

2006 – International Symposium on Online Journalism

Day 1, Panel 3: The Emergence of Citizen Journalism and Social Media

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Panelists:

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BARBARA BRY: Good afternoon. I'm Barbara Bry; I'm the founding editor of Voice of San Diego. And the title of our panel today is "The Emergence of Citizen Journalism and Social Media," although at lunch we all decided that we didn't like the words "citizen journalism." We would like to call it "participatory journalism."

And first, we thought we should define what we mean. And "participatory journalism" incorporates some or all of the following, and it starts with the premise that you interact in some way with your readers: allowing readers to become citizen reporters and submit stories; reader comments at the end of stories; reader blogs; readers interact with each other; other forms of reader interaction, such as forums; open source reporting, where readers collaborate with the professional journalist; a stand-alone citizen journalism site that is professionally edited; a stand-alone journalism site that is not professionally edited; participatory journalism as part of a traditional media organization; and then, of course, hybrids that incorporate some or all of the above. Clearly, these sites are fulfilling what was an unmet need, as demonstrated by the growing number, the growing number of sites, users, readers, and page views.

Our panel is also about the emergence of social media. And we've all read about the success of MySpace and Facebook. And I'd like to thank Dan, who's on the panel, for providing a very good definition of social media. It's individual self-expression through tools like user profiles and blogs, it's circles of trust, sites like LinkedIn, Friendster and LinkedIn. It's sites that promote people being allowed to share their interests and their hobbies. It's allowing for collaboration among groups of people. And it's sites that leverage group knowledge, such as a site like Flickr, with photos. So each of our panelists today is going to talk about what their site is doing, the need that they're trying to meet, and the best practices that are working for them. And we'll start with Elizabeth.

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ELIZABETH OSDER: Thank you. Now I've gotta find this thing [referring to the visual aid]; hold on. OK. There it is. There we've got some slides. Yaaaaahooooo!

Well, Rosental, when I was here for your first conference, in 1999, I hardly thought Yahoo would be in my future. So it's great to be here. And I hope I can talk to you guys about some things that are interesting about what Yahoo's doing. And I'm going to try to talk quickly, because we have some terrific panelists which I think have, really, probably better case studies of day-to-day street fighting, and what matters in citizen journalism, than I do at Yahoo. But we have a unique set of assets at Yahoo, and a unique community, and I hope I can give you some insight about how we look at the world.

I titled there's a quote that I've heard, I can't remember who said it, but "culture beats strategy every day." And, to me, what's going on in the world now is culture's beating strategy every day. Right now, there's something going on in our culture, the way people use media, and it's challenging the ways that Yahoo as a portal has looked at its business, me as a sort of online newspaper woman has looked at the business, and me as a citizen has looked at the business.

So this is my new boss, Terry Semel; before he got into running a news site, I guess he ran a lot of film studios. And we talk a lot about social media at Yahoo. And I pulled this quote from him, which is I think a good one. "We all grew up when someone else was the programmer. That dynamic has totally changed." And we, as newspaper people, we've been programming. We've been programming what's going on in our communities every day to make it relevant to the people that read our newspapers. And then we've been distributing it in print.

So at Yahoo we make connections. That's what we do. That's where our value is. We help our users program, we engage them in our network, and then with each other. We are fundamentally, that's what we're doing. So we've talked a lot, today, about the big picture. And everybody's done a good job setting this up. These are some slides that I, actually, used to show when I taught. And I used to always love to show this one, which is the old marketplace, the one we all grew up in, where we made our bucks we owned the printing press, it was one-way, we told people what they wanted, we broadcasted them, and we put it out over their radio. And there's a new marketplace. And I thank a professor who's at USC now, Francois Bar, for showing me this image once in a class at Stanford, which I use.

This is the new marketplace. And I ask everybody out there to think, for a second what's going on here? This is not the tidy world of printing presses and little newspapers on your front step. In this picture, you can't tell what's being bought, what's being sold, who's doing the buying, who's doing the selling. You can't tell what the price is. You've got to figure out what the price is, and you've got to hustle to see whether you can get the most you can get for it. This is a messed-up world. And this is the world of social media, and trying to run a business in it. This is the messed-up world for Yahoo, and this is the messed-up world for local newspapers.

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So we're all trying to make sense of it. So I like to show this slide, because I think it's a good take-away for people it's like, oh, when you're trying to think about what's going on, think of that crazy marketplace. It's got all this confusion.

