

2003 – International Symposium on Online Journalism

Keynote Speaker

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STEVEN ISENBERG: I hope I have not been in academia long enough that whenever I open my mouth I will absolutely talk for 45 minutes. That's a lifetime habit they pick up. Also, this is the example that no matter how badly I teach, these are great books. They'll survive me and they'll survive you and that will be there and this lunch and your good company will survive whatever I have to say.

The first thought that occurred to me is in the language of those great European warriors, the French, as I listened to this morning's session "(statement in French)". I first was worried how far ahead of me you were in the world, and then the longer you talked I worried less about it.

Bob Dylan's songs are in my head today. I was listening to the older Mercy album - to especially "What Good Am I" and "We're Living in a Political World" - more on the second later. Why, because I am a voice and a view more grounded in the past and one who still thinks mostly about the general reader and the role journalism plays in informed citizenship when it addresses itself to broad audiences, however elite in their engagement with public matters.

So, for example, next week I'm going to speak to a group of freshmen on how newspaper works - its business dynamics, and its journalistic ethos and the conventions of news coverage and opinions. And I want you to get into the organization of the contents of the paper and the slugs like news analysis and what do they stand for. I would not presume to do this for an online paper or a website or a blog - whatever that is. I've got lots of the authority of experience through the deep habits a consumer. I have a foot in your camp and curiosity, but not much more. Thus, what good am I?

Well, the New York Times was excited to find out I will use the paper to teach the class. I will also use the Austin American-Statesman so that I can show the difference between a local and a national paper and I, of course, will refer to others. I'm from New York and I live in Manhattan and so the last time I was home I brought back with me a couple copies of the New York Post and the Daily News because I just want to show them a kind of New York idiom - you know, the axis of weasel kind of thing. And necessarily I will want them to think of other papers. And of course this will make me say to them that they ought to go online to find them. This is quite a simple, but for me instructive point. In 1996, I taught a course at Berkeley on the Presidential campaign and the media. I called about fourteen publishers or circulation directors and asked them to mail me their papers. I just had confidence that enough of them were really being put out and online. That's only six years ago. And because

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I wanted to talk about things like news play and news judgment, you can't see that online and so I don't want people thinking you see the Portland Oregonian online that that's what the Portland Oregonian looks like when it arrives in peoples' homes.

But that's all past me because when I do talk next week, I'm going to say, "Do you want to see the Washington Post? Well, here's where you go, you probably already know how to do it, and you know in the end you can find a cow in this, you can find a news story and the hell with the stuff on the news play, we'll leave that for somebody else."

So I still cringe a bit because I know the paper itself and how it's read has particular dimensions and waitings that differ from the electronic, about how the editorial judgments arrange things. But I'm learning my way in your world. And of course we don't stop at our borders. The international spectrum is open and full. I don't know how far we are from simultaneous translations but we ought to be for those who like to read the world's papers.

What good am I for the likes of you who are living each and every day as Rosental said, in trying to extend the path of online frontier? Well, actually Rosental, the Los Angeles Times and *Newsday*, I was there when we first began to think about going online. And I think sometimes you ought to think about beginnings. And I think I can ask you some questions - for most of which you'll have answers. Nevertheless, even as I listened to you this morning I'm not sure they are as secure as they could be and (inaudible) type is still shaping things and may this will be of some help.

On the other score, my own experience does include telling my corporation not to create a sports business magazine in the glossy weekly format they chose and told the analyst that's not fair because those are the stock analysts - that's what they were going to do. I told them they were going to lose millions of dollars and that it would be a failure and I delineated all the reasons why it would be a failure and then I was told, you've done your duty, go give us a magazine. Which I did, producing something called Sports News, the Sports Business Weekly. This was actually a good idea gone wrong. And so I learned something in corporate life about what people are willing to spend money on and lose money on and it's usually their ideas up at the top. And then what happens, of course, it lost millions and they closed it. We had a hell of an interesting magazine and the version world of Sports Business has at least been taken up by the sports pages, business pages. It is a big, big world.

