to both of those is yes, but not quite yet. "Is there a new narrative structure for news on the Web?" You bet there is. "Is shovelware disappearing?" Sadly, it hasn't disappeared yet. There's an awful lot of shovelware out there as any of you who are dealing with anything resembling an online operation know too well. "Or is it still the basis for most of the journalistic products on the Web?" It's fortunately the basis for fewer of them, I think, everyday, but it still a very important part of what certainly those of us who have legacy media in our backgrounds are dealing with. "What is online journalism good for?" Now that is a very tough question. What is journalism good for, it seems to me, is what the question is and in terms of sort of the basic underlying issues of what good journalism should be about at its best, I am from the school that believes that good journalism comforts the afflicted and afflicts the comfortable and also it does need to keep you informed of everything from your baseball score to what the latest hot recipe is at the great restaurant downtown and also the Mideast crisis or something less important in terms of the international situation but more important in terms of what you're interested in locally. "What role multimedia resources have played thus far and will play in this new genre?" I think multimedia - when I'm using the term multimedia resources as opposed to a term that was very hot about four years ago and I never liked - convergence - and this was the idea that television and text and audio and God knows what else were all going to come together and converge in some sort of wonderful new way. The Internet is clearly helping that.

Multimedia is clearly an important part of that. We have had, certainly at washingtonpost.com, we have spent an enormous amount of time and money developing multimedia resources - specifically photo galleries and taking advantage of audio resource and video resources to augment and support the text that comes from our core legacy of the Washington Post. Very important part - I don't think any of us have figured it out yet, in terms of really how to best pull these things together. There are some wonderful examples of things at a number of sites around the country where multimedia is being used really, really well and where it is becoming an important part of the storytelling and what works well with the text. There are some examples where it is sort of standing alone and the text has become secondary, which of course gives those of us with score and text backgrounds pause. Are we completely losing our craft? So we are still figuring it out. I think we're in better shape than we were.

I was here three years ago and I guess Professor Rosental and I think we're in better shape than we were then. We've gotten through the ridiculous idea that we're all going to become extraordinarily wealthy because of the IPOs when our parent companies split us off and we became really extraordinarily wealthy pioneers in this wonderful web, but now we're trying to pull the arrows out of our backs which is what happens to pioneers, and figure out how to do this in a way that has always been true of great journalism. Great journalism usually comes, in fact almost always comes, from organizations that are at their core great businesses. So we now have this challenge. We've developed this new system. We've built an audience sooner than any other medium in terms of the size of audience and the amount of time it took to deal with it. We are presenting things in much different ways, but sometimes in very old ways. If it's just text on screen you're not taking advantages of the

opportunity. The video and audio opportunities are much stronger than they were. The video players that I sat here and joked about two or three years ago are a whole lot better now than they were then. But you still have to wait for them to load. The integration of these products remains. We still have a lot of text people who don't understand visual. We have a lot of visual people that don't understand text. But we're getting better every day. We have this great audience. And we have this one wonderful opportunity that's completely separate from the standard newspaper paradigm. We own the market between 8 am and 5 pm weekdays. We have access to an audience that nobody else can get at. The advertisers are going to figure that out one of these days. In fact, they are beginning to figure it out. A lot of people don't have TVs in their offices. A lot of people don't have newspaper boys running down the hallways throwing their print at them all the time. We've got that audience and we are, all of us, building quite a future on top of that. Advertisers are beginning to figure that out.

SHAWN McKINNEY: Now I'd like to introduce my next panelist. This is Carin Dessauer and she was recently awarded the J.B. and Maurice C. Shapiro Fellowship which is going to enable her to teach at George Washington University at the School of Media and Public Affairs. She's a former CNN Executive and produced the first online news interview with a sitting President. She's got fifteen years of experience as a Washington journalist. Let's go ahead and turn it over to her.

CARIN DESSAUER: Well, I'm also going to attempt to answer these questions. But given my present perch, I'll be a little more analytical. Not needing to spin for one organization or not. Not that Doug was spinning at all. He would never do that. I would say that right now it's the best of the times and not the worst of times, but the most challenging times in this medium. I think that we need to put this in perspective. It's moving so quickly that we all lose sight of that. We were very invigorated about seven years ago when this process started and for some reason this is really under the microscope like no other individual medium has ever been. I was just sharing with my students that, you really have to put it in perspective that the first mass communication was in 700 BC when a homing pigeon was sent out to provide communication. And it took 700 years later for the printing press to be invented. That's a long period of time. So the fact that this medium has really grown in about 7 years.

When you think that in about 1993 there were somewhere between 0 to 3 - some people think there were actually 3 websites at the time. It's moved so quickly. It took 10 years for USA Today to become profitable as a newspaper. At the time, they were defying the odds. And everyone seems to forget that when television started, it took really about 20 years for a "defining moment" with the Kennedy-Nixon debates and so we're really only in my mind starting to see the very powerful evidence of how great this medium is. But what has happened in a very short period of time is that there is a focus on "new media" and quickly companies - like all of the companies represented here - recognize that it's not just about new media, it's about amortizing your core product. So if you're print, Washington Post, if you're television - MSNBC and NBC, you have to amortize what you're working with and not start to reinvent the wheel. So that really changed the mindset. But still it's grown in an amazing amount of time and I'll just give you some stats to put things in

perspective. I'll give you some numbers from CNN which I don't very - well, when the Star Report, which everyone looks at as probably the most important event for Internet journalism because it showed the power of this medium on one day. Many other stories, as you know, run a series of days, weeks. But the Starr Report was that one day. It was so important for people to go online to see the document. I'll never forget when Candy Crawley, who acknowledged on air she had never been on the Internet, and the document ended up being put on the congressional website. So before she even got the physical document in hand, she was able to scroll through it by looking at it on the Internet. On that day, CNN.com had 34 million page impressions.

Then you fast forward to election 2000. And another record was set with 156 million page impressions. Even though the election still holds among the top ten traffic days to date on CNN, obviously with September 11th you would expect another record. On September 12th, CNN.com had 337 million page impressions. So again, 2000 - 156 million, September 12th, the date after - 337 million. So that's just astounding. I know that Doug and I were on a panel with Merrill Brown, your (inaudible) boss, a number of weeks ago, months ago, whatever, at the National Press Club in Washington. He pointed out that MSNBC.com feels that they have about 4 million unique users - that's not even page impressions - but unique users a day. That's incredible! And again, in a very short period of time. So, polls that were taken right after 9/11 show that clearly, as we know this was a television story. What was powerful is the fact that more and more people were going to the Internet as their second source for news. Why? Because it's about convenience. It's about the options. It's about the depth that the Internet provides. It's about the multi-media experience. You can get it all when you want it. And even though clearly it's going to continue to be a television story - this aftermath - in those first early days in particular. That is very substantial evidence for the Internet. And what's exciting is that we never got down to the lowest common denominator. Television and print right now are facing challenging times. Their numbers have dropped off. Ratings have dropped off. We all know there are so many television stations out there. We might decide that one given night you want to watch ER. Another night you want to watch something on the Discovery channel. So that presents challenges. And what's happening is the ratings are lower, the readership on newspapers and magazines is lower, but the beauty of the Internet right now is because, as we all know, we've not reached the saturation point. Not all households have PCs. There's still tremendous growth.