But it is a couple of things that are really cool. It is colorful. It is exciting. It is engaging. It is a lot of things that we want to be, and what we want to create for journalists. And it has a lot of interesting dynamics. I always throw those along the side like the Wikipedia community, it can create things, it's viral that's a nasty little picture of a virus it spreads in new ways that we can never think of with trucks and dead trees. It's open source; people come together and they create a it's global heck, you know; what's going on in Topeka now, can be going on in Singapore that day. It's a network; it's amazing what networks can do. That's a little hist I'm a history nerd. That's a picture of the canals in New England that connected all the old mills that allowed early commerce to take off, in the mills of New England. And it's two-way. So think of that picture.

And I'm telling you now, I'll tell you a little bit about what Yahoo is doing, but really, we're all trying to figure out where we can get a nice pair of shoes that will last, for a fair price, in that world, OK? [laughter] Who we can ask for where to eat dinner tonight, or like, who's the mayor of this mess? And whether he's honest or not. So. Making sense of this world. In that world, there are a few things that I think of, as a Yahoo. Or as a citizen. Or whatever I am. How do we make sense of that crazy world?

Credibility, brand, and authority are created and reinforced in numerous ways. This is the fundamental challenge to, I think, media brands, and it's the fundamental governing dynamic that we try to sort out when we think about this marketplace. Flickr's been redefining photo sharing; Amazon is introducing influence into the online purchase decisions, with ratings and reviews; Netflix lets other users share their purchases with friends, so you can see what your friends are watching you get that sense of community; and social blogging, this phenomenon of people just spewing stuff out, is really making email and IM obsolete in the ways we thought it was going to be powerful in the past.

So, for instance, in this crazy world, Yahoo Music, our music property we have over six billion ratings. Billion ratings, in Yahoo Music, from that community. So, in this new world in the old world, we were production process; we created the content, we stored it in our systems, then we formatted it, and then we shoved it out there and distributed it in some kind of way. People gobbled it up as we gave it to them, or else they tore it up and threw it in the bottom of a bird cage. Now, something different happens. We shove stuff out there on the net, people find it, they manage and subscribe to it, they create new stuff with it, and then they share it with other people. It's crazy! So at Yahoo, we have a lot of platform tools to enable this process. And when I think about Yahoo News, where I work, I think about our citizens at Yahoo. OK?

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And this is my asset. Yahoo is the number one Internet community. We have over two hundred million unique registered users, a hundred billion connections every day. Or, not every day. That's a hundred billion connections. That's big numbers. And we have a critical mass of user-generated content today. And I'm not sitting around, parsing every day whether it's journalism or not. It's just happening. OK? I've got ninety billion users connecting with connecting in Yahoo Groups; I've got two billion images in Yahoo Photos; I've got six billion ratings in Music. That's what's going on in my world. We are an online community, fundamentally; we're a portal, we're an aggregator. But there are a lot of people doing a lot of stuff, every day. And they might be doing it for you know, using mail or other applications. But that's my world now. That's my community, who I serve with my journalism. So.

The other thing that we know is that these expectations of these users are evolving. It's gone a long way. These users it's "my needs, my wants, my needs, my wants," all these things that people want for us to do for them. Because and we have to do them! Because we need to keep them on our network. Because, as you know, there's some competitive networks out there. So we have to do that.

So. What do I do? [to the chair] How am I doing on time here? I didn't I've got five minutes left? OK, I'm winging through! So.

Yahoo News is where I work. For many of you who I've known for a lot of years, I've done a lot of time in the new media racket. Local newspapers, the New York Times, consulting, studying stuff, teaching, yabba dabba do. So now I've got this new gig, after a year by the way of working in search marketing at Yahoo, which was the monetization side of the business. I took a year off to figure out how we could make money, because I think it's important to our content futures. So I've got this gig now where I put local search in social media initiatives for Yahoo News. Which, for me, boring inside is, a lot, about integrating a lot of those powerful platforms into the news experience. But, to you, it's hopefully about doing some things that are unique, learning from each other and making great products that serve customers. Because that's all we all want to do.