I'll go to my grave and the only thing I've ever invented through a couple of analysts - budget type analysts - was to create this for the first time - the sports GNP. It should never ever have been calculated. We pushed gambling out. But everything aligned from building stadium, to marketing - it's a good story for CBS for MarketWatch. You could take it home. I think I bequeathed to *Newsday* and to the Sporting News. It's a really fascinating and big world with players who deeply, deeply care about it.

But I also want to say, especially to my colleagues here, who are obviously younger than I. From *Newsday* and Los Angeles Times, my own company Times Mirror which

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is now subsumed under Tribune Company, I learned another hard lesson about what happens when you create something new, something innovative, at a moment when your corporation does have courage and will, which was indeed an extension of its franchise.

Since *Newsday* I think was the last paper other than USA Today, a local paper created in 1940, we created New York *Newsday*. It was fashioned in a niche to supply the best local news in New York City and it was supposed to be a powerful flank unto Long Island *Newsday* - combining editorial and advertising columns - which itself was unique. And then I saw or I lived through change in corporate leadership and transition and watched confidence wither on the vine and I learned the blinding light that comes off various analyses as to costs and revenues. And this very well. And this was one of the rationalizations by which new smug eyes and the blue licking of Wall Street killed the New York News Day and sent 800 people home. Now under the Tribune they're considering reviving it. I hate that sort of thing. I hate irony, especially when it happens in my life.

So I've seen and been part of what happens when the barometric pressure of Wall Street and share prices exert their force for people who don't know how to divine their way through this. So I guess you could say, I've been in the lion's den of corporate politics and journalistic innovation. I can't but believe that some of these things aren't still at work today.

Also, you can bet that if I don't get what you're up to, then lots of others who buy your stock or use your products or weigh your propositions don't either. And you or someone in your organization must have the ability to explain and convince several constituencies. And I think I understand something of the basics that always tug at enterprises, however bold their innovations and technology. But you will see that my language reveals anachronisms. I'm still thinking in and about forms that have really faded, and some are gone. And I don't know quite, I can't be facile with all the vocabulary of the new. And I think this is another gap, that when you go to see people who don't live in the middle of your world every day, those of you in leadership posts have to have a capacity to explain this to people - especially those that are going to invest in you, those who are going to advertise with you. You've got to have something beyond the close-in jargon. You've got to have a good way to make this clear and knowable.

We are not only living in a political world, we are living in a financial world. And it's imperatives, its whim, its oxygen, has a great effect on the business of news and the quality and the vigor of news. This was a great preoccupation a few years ago. Somehow I feel it is less publicly aired today - the issues of ownership of the large organizations that now own news and combine it with entertainment and other forms. What does it all mean? But I can't believe that those concerns have all been quieted.

I remember the first efforts of papers to develop an online capacity. To us it felt necessary, but we were really begrudging about it. We knew we had to do this in the face of a threat to newspaper readership. We saw computers were growing and we

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needed to protect our franchise as information providers and make sure our brand was not overcome. Yes it looked like an opportunity, but frankly it was far more perceived as something we've got to do, or do it to ourselves, or we're going to really be in trouble.

There was really very little prospect of revenue. It was in most cases an experiment - a small boat from the mother ship provisioned by the mother ship's sailors and supplies. We knew that the lion's share of our revenue came from advertisement and mostly retail and classified, because most newspapers, their franchise while having certain dollops of demography define them, are really geographically defined - setting aside, of course, the great New York Times and the Wall Street Journal and USA Today, which are really national in scope and are more defined by certain characteristics of their leadership.