So for example, the Internet started out at zero and then by 2000 it had grown about 23%. Whereas local television, years ago, was reaching about 80%. Now it had dropped down to 60% in 2000. And broadcast television about 5 years ago was at 60% and in 2000 had dropped down to about 30%. So there's a lot of positive news in all of that. And it's interesting, I actually found, being the packrat that I am, a cover of the style section of the Washington Post from February 21st, 2000 by Howie Kurtz, media analyst that many of us know. He wrote a story saying "Is online journalism on its way out?" So this seems to be the topic dejour and I think we're going to be dealing with this question for some time to come. Everyone is trying to figure it out as Doug said. So as we see these numbers growing, one of our challenges is that the click-thrus right now have actually dropped off. Why is that?

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Perhaps people are going to different sites and they're not spending as much time. So that presents challenges.

We have all these multimedia features. We have to figure out which ones people are tending to use. Obviously, we're going to hear more detail this afternoon - the financial side. We thought it was one thing when we started this. We thought the economic model was one thing. Now we realize that - obviously realized some time ago - that's not the case. Everyone is trying to figure this out. Some sites are pay model. wallstreetjournal.com. Some sites are doing a mix. CNN, New York Times providing some material that's paid, other free. We're seeing a mix and we're going to see that evolving for some time to come as everyone's trying to sort it out. That doesn't mean it's a bad thing. It means that we're in this great environment where we can figure it out. And in terms of another challenge, I'd say that it's about the integration and what we're seeing right now, as I have said before, people are talking the talk but they're not walking the walk. Which is, all news organizations are talking about integration and the power of integration but not all of them are successful at really walking the walk and really embracing what integration is - of not creating fiefdoms of - well, we've got the online folks and the TV folks and the print folks. It's about we're one organization. One of Doug's colleagues, Lyn Downey, the Executive Editor of the Washington Post, joined me in a panel discussion that I put together on terrorism and covering 9/11 in this multimedia-integrated world. He said, if it weren't for this technology, it weren't for the Internet, we would not be able to cover this story the same way - so here's someone who has been an old-line traditional journalist and said point blank - this is what enabled us to cover this story.

Just a couple other points. You know, I actually don't love the word "shovelware". I think it has a negative connotation, but there's no question that you're taking your core product and as I said earlier, transfers from print. I mean, why reinvent the wheel? There are times it makes sense to rely on your traditional news organization. And there are other times it makes sense to do original, generate original material. Lastly, just make the point that there is no other medium that offers what the Internet has which is multimedia, which more sites even if they were print and didn't have all those options - like The Post is a perfect example - very adeptly have offered those multimedia features. Has live links so that you can go to other websites. Has what I call layered journalism which is the depth - so that you can have research. You can have your main story. You can get to the links. Has user control where it's about you making choices, not being told that you have to watch this news story on television. It's about audience involvement. Some sites are still doing chat. Other have not been doing as much of that quick-vote message boards. The dynamic content. No where else - obviously cable television and the networks when they feel it's important enough, generate 24/7 coverage like the Internet. And it's about the customization, which I think we're definitely going to see more of. More sites are enabling their users to customize to their weather, to their sports, their entertainment, whatever the case. And that's all great. So I would just close by saying, as challenging as these times are, I think it's a great environment and we're all very fortunate to be immersed in it at this time.

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SHAWN McKINNEY: Alright. My third panelist is Bob Sullivan. And he is a genuine online reporter. He was first with MSN and then with MSNBC. He got his MA in technology and journalism from the University of Missouri and he is credited with breaking the story about credit card and checking account numbers becoming attainable on the web - which is something everybody should be keenly interested in. And he also made a name for himself covering the I Love You virus. So he's one of the people that people turn to to find out what should we be scared about online. I'll turn it over to Bob.

BOB SULLIVAN: Thank you. My favorite thing to do is to write about flaws in Microsoft software. I apologize for those of you who had to eat an extra Danish or two to wait for me. Everyone can tell that the reporter is in the room. But I made it, as always, at situations like this. Here's something I learned a long time ago. For some reason, since I started working with television online, people are more entertained by me on a video screen than they are on real life. So I'm going to show you a video of what I do. First there will be an advertisement for loopingpeople.com. They sponsored my trip down here. … TV is not my first calling as you can see. …

How many folks in the room are students here? Quite a few. While I'm setting this up, why don't I tell you a little bit about where I came from. I was hired by MSNBC - well by MSN - almost 7 years ago as part of team of about 10 people from the University of Missouri who were working on an online publication there in the early 90s - '93, '94. They picked up a whole team of us and brought us up to Microsoft to start a newsroom for MSN at the time. Then about 8 months later, Tom Brokaw and Bill Gates shook hands and we had MSNBC suddenly and what Microsoft brought to that deal was this newsroom of people who had a little bit of journalism experience. My background - I had spent 5 years working in print journalism at school newspapers and suddenly I had this job that made me half an NBC employee, which was an incredible happenstance of good fortune for me. But I was essentially a programmer and I spent about 2 years writing code for the site. While I did that, I slowly noticed that there was a real dearth of still technology reporters. So as was always my devious plan, I learned a trade to kind of back my way into the business. My timing is very lucky, but I guess I can maybe offer a little bit of advice to all of you out there. I think you've already picked up on this. But if you can enter into the field with a particular skill. I just worked my career; I landed on the Internet and was willing to do some of the dirty work. I'm still a full-time reporter and I'm part of the NBC family.

VIDEO SHOWN TO AUDIENCE: We're beginning this evening talking about an issue that is on the mind of all of us these days, and that of course is the Department of Security - our own verbal security - and the security of the devices that we use in an increasingly large fashion. We've asked MSNBC.com's Bob Sullivan to give us a little example of how easy it is to access even the wireless devices… (Bob Sullivan): You may not realize it but in most major U.S. cities, computer data is being broadcast through the air, just like FM radio waves or a TV signal. Today 7 million people access wireless networks this way. But so do computer hackers who have learned how to listen in on the zeroes and ones flying around. There are a few computer-controlled power grids - powerful networks - even water treatment plants can be attacked by a computer. But even as security experts sound the alarm, data

is being spread faster, farther and wider, and sometimes hackers can tune in just like you tune in your car radio. Most everything connected to the Internet is vulnerable to some degree or another. Kevin Polsen, a former hacker who now writes about computer security issues for securityfocus.com, goes fishing for networks in his car just to prove a point. (Kevin): This is SSI. These are the most important thing. (Bob): Hackers call this "war driving." Remember the Matthew Broderick movie, "War Games?" The actor in that movie programmed a modem to dial sequentially through phone numbers in search of a computer with an open front door. They called it "war dialing". War driving is similar, but instead of dialing thousands of phone numbers, hackers now shuttle around the neighborhood looking for vulnerable systems. We went out for a lunchtime drive and after about an hour, found dozens of networks broadcasting their data right out to the street. What does it mean when this thing beeps? That means we have picked up a wireless network. So the fact that we've picked it up, what does that really mean that we can do? They are using encryption then we can likely hop onto their network, intercept their traffic, go out to the Internet or attack hosts within their own network. On a rooftop, armed with a small dish-like antenna aimed at office buildings, we get more. (beep) There you've got something. And some of it's encrypted. That's good to see. But fragile pulses we know that other critical infrastructures like a power grid, telecommunication systems, phone lines, water distribution, all rely on computer networks. Computers aren't secure. Computer criminals still have the upper hand. But, would terrorists attack using these methods? It was Polson who first reported that All Qaeda agents were studying computers that controlled water systems here in the U.S. And at the same time that a serious terrorist attack happens, our phones stopped working, or our power goes out. It would amplify things considerably. Stories about vulnerable computer systems have mounted in recent years, but since September 11th, the stakes are much higher in a world of computer security. That's Bob Sullivan from NBC.com. My guess - it's only a guess - that this is the most wireless intensive audience I have ever been around.