Yahoo News, we believe, should be the first place Yahoo users turn when they want to find, explore, and interact with the news. And I think that that's important to us. They're there. I showed you, they're there. So we want them to have a news experience. Without us at News, they might not be having a news experience. They may not be knowing what's going on in the world. It seems to me like a pretty cool audience to serve. So Yahoo News and our network We have lots of ways that people can contribute, ah, lots of ways to contribute, create value, engage that could be written better. But anyway. So.

We have all those platforms. So the way I look at it is, our editors in Yahoo news, they create an organized product, different than Google and some others. We take we have actual editors, not a lot of them, but we organize and present the news every day. And then we put that out there for our users to share, to discuss, to

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contribute. And if we allow them to do that long enough, authorities will emerge. New credibility and trust will be created.

And there are lots of ways that people can create content. And I think that this fixation with everybody going out and writing long-form articles is not where I come to participatory editorial journalism. I look at the fact that somebody emails an article as a legitimate form of adding value to it. That they rate an article is a legitimate form of contributing to the quality of that content. That they can create a slideshow or a playlist of things they like. That they put a comment in a message board. That they maybe blog on their own site about something. Or maybe they blog on our site. That people want to contribute photos of news events, maybe, but maybe just a Flickr of things that they like. What I do know is that I've surfaced the people, over time, that do that work, and I want to reward people for doing a good job, and new authorities will emerge.

We are, with social media, I think, at the hub of the new-formed team of talent. There's always been little league, there's always been college ball, there's always been single, double, and triple-A, and there's one show. The New York Times is a formidable show, but we have lots of levels of engagement, of credible ball being played in the content space.

So. I'm just going to talk about a couple of the products I work with, and how they might be useful. Because I think we're all familiar with the traditional, sort of editorial presentation what's important, put up the stories, slap on the discussion board, add the slideshow, let's do the multimedia. I have a different set of tools in my new job. So I run news and blog search, we work with news and blog search, two very, very powerful tools. News search, 8,000 sources crawled on the Internet every day. Anybody who wants to take feed of something that's interesting to them, any day can put a query into Yahoo News search, put it out as an RSS feed, and send it back to their email or to their site. We allow you to query that, get something that you want out of it.

We also invented "most populars" a lot of most popular, most blogged-about out there, and what we do with these products is we try to let people rate stories, we watch how often they use them, and we surface the stuff that people care about. Our job, as an aggregator, is to help point you to things that you're interested in. To help use what we know about what you might be interested with what you're telling us about what you're interested in, enabling you to get what you want.

And blog search and news search are important tools. We also think of ourselves as a tool for navigating, personalizing, and contextualizing content. We just put out a small, local news product this week, and it's very, very simple. We have rocket scientists at Yahoo. This is not a rocket scientist product. This is something that people use and they need. OK? Simply go to your market, and we will surface and direct you back to the local news content in your area. And part of what we do is help people navigate the best local content there is.

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We're now putting editorial feed on the street; we value editorial feed on the street. My job is to surface it, limelight it, contextualize it, and send part of that giant community that I have back to your publications. We also talk a lot about Yahoo, about open content. People can personalize things, they can remix it. One of the great tools for that is what we've been doing with RSS, and what we're doing now with our developer network, with Open APIs, our publisher network that allows people to monetize things.

Basically, when you come to Yahoo, you can have a straight-browse experience like any news site, or you can do some other things. You can have a personalized experience with My you can take a feed out of something that you like and send it to your desktop. You can save sources and see what other people are saving. You can make things with Yahoo content. We're putting it all out there. You pick it up, you do with it what we like. Our business is, is helping you get the information and get the tools you need to meet your information needs.

Finally, we have a universe of user-generated content, as I said. And we're all, sort of, thinking about citizens going out and writing articles. I just want to leave people with a thought that, if somebody puts a rating on a story, that is a valuable contribution, and I want to reward them for that. If somebody writes a short review, that is a valuable contribution, and I want to reward them for that. If they put a brief comment, that's no better or worse, it's just different. But valuable. And I value them for that comment, versus them having a blog and a full features thing. If they want to vote on something, that's valuable content.

There are all kinds of user-generated content out there. And, a matter of fact, my interest is more in getting people to use what I already have, which is low-hanging fruit of user participation like rate and review, versus make an entire make more content for them to use. So I want people to use what we have, and add value to it, before I want people to create all kinds of new content. So we've got "most recommended;" we create that product with the people who recommend things, and that works out. We have all kinds of other tools that we use, like that.