Ad rates. What is it you charge the advertiser? Obviously you take a deep breath and you look at what all your costs are. But they were justified to the advertiser by circulation numbers and this was a matter of mass. You could maybe get a little regional buy and maybe you could take a day of the week in the home section; or something slim like that. But essentially you bought the whole paper and everybody who bought the paper, whether or not they were a potential customer of yours. What are the outfalls of this? Was it the newspaper industry spent very little time stressing the value and worth of the content of the newsgathering and editorial material that was in the paper? Damn. I mean, people used to bitch about a small rise in home delivered newspapers, of single copy at the stands and it was the cheapest bill that came in the house every month. Because we under priced our circulation because we just thought any time we have a fall in the circulation, that advertisers are going to breathe hard on us. And in the gross, we weren't targeting anything really. And of course we couldn't. We had a mass - for some things a mass class kind of approach. I put this up as a small danger point. I put this up as a small danger point for those of you who are not going to charge anything for your content. When you give things away free for a long time, people undervalue the worth and then when the day comes to charge them, it's just a cold shower that they aren't prepared for.

Of course what we used to charge for a newspaper and probably damn well - those of you who are part of the organization - probably covered the paper, probably covered the printing, probably covered a piece of the delivery. That's about it. Although you can tell Arthur I'm coughing up \$5 every Sunday for the New York Times to be there and that will make him happy. I mean, whoever thought we'd pay \$5 for a paper?

Now, in newspapers we purposely look to the advertiser. And by the way, our advertisers in the case of classifieds are also our readers. They sell the homes, they advertise for jobs, they have a dual identity in classified. And we were going to have them lift the heaviest loads. Eighty-twenty is probably the revenue flow of the major papers, but somewhat less in other sizes. But the fact of it is, all of that together started to determine news ratios in papers; it determined the number of pages in a paper, or certainly your configuration of your paper and staff sizes and profitability.

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Those of you whose product and organizations are aligned to and grow out of newspapers, I think you know this, and I would bet you have not loosened those bounds entirely. Now television and made cable also came into the online world too. They were unbounded by time. They were not a once a day product. Armed with the visual power and emotional force of television and sight and sound together, they were national in scope. But they too in the news world were saying, well how can we deepen our franchise and put our name out there as a news provider? They largely hit their revenue from national advertisers as a paper like the Wall Street Journal or the New York Times. And, indeed, magazines do. Cable, of course, brought some of the experience of the user fee to the picture. Now magazines, by the way, also are just like newspapers. They suppress the revenue they get from circulation. It's what they do. Lots of accounting moves worlds. Lots of subsidies because their big dollars come from the advertiser and they don't want to have somebody wake up and say, gee, I'm not going to get Glamour or Redbook or Victoria any more because it's just these three dollars make a difference to me. They'd rather underwrite that because of the advertising.

So, the franchise, the power, and the credibility of the newspaper are rooted in a journalist capacity to win satisfied readers. And a knowledge of and a tie to their community. In a sense, the Wall Street Journal, does it have a community? Indeed it does. The Wall Street Journal exists because newspapers are really, really awful at business coverage for years. There is no way about get away from this. Our reporters were economically illiterate, businesses looked down their nose at us because of that, they lied to us, we didn't know it, and we didn't have a broad gauge view of business coverage that included, as was mentioned this morning, the percentage of people who are investors. It didn't include consumer finance. It didn't even look at good workplace issues, and today in a global economy, I'm an advocate for a hugely strong business page, but since, in fact, that was done so badly, guess what? The Wall Street Journal invented itself for people who had really primary business concerns, wanted sophisticated reporting, wanted sophisticated data, and that's how it came about.

By the way, newspapers, talk about great blind spots. I mean, they missed civil rights in some places, they missed the women's movement. When television came about they just averted their eyes. And so you have a TV guide. You all know that newspapers, they waited forever before they made a good guide. It's just so stupid, it's hard to conceive. They thought, well, if maybe we don't mention it, people won't really be watching television. Hey, God made a lot of bright people and he also made others.... All with purpose I'm sure.

So newspapers, as you will have to do, the composition of the newspaper is pretty simple. You win readers by producing a satisfying style and you sell your readers to advertisers. That's it. That's the end of the lecture right there. About everything else is fine print.