BOB SULLIVAN: So, of course it was very self-serving to show a video of myself in front of this group - but that's not why. Now I think one of the good things that we've learned at MSNBC and we all have. When we started this venture - if I was invited to panels like this five years ago, there would be an awful lot of people from website-only publication around and alternate media. But since we've learned, I think, is that we need friends to get through this. MSNBC is a classic example of that. Here now at MSNBC we have Washington Post stories, we have Wall Street Journal stories, we have UBG stories, we have all sorts of partners. In fact, some people call us a new portal - which is part of our strategy. Getting through this phase of the business, Karen said, being able to work together whether that's within your organization or outside of the organization is absolutely critical. Getting our MSNBC.com faces on the MSNBC cable TV station is a really important part of our strategy. And it's a really important part of building a brand.

I think the combination of the - and I don't like the work "shovelware" either, in fact, I like to think that I'm here to be a beachhead against shovelware. My whole job is original journalism for the website. It's a conscious sprinkling of very particular, in our case, beats for the channel of news that we don't get from our partnerships that are from wire services or from other places that we would rarely shovel material. The

reporters that we have are very business-heavy and technology-heavy. For obvious reasons, our readers are, of course, more technologically savvy than the general public at large. They all have computers. So when I do stories about computer viruses or computer security, it hits home in a way that it wouldn't hit home for a TV audience. In fact, there's an interesting - this is sort of a big deal for us - it's been years - computers security stories are not visual stories. They're not very good TV stories. So, they were very excited when I told him I could jog around in a car and break into networks. But getting computer stories onto television has been a difficult thing because it's a different medium.

But I wanted to talk about just a couple of other things real quickly. There is, of course, all sorts of talk about the demise of the Internet and online news is anything other than an appendage to organizations to CNN or NBC or Washington Post. And since I cover technology, there's a phenomenon that I've seen over and over again, and I've only been doing it for six years, so the cycle didn't take long to complete. I think a lot of our DVDs for example - and here's what happens all the time with new technologies. It comes out. It's the greatest thing since sliced bread. It's going to take over the world. Within six months, people are willing to replace all their VCRs with DVDs. The earlier adoptives took them and there are all sorts of rave reviews for how well they worked. Eighteen months later DVD sales are way slower than anyone expected and we're ready to write off DVD as a new technology because people really liked their tapes. They liked recording programs the way that they did, and this new technology was a big waste of money. And it was latent for a couple of years.

And then low and behold, slowly but surely, if you go into a Circuit City right now, VCRs are relegated to a back corner and soon they'll be gone. The superior technology eventually takes over and there's this natural wave of the over-hyped initial warrant, then everyone turns the other direction because they feel like, oh, it hasn't happened nearly as quickly as you thought it was going to, so forget it, it's passé. And if the technology is good, eventually it inevitably wins. But it always takes longer than people think it is going to. I think that's right where we are with online news. There's an awful lot of things that still need to be figured out. I actually am fortunate that I'm not responsible for the economic models here. But since I'm the only person speaking here for the rest of the day.

There's a couple things that I should bring up form the business side before I turn back over the microphone. The big thing that I would like to suggest is a little bit of patience is going to go a long way right now given where we're at. And again, I've seen that again and again in the world of technology. Just a couple of other things. We just went through the Olympics exercise at MSNBC which was a really, really interesting exercise for a couple of reasons. The thing that kind of fascinates me right now is what's going on in advertising. Things that people would not have dared to try on websites three or four years ago for fear of all the insults we would get from our readers, we now do try. You've all seen these banner ads come creeping over and take over your entire screen, or airplanes that fly out of banner ads and fly all across your homepage and whatnot. And people are far more tolerant of them than they would have been 3 years ago. I think slowly but surely the message is coming in that free is utopia, not the real world. And subscription models - I'm you

guys just started charging for some video. We've mulled that over. There's a lot of other folks trying to figure what to do about them - with the more expensive portions of online news. But, generally speaking, the public is more receptive than they would have been 3 or 4 years ago to somehow subsidizing what it is we do for them. I think that's a really positive sign for them. Also, the Olympics exercise is really interesting in this regard: There was a bit of a one off website for us. MSNBC has now become good at publishing very, very high traffic websites which have these sort of apex news events. The Olympics was one of those. That's a concept that I know our company is looking into as another potential revenue model. We had great success with getting big name advertisers like McDonalds and GM who we hadn't seen on websites. We certainly hadn't seen on MSNBC before a year or two ago.

There are other individual projects like that that are somewhere. I think this is a stretch, and I probably wouldn't like identifying it this way, but as a reporter, this feels to me like when I worked at community newspapers and we would do special sections. Special sections can be anything from awful advertorial sections to pretty good looks at the housing market in your community. It could also come with advertising for real estate and somewhere in between - maybe I'm from a younger generation here - but I do not immediately reject the idea of publishing things that are interesting to readers and selling advertising to them because they're interesting. So with that, I think I've taken up enough of your time and I think now we're going to have a question of two. Thank you.

SHAWN McKINNEY: Thanks. Yes, we'd like to open it up to questions from the audience at this point.

DOUG FEAVER: I always have questions.

SHAWN McKINNEY: I have a few too.

ROSENTAL CALMON ALVES: I want you guests to talk a little about the strength of breaking news and how slow the online journalism in this country has been in understanding this, and how strong it is for the new genre to use and disconnected from the legacy media kind of time cycle that... For instance, when the Washington Post start emphasizing it, it used the pm extra name as if it was an afternoon newspaper. When are we going to disconnect from that and see that this is a 24-hour medium that has no edition.

DOUG FEAVER: Since you mentioned the PM Extra which we don't do any more, incidentally. We started about 3 years ago something in the middle of the day in which Post reporters who, of course, have always been accustomed to, sort of spending their mornings contemplating what it was they might do later in the day. When the deadlines really got close, and after they'd had their coffee and decided what it was they really wanted to do, the biorhythm don't really get turned on until about 3 o'clock in the afternoon. And meanwhile the newspaper that was delivered that morning on the front porch was already 6 hours old when it got there. My colleagues at CNN and MSNBC.com and ABCnews.com and some others, are killing me with live video and lots of other stuff that their reporters are ginning up and I'm sitting there stuck with the same - no knock on AP - but stuck with the same AP

story that you can get on Yahoo. So we thought this was an unacceptable situation. Frankly, it's one of the reasons I went from the Post newsroom to the website, was to start and try and suggest, because of my long-time contacts with the Post newsroom, that we had to take advantage of that extraordinary reportorial staff and bring it a little more into the idea of doing what we used to do. I'm so old that I started in the days when there really were pm newspapers and we really were competitive and we really did try to get things out through the door before they were killed off by television.

The term, PM Extra, we employed frankly because it was an organizing principle that the newsroom understood. We'd have an edition that would go out at 1 pm in the afternoon. We figured noon would be too early for morning newspaper operations. It would just never happen. But if it went for 1 o'clock, they would understand that the copy had to be in by sometime around noon or it wasn't going to happen and get on the site. It was as much a sales pitch within the Post newsroom as it was... It had the disadvantage that Rosental has already spotted and that is, it sent to our users the very queer message that we updated the website only once a day. We put the Washington Post up in the morning, which we do, and then we did some sort of a modest, half-baked retooling around 1 o'clock in the afternoon. We have been in serious discussions about eliminating that flag, the PM Extra flag, when 9/11 came along and I took it down that day along with almost everything else on the homepage just to concentrate on that extraordinary story as everybody else did. We all tried to lighten up our home pages very quickly to deal with the great traffic that we got. And it has not returned. So we took advantage of that opportunity.

Now the truth is, we've been doing 24/7 journalism with Washington Post Reporters for some while now. We often have - we'll do regular with odd stories - the one with the Mideast crisis. We're getting files out of the Mideast at 9 o'clock in the morning. They are really doing a terrific job of bringing up video of what happened overnight. We're getting excellent reports through the day from the Post staff. They've bought into it now. Post reporters are comparative individuals just like all good reporters everywhere. They do not like to see a wire story on the site on their beat when they can give you, in their view, a much better story because they wrote it. Right? So we're taking advantage of the ego trip and frankly, the reputation that we've evolved as being a breaking news site and we're working very hard on that. And it clearly is, Rosental, a significant shift from where we were 4 or 5 years ago.

BRUCE KOON: One quick follow-up on that. Is that still optional for the reporters or is it required?

DOUG FEAVER: It is still optional. It is not required. There are some reporters, but the number is getting smaller every day of those who will just flat refuse. Now there are reasons sometimes when people legitimately can't write a story. And that sometimes we can get somebody else to write that story, too, who works with them on a subject particularly out of our political staff. I have two reporters of my own and will use them sometimes to fill in the gaps. It's optional, but the Post is also been very clear from the very top of the Post - newsroom management has been very clear that they regard this as an important part of what their staff is expected to do.

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CARIN DESSAUER: I would add that it's been natural evolution of the medium and that a news organization like a CNN or MSNBC that are 24/7 mindset, it was not an adjustment because you were doing that. So the expectations are real different for what the New York Times deposed. For that matter, the traditional broadcast networks that didn't have a 24 hour outlet were doing, but quickly we all recognized and users wanted it - that if they're going to go to certain sites they had an expectation that the information was updated. So for those, and not all of them news organizations that recognized they wanted to really play in the top 10, top 20 of all news websites, they had to make some changes and that related to the 24/7 changes internally and also related to multimedia if they didn't have those offers.

DOUG FEAVER: One of the ways we have sometimes dealt with a reporter who was too busy to sit down and file was to do an audio clip. And that has been very effective. We did a lot of those out of Kosovo and that situation we began to develop that and got a lot of traffic to those things. Somebody would give us two or three minutes on a sat phone and a Post reporter would get there on the site right away.

AUDIENCE QUESTION: I always like learning from example and I know you don't have a lot of time to think about this, but if you want to point out some specific things that you've seen on your own sites or other sites where you think multimedia has been used well or their breaking news has been done well. I'm sure a lot of the students here would appreciate it and I will use it in my class next week. But I'd love to have examples you have studied, your own sites better than any of us can…

BOB SULLIVAN: I have one. Rosental and I were just talking about this yesterday. When he was a foreign correspondent, he had this frustrating issue all the time where the conversation would be with him with buddies at the bar about what happened that day were always a little bit more interesting than the stories he wrote. Because of the restrictions of writing and whatnot. And actually I think this is something the Newsweek is doing very well on our site. They have short video clips with reporters that are appended to stories right now. And just sit-downs with people like Eric Halder - you know a piece on the president and has four or five questions that he just sits down and it's barely more produced than a home video but it's very conversational. I've had this instinct for some time that when the bandwidth arrives that we'll do more and more of this online because for some reason these conversational sit-down chats are just an easier way to get people information than formal text writing. My background is as a writer so I hate to admit this, but it's true. It's really a lot more powerful in that and a lot more impact in that. And I think that Newsweek has done a real good job of taking the extra time and sitting down reporters in front of cameras and doing that.

CARIN DESSAUER: I think all sites - and I'll give you some examples - have done well when it comes to a story that is so important like obviously 9/11 and the Middle East right now. Then a story that they decide to devote a lot of resources to, and I'll give you one example. I didn't know he was going to use the video, but the MSNBC.com coverage and then on their television side too of their tech summit. Obviously, it was produced by them so they want to give it a lot of coverage, but, provide a good example of the depth of the Internet and the multimedia offerings. There are at least five - correct me if I'm wrong - really good comprehensive pieces

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written about what experts said on that panel. You could tap into the video, you could chat with some of the experts that run this panel, executives from various media companies. So there were a lot of depth as we all know from 9/11 most major news sites had not only the stories, the breaking news, perhaps a video/audio clip from some of their reporters in the field, chat, but all that gap that only can be provided on the Internet. You know, whether it was the Post, whether it was CNN, others, explain to people what is this anthrax. Like, no one had really focused on it before. Clearly that can be included in newspaper, included in a television piece, but when you really want depth or photos - I was looking at USAToday.com the other day. They are known, as we all know, for their strong graphics in their newspaper and they've taken advantage of that in their website and provided those offerings. But it's usually just a recap when there's a story that has so much depth and/or it's high priority news story and there are so many elements.

DOUG FEAVER: Just a couple quick examples. One old-fashioned text example is our live online conversations which are moderated discussions because we are in Washington we can get experts on anything who really know their stuff and we are getting very good at integrating them throughout the day with breaking news events - getting good experts on and getting very intelligent questions from good users. And that we link very closely with the story of the day. We're using the technology more and more, multimedia technology based on a flash-back which we use for something we call the war explorer which was a combination of maps and what have you that went - and you can still find that back on the war front that dissected what was going on in Afghanistan day by day. And we went to the important news stories of the days in one very convenient and easy to navigate package. We're doing the same thing now with the congressional elections 2002 in our on politics front. You will find it on the on politics front. Sometimes on the home page of the washingtonpost.com. Something like the little box that says Election Explore. It's in the right rail at the moment although it's going to move shortly somewhere else on the homepage. And if you click on that, you can go in there and figure out what the key races are, who's running. It really has all the congressional districts that are up, the senatorial districts, as we continue to take advantage of what we think is one of our major core competencies which is covering the politics in the United States.

CARIN DESSAUER: I'll just have something. I think the CNN in depth coverage of any topic out there whether it's the Middle East, 9/11, the Oscars, they did a really good package. The product that they're turning out has been very consistent and provide a lot of detail - some more than others in terms of the research and flash and other technologies used. But those are good examples. You can go back a number of years in the archives.