I want to say something about classifieds. One of us was talking about online classified is very, very slow growth. I'm an old competitor. And I've got to tell you this. People are eating the lunch of newspaper classified. Nobody said that today.

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Because you've got these yellow books, goofy books, things that people distribute cheaply that are eating into classified, which, by the way, has no editorial content in its pages. Once in a while I always used to say, for god sakes, let's just have some good automobile story or something on the front page of classified. Let's draw some readers in there. Something. But nevertheless, in that particular arcane way that newspapers work, you're not adding pages for classified. For news coverage we have to sometimes to hold all your retail advertising when life is good. So if your online franchise is protecting the mother ship against an attack, that ought to be in your calculations. It isn't just the extension of the winning of new dollars. You play offense and you play defense. So if the electronic world can bring things in classified, so be it. I'm actually astonished how slow we've moved. And I think I was very interested to hear the illusion to extensions.

For example, only in the electronic world could I come to you, Mr. Enron. You are looking suddenly for a few honest employees and so we're going to run an ad for you as you repeople yourself. If I put it in the paper, you're certainly going to get a response. What if I say to you this? I'll sell you an ad on, and I'd like you to make it so that when people read it on our online service they can send your resume here. Now, that's not a genius idea, but why isn't that sort of done everywhere? And that really gives the advertiser something different than they could do under other circumstances.

So I just wanted to stop at that point. By the way, let me say this, there is a sort of self-conscious moment here when somebody faced out to the audience and probably can't quite tell what this audience is made up of and not really that many students, but let me give this preachment too. Journalists who of all things - there's two things that if you ever hire a journalist and they go wrong on those two - I think it's time now that I ... One, when you meet a 100% cynic, I want him working for me. Cynics know everything. They know everything. I don't want people who don't ... they're not listening, they're not weighing, they're not judging, they're corroded gone. The other thing is, what's the most prized thing in a journalist? Curiosity. Curiosity. And if you have to teach somebody to have curiosity, they should do something else in life. OK, but how curious are journalists about the very institution in which they work? There's this old thing that is if they somehow take an interest in or know about the business, they've soiled themselves. And this is a crock. It's just a crock. Why don't they turn their mind and their curiosity to the very institution in which they work? And you don't have to wind up like a circus version who used to be the head of Times Mirror who has returned to his native state. Something he was going to take the walls down.

I'll tell you, when I was first a young publisher. And I was once young and I was a young publisher in two small papers - Stanford Advocate, the Greenwich Time, in the richest county in America. I said to my editor once, I'd like to have ... with a managing editor, whoever you want, but you'd have a bag lunch and I want you to invite everybody NOT from editorial to that bag lunch. And I want you to answer any questions there. And then I want the sports editor to do it. Because we are all part of the same enterprise. And I want them to understand it. I said to the advertising director, I want you to have a bag lunch and talk about how advertising works. And

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let me tell you one of the other things about this. As people rise in an organization, they've been in circulation all their life, they've been in finance all their life, they've been... When you start to get up in to upper management, those little groups of three that you were talking about so many times today. The three of us look at these issues. When you have to forge the whole enterprise journalistically, technologically, in terms of human resources, in terms of the financial picture. If you've lived in one little box, that's a hell of a jump for you. You can't understand the other parts of what make things work. And all of you are heading for general management as so many of you are, that's it.