AUDIENCE QUESTION: You know, it's really interesting to hear you talk at this conference where here's where we were two or three years ago, where you're really talking about synergy and convergence between your traditional media companies and your online newsrooms, which is really astounding to me to hear that a lot of the barriers have been broken down. Doug talked a little bit and so did Bob about their experiences. I'd like to know, was there an "aha" moment where either online fed the paper or the television or where both newsrooms were able to say "ah, if we

worked together here's what we can produce." And then what advice you can give to other organizations that are really struggling to have that true convergence.

DOUG FEAVER: Well, we've had a series of little "aha" moments that started before we certainly started, in terms of we've got the story port on our site before the Post newsroom was able to get a copy of it and Post reporters were forced to read it on washingtonpost.com. I loved that. We had the same experience when any number of the court decisions that came during the never-ending 2000 election that came out when one of our young geniuses had figured out how to immediately tap in and get pdf files of the important court decisions on the site like that. (snaps finger) And the Post reporters were again going to washingtonpost.com to read so they could write their text-based stories. I thought that was wonderful. Now whether it was - every one of these events that Carin sited and she sited, I think all major news organizations had the kind of traffic bursts that happened and then retained a percentage of that traffic. The same thing happened on television with the Gulf War scene. It was this huge burst and then held a significant percentage of that audience once it had captured it. Those moment are huge, not only in terms of audience perception but also in terms of our colleague's perception of what the Internet can do because it's right there. It's now on their desktops. That was one of my biggest fights four or five years ago was getting washingtonpost.com on the desktops in the Post newsroom. They had the company Intranet up there that told you where to go get the HR forms and stuff like that. And now they've got washingtonpost.com on it. I want to look at that thing. I want them to call me and tell me when they know something or call me and tell me when they see a mistake. I want them to see what wonderful journalism we're doing with their stuff. Or sometimes in front of them, and that helps - so all of these things they kind of build. And now we're an essential part of their operation and we know and they know it, and it helps a lot.

BOB SULLIVAN: You can ask me later when 30 Rockefeller Plaza got Internet access.

CARIN DESSAUER: I think 2000 overall was the year that - and I actually have been quoted saying, that the new came out of new media. That year overall was, I think in a lot of newsrooms, when people either got it they were pulling content from their website as Doug said or just recognized that they could file a story. Maybe have a little early summarizations, maybe happen a little later, but that that year isn't necessarily the defining moment and perhaps 9/11 will - everyone is looking for this defining moment in terms of the power of Internet news. Perhaps it will be akin to, related to 9/11. But 2000 was a very monumental year. For CNN, it was a monumental in terms of some on air reporters, anchors, who had never made an online contribution before. June Woodruff, Bernie Shaw, Larry King. We don't have to go into what it took to get them to do that, but it's just, it's part of the challenge. It's all how you look at challenges. You know, is it their fault that they didn't look at how powerful this was? No. It's just that journalists have been immersed in their particular medium. If they weren't working in Internet journalism or even if their company felt that that was important part of their overall model, you have to educate people and it takes a team effort and it takes different people even if they don't feel like they have the support of the overall organization to get people to recognize the power.

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I think for my personal experience, it was actually 99. I'd been, like other organizations, I wasn't alone in this, trying to get then President Clinton to do his first "online news interview". And it was definitely there in the making. Finally Lockhart came to me and said, OK, I need an official proposal. So how is CNN going to get this interview? They could go to any other news organization. One. I'd go to one of the broadcast networks. One. I'd go to MSNBC - they've got MSN, they've got NBC, on and on. Why not go to one of the stellar newspaper's website? I thought the way we're going to get this is if we can offer a truly cross platform opportunity. That's the power of the CNN networks - not just online, not just television, but television domestically, internationally, FM radio. So when I went to my boss - the president of CNN interactive and said, OK, what do you think? He said great. Go talk to the different presidents. So I thought, oh, maybe he would have gone and talked to the different presidents. But he had me go, but that was fun. And fortunately they bought into it. But I must tell you that I think, and I'm on the record here, I don't know if I thought that it would actually happen. So that Sunday, classic Clinton administration, I get paged at 2:30 on February 13th for a 80% signoff on an interview that was supposed to happen the next day, but I wouldn't get the signoff until in the morning and the interview was going to be at 12:30. You know, no chance of extra phone lines. That's another story. Then I finally talked to my boss. He said, OK, talk to Rick Kaplan who was then the president of CNN television on how you want to produce it. And Rick says to me, you're in charge kid. You know. This was your idea so you're going to do the whole thing. But at least he bought off on the notion that it would take the Internet side to figure this out because even though it in the end became a team effort, and he and Sid Biddingfield and others at the highest level were involved in this and Wolf Blitzer was the one who moderated it and its core was the chad, it was a massive team effort and that was in 2000. So in my mind, 2000 was a very important year.

BOB SULLIVAN: These are efforts and they're certainly they're incredible traffic drivers for us so I think that kind of qualifies as another "aha" moment. Just to add something else that Carin said. When I am pitching a source, trying to say, break your news with me, leak your thing to me, the most powerful tool that I have - this is a sermon I give almost every day is, I am not just MSNBC.com, I'm NBC, I'm Dateline, I'm nightly news, I'm all these things. So if they're thinking about leaking with the Wall Street Journal, let me add the numbers for you, I think I can do better for you. I actually don't think the real "aha" moment has come, however, because given that I still have to make the speech as much as I do. There's not a perception among the news people, among the news consumers and among the sources as to the numbers that we get. It doesn't sit with them at all. Four million people a day is a lot of people. And when people call me, they are still are interested in trying to use me to get onto cable. And I often tell them, these are the same stories. We only had 300,000, 400,000 a night watching MSNBC. I can promise you a lot more eyeballs than that. So think that the "aha" moment is still in front of us. Just in terms of audience.

SHAWN McKINNEY: Do any of the panelists have an idea about what's holding that back, what it would take for that kind of "aha" moment to happen?

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CARIN DESSAUER: Well, one thing is, there is confusion of how we're counting. One is that page impression thing. So when you can translate …. Meril had said we have four million users a day, but I think different news organizations feel that's their own internal numbers, it's not an outside source that's providing that information. Is it legitimate? But I think that will help dramatically.

AUDIENCE QUESTION: I'm interested in knowing if the panel thinks that there's a difference between producing video for TV and producing video for online. Specifically Bob, you work on two platforms, and if you're going to go out and shoot for broadcast or if you're going to go out for online, do you use different techniques? Do you approach the story differently? What's the distinction?

BOB SULLIVAN: A real one first. When we shoot something that we're going to use online everybody who's been trained to do this is trained in television and we have a day to do something like this we go to our old habits. So basically speaking we're shooting TV pieces and putting them into postage stamp sized screens. We have talked about - we've made some attempts at - I mean there's some obvious things. First of all, there aren't good numbers on the stuff yet, but a lot of that is anecdotal, that people's ability to hit the stop button on a video that they're watching on the Internet is even better than their ability to hit their remote control which means you'd better get their attention really, really quickly and especially if you're going to play 15 second ad before they see what they want to see, and that it be really, really important. I also think a lot of the principles that apply to photo editing apply as well. Because of image compression, very detailed images just don't work at all. They block out entirely so very large in your face images work very well. Stand-ups compress very nicely so. I can make the argument for more face time. But very complicated moving objects don't compress well at all. So all that stuff we try to keep in line when we shoot, but the truth is, when you're out there shooting a story, you're using the training that you have and they work out pretty similar still to what TV stories are.