By the way, remind me, you were kind of glib and said - it was you it - CBS types ... He said in newspapers they have such easy things to decide about ads. When I was at the LA Times, I want you to know here's one. I wanted to take an ad from Benatol for the LA Times has the last of the few Sunday magazines that are successful. And it was a newborn baby, held upside down, umbilical cord hanging, blood, everything, a typical Benatol. I would take that ad. I'd take that ad. It's going to be in every woman's magazine. My publisher wouldn't take the ad. Thanks to also a woman who was in charge of display. She said it was too much. So you're talking about and A Changing Times. I went into the Times Mirror Corporate room the day we took the first personal ads in the LA Times. I don't want to say anything like Hitler going into the Antidefamation League or something, but I mean some of the stuff the old guys at the top said, "We are taking personal ads in the LA Times!" Believe me, it wasn't the Village Voice. I mean they were so bland, I don't know how anybody would have met anybody through them. Or even wanted to meet anybody. He's up there today, Latina, Gay, blah, blah. It was only ten years ago! I'm not 125 years old. And finally the only way I convinced the former chairman of the board that this was a good thing (and you don't want to hear about the finance.) I said, "by the way, did you know Franklin, that the New York Review of Books takes personal ads?" It was OK. By the way, we went to a million dollars revenue overnight. I figured that had an OK quality to it. But today's prudishness will be tomorrow's freedom and the world moves on. And so should I.

Papers began to see that in television and cable and the electronic universe, not only for them the uncatchable advantage of being round the clock - that you were present, you were available, and you were continually freshening. But we say there is an ability to let consumers carry out their own inquiry in terms of transactions, and not only that, shaping the use of the information they received and even to choose it. And far beyond a newspaper. You read a newspaper through serendipity and you pick and choose but you don't get to say exactly what's in the paper. But electronically you are starting to do that. And we also know, I've noticed no one today in talking about profitability said one word about cost. So it just shows you guys don't really have profit/loss responsibility. You get a big blank in that score. I'm going to tell Arthur. Now papers know that they've got a couple things that weigh down their saddlebag. You've got to buy tons of newsprint and you've got to have those big presses and you've got to deliver the stuff. And that's inescapable. And that isn't true for the electronic competitor.

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Once you change the cost formulation you don't even have to look at how this changes the whole world of profitability. Yes, you always want to drive revenue, but your cost, especially with things of that size and scale. Now this is what started to drive newspapers to take on the online proposition as a business, not just a - you've got to learn our way, or it's a defensive thing. But it's possibly an enlargement, it is possibly an enhancement. Now what else was the world seeing out there? The great increase of computer penetration. I can remember when I was at *Newsday* the numbers that I had. We got like 22% penetration in the community. That's a high end, high-income play. Well, you're not going to bet a few of your major limbs on 22% especially when your newspaper is delivering 59.

But it moved fast. You know that. And you started to know that because the computer was having a very dominant role in the workplace - and I think this was well mentioned today. People while they're working, they do lots of other things on that computer. They read the news. I notice there was not mention today of porno, video games, the things that supposedly run the industry's revenues way up. But this is really a significant thing when the workplace has that thing in front of people and they may not be able to - they're not supposed to turn the news on really loud. But there are things that they can do, and you want to reach them there. And there are very good charts - you know, which show hours of the day. I hope you saw nobody wanted to mention at the box where 50% of those users did not read newspapers. So you wonder, are you cannibalizing the dollars or are you going to some new ones? There are some new ones out there. These may be - either they were never readers or they went to reader heaven. They're not with newspapers anymore.

Now we're also seeing, and this is a continuing trend and for the likes of me a really worrying one. There are certain age cohorts where newspaper reading is supposed to click up. That is, we don't really expect college kids to be great readers, but on their first job, marriage, all the other bad things that happen in life, you know having to be responsible. You start to go up in readership. And we'll put that one under a microscope. It's not happening. And the online world, this fantastic world to which you belong, wasn't just print and graphics and photographs. And god knows, I'm also old enough to have been through the first discussions about whether or not there would be color in the newspaper. My line was simple, God made the world in color and we're just catching up. But I can't tell you the number of literary dilatants who also worked on 43rd Street with you and Arthur. This was the end of mankind as soon as the newspaper was going to have color in it. And you look at the New York Times today. It has fantastic color. They did not lead the field in that. They waited. Magazines were doing it. It's unbelievable some of these things ... But now sight and sound were now going to be embraced within this force and a generation has grown up - and some of you are young enough to be part of that generation - and the next one and the next one. Using the computer is just like breathing. It's just like breathing for them. Regrettably reading is not like breathing for them. But I tried.