DOUG FEAVER: We have players that are a whole lot better than they were 3 years ago. I presume they're continuing to get better. But there's still an irritating moment where it has to download and it has to buffer and all that kind of stuff. We have found that 90 seconds is about it before people will bail out except on something extraordinarily interesting. Interestingly, though, we have a couple of shooters on our own staff, one of whom won the White House Press Photographer's Association for video this last year. This is against the networks. We were very proud of that. One of both for the shooting and then also for directing another one and a couple wonderful pieces that in some ways were sort of long form television things that you don't see any more. You used to see them on Charles Curalt's version of CBS Sunday Morning, which is different from the one that's running now. And those have gotten very strong traffic, but over a period of time, not at any - they were petri type pieces. You have to build an audience and get a little word of mouth.

SHAWN McKINNEY: Is it more a matter that you shoot the story and then you edit it differently depending if it's going online or on TV?

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CARIN DESSAUER: If there's a mandate for a reporter to file for both places, they're just filing for television. We're just filing for online. So it just depends what the demands are.

SHAWN McKINNEY: So if you know it's going to be for both, would you shoot more footage or some different type of things?

CARIN DESSAUER: It also depends on what program something is going to run on. A perfect example on CNN is the program that was originally called CNN.com and now they're running pieces under their NEXT programming that have a different kind of jazzier, I call high tech presentation than a traditional news story. Kind of like what you did in your production. There's an expectation of the user online is a savvier user and they are looking for a different kind of visual presentation. But that's not to say that they won't go for the footage 9/11, just wanting to see more raw footage because the Internet can provide that. So it really depends on your audience, your user, your venue.

SHAWN McKINNEY: Would we agree that they may be a more impatient viewer or user as well. It sounds like…in the sense that it's easier to push the stop button.

DOUG FEAVER: That's a very good question. People come and they don't stay that long , I think of all of what, 7 minutes or whatever, not atypical at all, 2 or 3 links. The way I use it, if I see, I check the New York Times site probably more than any other. I regard them as sort of the peer competitor. But if there's a long piece there and I want to see and I haven't got a paper with me, I will print it out. I haven't been able to figure out how to count that one. I'd be fascinated to know how many people print out, still use the printer to get the long story. We know people in the afternoon come to our home page and look at it quickly and go away. We've gotten enough cookie information now that some of them were there in the morning and looked at it a little longer than they did in the afternoon, so they want to see if something is different, if something has changed. There's a lot of different habits. We get a lot of traffic from Matt Drudge, from the Drudge Report thank you. …independent to send people into one story, they'll take a look at the story and they they'll go back to the Drudge Report and they don't stay at our site. It's such a bizarre situation right now. We haven't figured that one out yet.

CARIN DESSAUER: This is an area that we definitely haven't figured out and won't for some time, because we all know that even though we have to have the offerings that people aren't using the videos as much as they're using text. It's part of the evolution process.

AUDIENCE QUESTION: You guys have talked about some really interesting events that have shown some cool successes with the news room and the online efforts. Can you talk a little bit about what you're doing in terms of - and maybe it's in terms of structure or informally - what you're doing in terms of project work, long-term kinds of things. For example, MSNBC does a really nice job with background flash work on the MidEast and things like that. Are you guys in conversations with the newsrooms from the very beginning? Are you sort of elbowing your way in? Maybe just let you go with that one.

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DOUG FEAVER: We are more and more. It's a lot better than it was, again, three years ago. It depends on the project. The most successful projects are ones that we've been able to be on. Most successful projects from the Internet point of view are the ones where we ran on early enough so we could think of the graphic things, we could do the conversations, we could do the extra video and multimedia that we could do. We've had some powerful successes particularly on some local investigative pieces. One of the major local police departments in Washington has a tremendous history of shooting people who weren't guilty of anything. And some other problems like that is exactly the kind of good hard-hitting journalism that any newspaper should be doing and at the beginning of that project significantly have some extra documents, extra photographs, extra things. And if we hadn't been there and hadn't been a part of that conversation, we're a regular part of the conversation. My world editor meets several times a week and talks daily with the world desk at the Post about the Mid East situation and that sort of thing. That's just so much better than it used to be.

One person at a time. One story at a time. That was my job when I first went over there now almost five years ago, was to establish links between the people between the people in washingtonpost.com newsroom who are responsible for certain subject areas. I have tried in - I wasn't the editor there, I was only liaison - but I have tried since I've been editor to make sure that the people on the Post side understood who was responsible for certain areas of coverage. And the people on our side knew who their counterparts were at the Post so we'd get them at a table together and they have regular meetings and regular conversations about what's going on. We've done this on the hot story of the time. We've done this on a reactive basis and when we've had time on a planned basis, where we've gotten some of these things nailed down. But it's a long, painful process. It really is. It's one reporter and one editor. One copy desk at a time. But this is an important part. The most important thing, the most valuable thing that happened to us in building this relationship was when the Post, then the Managing Editor, Steve Coll, made it very clear to the rest of the newsroom that from the top, the newsroom participation with the Internet was an expectation. He didn't use that word, but that message came out very strongly and it was extraordinarily helpful. Then suddenly some of the meetings that I'd been trying to have with people I knew for 30 years became easier to hold.

CARIN DESSAUER: I agree. I mean, obviously as we all know, if you don't have the support at the very top levels, then it's one person, as Doug put it, at a time. And it's so different than anything else. Although I think our patience, our lack of - impatience - as journalists we want everything happening now, so we're used to building relationships with our sources, but we have this expectation that internally we shouldn't have some of these challenges. But frankly in my mind no different than building a rapport with your source. Like you want somebody to trust you to give you that information. You want someone to give you that interview. It doesn't matter where you work. And the same kind of set of diplomacy skills, shall we call them, is important with internal newsrooms. But I think what was very challenging in the early days was that you expected a certain amount of natural support that may or may not have been there. But I definitely agree with Doug's suggestion that for some of the news rooms it's been a gradual thing - all of them. But I think that 2000

and definitely after 9/11. If people don't get it at this point, then that's sad and maybe there are still some kinds of hold-outs but they'll come around. That's always the case with anything. But if anything you look at it, like okay, I'm going to get this person on my side. They're going to get it one of these days. And if they don't, it will be tomorrow or next week, it'll be next year but it will happen.

BOB SULLIVAN: I just very quickly, I like the business relationship example you're giving. One thing that's been very effective in MSNBC is anticipating what the cable needs instead of expecting them to demand it of us. And I think our best work are these moving infographics, these flash things that we do. When there's a big story of the day we don't really consult with cable. We just do them. They're useful for our website, but as it turns out, they're good enough to put on television. Which is a really big issue for us at the beginning - showing the website as kind of a boring television. Showing a flashback like that's moving on television is actually pretty good television. And often it's better than what their graphic department can do in a hurry. So, we're actually providing them a service. And it makes it irresistible for them.