Now speed and capability are also growing in such staggering ways, so people are now as they did with television, they're starting to develop reliances, expectations, and even agility in using your medium. And they know how to assemble and choose

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and weigh and play with their preferences and selections. I still for one believe that the editorial lens, the sorting lens, is an absolute requisite. I don't know how people do without it. But that's another issue.

Now the other thing newspapers saw, and you've touched on this in some of these things - although the potentiality is not fully caught, is that an advertiser, or indeed the progenitor of the news itself could have the identity of every reader except for certain people from Minneapolis who give false telephone numbers.

By the way, if you get your own paper home delivered (where is she, she escaped, and I don't want to talk behind her back) - if you don't think home delivery has her telephone number.... This is really a major thing. And you are able to say what they looked at. I can't tell you how many advertisers used to say - what can you prove to me about who reads what in your paper? What did I have to say - come on - you make those sales. Our readers, just like he said today, they spend more time with us - IHT is Clay. Our reader - right? That's one of your pitches. You've got a high-end audience. People are better readers, they'll spend more time with you. More time, they'll see more things. You've got to jump to some very interesting sequential pages in everything, but this potentiality is there. Once marker is here - you mean you can tell me who's actually using your medium? - how often they're using it and all of us, like it or not, even if we don't give our telephone number, we have characteristics. Age, height, weight, blah, blah, blah, spending behaviors, other things, which people who want to sell us things we are interested in. So we look at this too in newspapers. We can see over the horizon and that's one of the reasons why all you guys exist. And for an advertiser there is a possibility - it's an ideal, it's not true - hey, I can buy what I want and no spillage on which newspapers have, a lot of you could argue.

And, of course, your interactivity potential. It just keeps growing and growing. And some of you I'm hearing of having models really that at some distance from your mother ship. And so your imaginations I see are starting to turn to the formatting of ads and hyperlinks that would attract advertisers in some sites even on a subscription basis. (inaudible) just help out the people in Corpus Christi with Dillard's. You see, as you said, they didn't want - they wanted foot traffic. They didn't want the addresses. Here's what I would have said to them. I tell you what, you want foot traffic, I'm going to give you assured foot traffic. I will give you the names and addresses of these young couples who have signed up in the paper. You get them every two weeks and then do a real beautiful little invitation - come visit Dillard's bridal shop, new home shop - a special thing just for you, addressed. I bet you that would have given them more foot traffic. Sometimes you have to teach the advertiser, don't you? Stephen, you've got to teach them how to use what you can give them. But I want to stop here. Because I simply don't know to what degree all of this evolution has taken hold. And I was really interested to hear today and Dirck, who's going to talk to other colleagues about story telling, I think is another really important thing that is going to go on this afternoon. Because I'm really interested in how this idiom is unfolding.

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I think there's some really pressing questions in one way about how you do some things independently, how you do things that strengthen the mother ship and the relationship amongst and between you. I just can't tell from what I hear to what degree you've made something which not only has the quality of the new and the unique about you, and as revenue moves from the mother ship or allegiances in any way to your online form, this goes back, to me, to how does it affect the economic health and the journalistic health and strength of the main enterprise? And those I think are very, very profound questions.

Here's a couple things to know. Why are we still printing stock prices in the newspaper? Why are we killing all those trees to present stock prices if you've got a really good penetration in your home area? Why don't we just say, you buy the Austin American-Statesman, either home delivery or single copy. We give you in our special online, we'll give you your cut courtesy CBS Newswatch - we'll give him the job - we'll give you all the stock market information and much more that's in the paper. I mean, my God, commodities - and we can give it to you around the clock. I'd almost be willing to go buy a thing from Reuters or you, put my brand on it, send it to you, and do you know how much all those pages will save you in a year?