CARIN DESSAUER: And like the early days, it's a little bit of spoon feeding, but I remember writing out for CNN, here's what I want you to promote. But, it's this balance of insulting someone, but actually giving them the text as if I'm their producer and telling them, okay, during this particular coverage, I'll make it easy for you. And that's how you pitch it. It's not like you're insulting their intelligence, but here's what we can do, this is what we'll pre-produce for you. So they're not - cause in the early days people were thinking, well, we just show the website. As long as you're saying, well, okay, fine, but there's more there. What on the website can you show? Or how can you show the back and forth? Because in the early days on the print side and on the TV side, people would say "well, that takes people away from reading the paper of watching television." So to show that it all comes full circle. A lot of times, if you're the one who's pitching to say, this is what can be done. Here, I'll make your life easier. I'll work with you if there are other areas that you are interested, but here are our suggestions.

SHAWN McKINNEY: I'm not sure if this is the right panel to address this, but to follow up on what Bob mentioned, I think especially a lot of students may wonder, with something like Flash that a lot of people are learning or excited about learning, which is basically a computer nuts and bolts animation program. Is that really being used now in a meaningful way to create journalism? And is it being used more online than off?

DOUG FEAVER: We're using it all the time. We're in a certain risk cause there are certain people haven't downloaded the latest flash player and that sort of thing, so you're losing pay views there and it's certainly better on broadband than it is on a dial-up. And of course as we all know, broadband will be here tomorrow. Any minute now, it will be universal. We met here three years ago. But we're using it all the time and find it a very effective way. And of course, David Card doesn't count each one of those flashing presses as a page view.

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SHAWN McKINNEY: So that's something that you all look for in terms of hiring new people - is flash skills?

CARIN DESSAUER: I think you look for skills. It depends on what the position is. You need someone who has the technology background for certain positions. You need someone who is a journalist for another position who doesn't have those skills. It really depends on the position. Is it a web editor? Is it a reporter?

DOUG FEAVER: I think it's easier to teach journalists technology than it is to teach technologists journalism, frankly. I may be wrong about that. At least we have different experiences, but I'm looking for journalists first and then… Frankly, if they don't know something about the Internet at this point I'm not interested in hiring them…

AUDIENCE QUESTION: It occurred to me that you all represent national brands. And last night I think in one of our conversations, someone said, "Well, anything that's successful technically at a national can be brought to a local level." But in reality the struggles that local news operations have regarding resources, regarding a different kind of audience. I'm wondering, even though that's not your area that you have think about, whether you do have some observations or thoughts that if today or tomorrow you decided to - well, enough of this glamour of the White House and foreign reporting - I want to have a different life and go to small town, USA - you would put into the operation to make online news and journalism successful in a local area. What have you learned that might apply there? And I do have a couple different questions. 1. What is the local audience? Is there really such thing as a local audience any more? I mean if we use the TV model, I look at local TV, that doesn't appeal to me. It seems to be what leads leads. Is that what local news is about? And secondly, and the resource issues that these people face to try and make some of this work. I was wondering if any of you had thoughts about how that translates into where a lot of that news is happening.

CARIN DESSAUER: I'll jump in. I actually said this to my students, that even though it used to be about the economy stupid, now I think it's about the brand, stupid. Everything today is about brand. You don't have to look far to see the Coke and Pepsi ad boards and how long have those companies been around. You know, it's pervasive.

At the competition between Wal-Mart and Kmart and other stores like that. It's about building a brand and that's no different locally, but the difference and challenge is locally perhaps in one city, like Washington's local television, obviously newspaper coverage is very different than a small town. Expectations obviously in a city like Washington, they want to know about major national and international news first and foremost and then they want to know about some of these other local - the local stories. But they want that coverage. They want it all. Although the Post would probably argue and other executives that Doug agrees will say that the Post is really seen as a local paper at its back door, but on the website it's really nationalized and internationalized the Washington Post because of the website. So it, bottom line, just depends on the market and knowing your audience, your viewers, your readers,

whatever the case may be, and understanding those challenges and then making those decisions accordingly.

DOUG FEAVER: Bruce, I wish I had more - I hate to say that in this room - I started at the Norman Oklahoma Transcript which of course is where another university is located. And I wondered that that's not been gobbled by a chain, but I've wondered how it would have reacted in this area and age now, the Post said, the concerns about cannibalization of audience and all of that sort of thing. I think, I've heard a couple of these panels at E&P meetings and a couple other places where some publishers are beginning to get it. That people are using the Internet for their daily fix and they're somewhat disappointed in the paper, in that local brand that they know well, if it isn't providing them the important local news - a zoning hearing, a police story, or whatever else. I suspect that's becoming very important. I know people are using - people have a paper on their porch or the one they buy up on the news rack are increasingly expecting the Internet version of that product to keep them up to date. Maybe it's a weekly and there are some weeklies that are doing this pretty well too. I don't know enough about it to get any farther into it than that. But I think the complementary nature of the products is going to be part of this figuring it out that we're talking about here from the very beginning.

SHAWN McKINNEY: So you think that they would use the Internet to keep up with the story that they read first in the paper?

DOUG FEAVER: Yes, exactly, or vice versa. I was interested - you were at the E&P meeting that guy from Cedar Rapids who had taken it a subscription model based on a number of - just looking at their audience and what was it - they had a very interesting out-of-their-circulation-area-audience. I wondered what that was all about, that they were serving. It wasn't doing them any good in terms of their advertising point of view but that suggests to me that their brand was strong enough in an adjacent county in another state. I am not the business guy going to figure out how to take advantage of that, but I sure wondered if there wasn't an opportunity there.

BOB SULLIVAN: The first half of my career is in local journalism, actually, so I have a very soft spot in my heart, and I may very well return there some day. I think that the mistake that most of them made when all this started was trying to be like washingtonpost.com online, feeling an obligation that would update all the time, 24/7, and I just think that's the wrong fight to pick. There are some really obvious opportunities for local newspapers. Mobile form of residence is a big one. Knight sports scores is a big one. And I think that if I were doing this right now I would work really hard at not spending 8 or 9 bodies trying to keep wire updated. I would look at a very specific opportunity for them and shovelware the rest of the paper out.

BOB SULLIVAN: I agree. Cover your core. Absolutely.

AUDIENCE QUESTION: At the beginning of your presentation, I know Doug mentioned in his answer to some of these questions, that the panel is supposed to be about. Yes, this question of, is there a new narrative structure for news? I'm interested in this topic. I know from looking at the Washington Post that it's pretty

true there and has been for quite some time. But talk a little bit about how lighting is different for online media as compared to say, print media or even broadcast media.