Why are we putting sports agget out? I mean, why are we doing that in any way? I can give the richest, fullest information - a Bill Janes - I'll get ESPN. You see what I mean? Where is that sort of imagination been that's also affecting the cost structure of the paper? I look and see these eight trillion glossy catalogues come into my apartment for my wife from all these companies. Why do they even exist? Why do they exist? Why aren't they just - you do beautiful work electronically - why is Lands End sending anything out? Because the person can order right back. I don't get it. I really don't understand why there isn't a newspaper really doing well the whole real estate thing. Absolutely. In other words, you want to buy a house in Round Rock? You come right into our electronic database which we provide. You tell me what you want. You want a 3-bedroom house, you want to be near a grammar school, you want to be this far from it? Give me the whole thing. Not only will I give you the floor plan to those houses, I'll give you the crime reports, I'll give you the educational performance of the schools, I'll show you where the markets are. Newspapers own this stuff. And then you'll flip through it all and you'll come down to three houses that you're interested in. Poof, there'll be a hyperlink to Joe Schmoe's real estate who's paying me in the newspaper and we're kind of partners. Where are you now? I mean, really, that's a job for mortals. I ask you, why can't you get that one done and build a strength? Or let me give you one more. By the way, some people may die. Yes. There may be a few realtors that aren't going to be around tomorrow. I'm a competitor. It strengthens my paper and my reach. OK, so let some of them will be our partners.

Travel. Why aren't newspapers - travel agents are going to go. They are withering. People may - what have we got in our papers? Or your online call it what you will. We've got travel, restaurants, hotel, opinions, maps, guides, things to do, airline price and everything. Why aren't we one stop shopping? Why isn't the newspaper - we want to get the traffic. LA Times, we want to open up a travel business. That was

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it. Just take it and do it. Come on, these are really not... I think these are feasible to do and I think they could really be winners.

Financial imperatives, they always have their day. And I can't see yet down the line how the new life forms of newsgathering, editing, as well as commercial presentations are really reshaping themselves so as to promise a sustaining proposition for news of quality and depth and of reach to groups beyond the highly fractionated, however desirable. And indeed best made for substituting electronic for print and a group closely defined in interested or expertise. You see, I'm an old-fashioned guy who still wants a cohering force in this society even in its many specialized groups and their information wells.

We are living in a financial world no doubt. I mention that for some of our deepest pangs are about the exigencies which shape the tonalities and tides of journalism. And indeed the habits of mind and media where the premiums on speed and concision and entertainment grow gnawing concerns about how this shapes our thinking in a world where deliberation and complexity are requisites for matters of public consequence and our destiny.

And so back to the Dylan song number two. We are living in a political world and we are at war. And this above all is on our minds as journalists, as citizens, the rational, the conduct of the war, and its critique politically and militarily are also bound up in the new and old ways with how this war is being shown and hidden, reported and unreported, opined about and shaved. I tried to convince an old colleague of mind in the news business, cable in fact, that what is needed immediately is an ongoing critique of coverage so that we begin to weigh the effects of what we see or hear or don't. What the effects are on our military, on our politicians, on us? And how in turn all of that runs back to how the war is covered and carried on.

I leave you then with this thought. Here you are the progenitors of new formats, new ways of getting and assembling information, and even expressing it. We are in a crucible of war and democracy that has its eternal and yet much that is new and unknown and unfathomed. Can you convince your organization that it will be worth finding a way to analyze your part in all this? Now and later. Will you have the capacity to see yourselves from outside? Will you invite in others to weigh in with their judgments. The journalistic calling has its old paths, instincts, routines, and capabilities. But there are some new ones that are uncharted, undeliberated, unweighed, and they are profoundly important to the course of the nation, to the world, to the future. You are on the hinge. I know the side that speaks to yesterday and today. I look with wonder and admiration and concern in trying to figure out what the other side of the hinge will be - the one that will shape and reflect tomorrow. The baton, the mouse, the screen, they are in your hands.

ROSENAL CALMON ALVES: Thank you very much Steven. We know have just a couple minutes to move there and start our agenda because we are two minutes late.

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