DOUG FEAVER: Well, we reproduce the entire Post including some of its extraordinary long articles that I am confident very few people ever get to the end of in either the newspaper form or the online form. But we're quite happy for our various daytime updates to have a much shorter version of the article and we know that a lot of users are happy in reading the headline and the blurb that we write on the home page and never go into the story. I think this is one of the things that we've got to figure out. I'm particularly taken with the New York Times' redesign recently. It's been evolving and they've been doing some things on it and Stephen can talk about that more, but they're now they are featuring typically 3 or 4 stories on the home page and the rest of it is headline links. And little promotional boxes and some other things like that. I think we, in fact we're talking about it, we're blurbing too many stories if we want to get people inside the site. Are we putting too much on the home page is one of the questions that we're asking ourselves. Now that's not exactly, how do you write for it question, but it is a question of how do you display it? how do you intrigue? is the headline enough? If you read a paper - I think we all read papers, we look at the headline and decide whether we're going to read the first paragraph. You read the first paragraph and you decide whether you're going to go on. There's a certain amount of that in the Internet selection too. But in terms of how we're writing, Post reports are writing most of the copy that appears, most of the content that appears on washingtonpost.com. They're not writing it any differently than they do for the newspaper. And getting back to Carin's point we're entirely a local paper in terms of our newspaper distribution. Unlike the Times, unlike the Wall Street Journal. We have the national, international reputation and we have a huge national, international audience in terms of our percentages so somebody is coming to read something. How long they're staying with it is another question.

CARIN DESSAUER: I'll just quickly say. The writing is the same, but as Doug pointed out, you're following on to condense it know that people - you want them to click through more often and maybe even present the story that they have to click through to get to the bottom of it, as some sites we know do. But you probably shorten - if you even look on a given day - I'm known to do that - I'll be reading the New York Times business section and I'll see an article and I'll decide to keep a link instead of having a paper copy. And this is the case with everybody, the version is shorter. And maybe it has a couple of charts that you wanted, but maybe it doesn't. There was an article on Monday this week - I'm trying to think which one - and there was a chart that went with it and it wasn't there. But on other times those charts are included. So the bottom line is you're just probably going to have a slightly shorter version but the same write. As someone else said at another conference once, good journalism is good journalism no matter what the platform is. Good writing is good writing.

AUDIENCE QUESTION: What about structuring the story so that - taking advantage of doing the link to the page - something you can't really do when you write.

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CARIN DESSAUER: Well that's the thing. You're thinking outside of the box as a journalist. You're not just thinking about the story. You're thinking about what links, what are good in-depth websites, what features can I propose, whether I'm the person who generates it or not. Or there's an associate producer - whatever the title is at the organization you're with - that can come up with this feature because I feel we need in depth information. If a graphic was produced, whether, I mentioned USA Today, New York Times, others that you want that graphic. Is there a way that you can take that material? So you're just always having to think beyond your story to other elements because of the beauty of the Internet as I said earlier. Just providing this layered journalism and all these different options. And if there is video or whatever the case may be.

DOUG FEAVER: You know, in newspaper page design you try to avoid the big gray blob of text. It's something you try to break up with some photos or some graphics or some subheads or some artistic use of white space and all of these other things to make the page attractive. You still have to do that, I think, particularly in the long form stories on the Internet. You've got to make some things happen in there. Related links is certainly one way to do it. And an important way to do it because that's there to provide the background material and the other things. If you've got a map, that's great. If the map is clickable, it does even more. It's even better. And so there are a lot of things that you can think about here to make things more interesting. The key is getting people, frankly, to the article page, which is where you can….

Now, Bob, I'd be interested in knowing, MSNBC has this format where - the standard article format where the first paragraph is there and then there's a "more on the story" thing and you can scroll through it and see the ad and then pick up the rest of the story. Or you can click through. Have you guys done any statistics…

BOB SULLIVAN: We have no statistics on it. We have usability studies. Actually given my little bit of background in software, I have more faith than probably a lot of people do in usability studies providing useful information. People like reading the leads and moving on. It's funny you were talking about writing. I can tell you. I know, I write stories - long stories. All the time as I'm writing them I'm thinking, no one is going to get to this point. Why am I continuing on? But I continue on. I've been fighting with this internally for 6 years. It's a very intimidating process as a writer to sit there. It's sort of like a television writer. You know, knowing darn well what people can do with the mouse. I think with newspaper we always had the fantasy that they did follow jumps. Though we don't in newspapers. What we see people doing is, they click on the story, they look at the headline. They look at the lead for a moment or two so you have real chance in the lead. I actually really like that format because it's… Some of you aren't familiar with this. We present the first paragraph of our story in very, very large type. A little bit like newspapers from the 1800s used to do. And it always ends up being more, longer, than a traditional newspaper lead, so you have a little bit more chance to get someone's attention. But so they glance at that for a moment and then they scroll to the bottom of the page to look at what's there. You guys went to the breaking stories up at the subhead and all that sort of stuff a couple of years ago as well. That seems to help. The design concept of entry points helps a lot here. People don't necessarily read the stories in

analog form. They'll look at the top, look at the bottom, see a graphic, they'll see a subhead they find interesting so they might read it in different segments. And all that - to keep all that in my head as a writer as I'm writing is very, very challenging. I do try to stick to maybe in a little bit stricter of an outline format to my writing as a result of this to keep my story in kind of chunklets, if you will. Which I think is a good practice anyway. But it's a problem we haven't come close to solving. My long term vision for this has been that I think that we should be looking at presenting web pieces with some sort of time in mind since the only studies I ever see show that people spend x amount of moments looking at stories. So I think we have, like the television. I'm colored a little bit by my connection to television. We have a few moments to get their attention. What can we do in those moments, rather than what can we do in 500 words.

SHAWN McKINNEY: You mean time limit. How long can we expect them to stick with this?

BOB SULLIVAN: Yeah. This story is a 15 second experience. What can we do with those 15 seconds?

SHAWN McKINNEY: I've got time for one more quick question.

AUDIENCE QUESTION: I don't know if you guys mentioned these things clearly, but I was wondering if there was any special stories just for online, not for the actual print or the actual television. If there is any, how much of the percentage of your piece is for online and who covers it? And if there's not those kind of stories right now, is there any possibility for the future for the reports to cover those kind of stories just for online?

DOUG FEAVER: Bob writes for online all the time. We at the Post we put a number of stories on line that were from Post reporters that may or may not appear in the newspaper. But probably if they do appear in the newspaper, will appear in a somewhat longer form. We'll take the stories that are written earlier in the day are often essentially outlines. The quick and dirty first take and that will get changed - will become a longer story in the paper the next day. I said I had 2 reporters. They write stories regularly that stay online and remain there and in some cases they're stories - and I particularly like it when this happens - that the Post feels obliged to pick up. We started online and credit the dotcom reporter. That doesn't happen that often, but it happens once in awhile. My two reporters are - I'll talk about them. The first one is a person who is in early in the morning to deal frankly with my local concern - and that's traffic problems, big snow storms, some huge issue that I need to serve the local Washington area audience with. Very much a local paper focus on that. The overnight stuff that just needs to be there.

The people in Washington are obsessed by traffic. It's worse than Los Angeles - at least we think it is. They want to know, I mean, the feature I've been trying to get started for years was "how you got screwed this morning" but I haven't been able to figure it out, I haven't been able to figure out how to make that work. But if it's really bad, we know those get a lot of traffic in our local audience.

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And then the other person is a target at the national political issue - works very closely with the Post political staff.

SHAWN McKINNEY: Okay, let's go ahead and go to our break and we'll have about 10 minutes or so before the next panel starts.