And the final thing we do is share. That's part of what we want to do. We want to share with our with others, and we want to surface our users. I've surfaced myself a lot in there Yahoo's an interesting place; that's my New York avatar on top, that's my Santa Monica avatar on the bottom, when I'm traveling. [laughter] OK? You can see the various personalities of Elizabeth Osder.

But, old-school, when you wanted people to share things, it was like, "Uggggh! Let's put the button on the site, so we get somebody to email the article, and we'll be able to tell advertisers that we emailed so many articles today, it's like, you know, whatever!" New-school: "Hey! You can do so much more, and it's all about feeds, feeds, feeds, OK?" So, all of a sudden, Yahoo 360. You're blogging something on your own site, you can send it to your 360 page. You do something on your 360 page, you can send it to your My page. We want interoperability. We want people to be their own syndicators. Flickr allows people to share photos with each other; we've

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got groups, message boards; we've got blogs. We've got a lot of products. My job is to rationalize all the goodies at Yahoo for a news experience. And it is a challenge, because we've got a lot of goodies, and they're not all well-connected, but we're working on it.

So at the end of the day, it used to be that we create, stored, displayed, and distributed our content. Ah, that's the world where we all had a really good business model, and those were happy times. So now, we work in this new ecosystem, where people find, manage, create, and share. And what role does our user play? Well, we know that there's a new dynamic of credibility being created, of reputation, of trust and authority. And that we are committed to the long term, to listening to what they're doing in that community, to understand what to do right by participatory editorial There are new relationships between consumers, advertisers, and publishers. But at the end of the day, all the businesses that we're building, as businesses, and all the journalism that we want to do about journalism, it's about relationships and feeling a sense of connectivity. And that is where Yahoo serves ah, starts. So, I think that's it! Thank you!

[applause]

CLYDE BENTLEY: OK, so where do I find this thing? Could somebody tell me where you've got a Mac guy here, trying to figure out where everything is. [inaudible] for my presentation OK. You get it from there. Maybe. OK which one of these is

ROSENTAL CALMON ALVES: You're a Mac person?!

CLYDE BENTLEY: Yeah, everything's upside-down!

ROSENTAL CALMON ALVES: How you can be a all right!

CLYDE BENTLEY: All right. And I have some Mac-centric slides in here, which may not go over, because I thought I would be

I'm Clyde Bentley, from the Missouri School of Journalism, and it's a very unusual school, and a very unusual product we put out, My Missourian, and MyMissourian.com. The reason I don't think it's bad to say "citizen journalism" is probably indicative of the Missouri School of Journalism. I don't really care if you call it "citizen journalism," "online journalism," "open source journalism," or "Clyde's nightmare." [laughter] It's just in my line, it's just part of journalism. At Missouri, we just do it. We don't want to talk about it; we just want to do it. Because the Missourian is just into this whole notion of doing journalism.

Let me just give you a little history lesson on this you see some of these people here, you probably know Gutenberg, everybody talks about him inventing movable type. But really, what he did for us, is he printed a Bible in the vernacular, in German. And that caused a whole revolution of people who said, like Martin Luther,

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and John Wesley, and everybody else who said, "Hey, if I can read the Bible myself, and somebody who's a priest doesn't have to, then the laity can make their own decisions about what's in there." And that started this whole Reformation issue, based on the idea that someone could actually read the information for themselves, who didn't have to have someone in a pulpit.

Well, in our side, we have Tim Berners-Lee, who started the World Wide Web, and that kind of went on up to some guy called Oh Yeonho, who ended up with OhmyNews with the same idea, that the priests of journalism, the priests of truth, didn't have to give the word. Anybody could read it; anyone could produce it.

So we've been working on this situation for 16, 18 months now, with something called MyMissourian. It was a participatory project, under something we call "the Missouri method." All of our students actually worked in journalism. We ran a real daily newspaper, not a student newspaper. We ran an NBC television station, and a radio station all these things. MyMissourian is a commercial site. So all of our students work, as part of a shift work, in journalism. They don't just do it as part of a classroom experience. But, saying that, citizen journalism, was a big threat to the traditions. You've got to remember, if we're talking about a priesthood of journalism, the Missouri School of Journalism is the seminary. And we're real traditional. We're the people who really turn out a lot of traditional journalism. And we had a lot of people talking about the whole notion of credibility and control.

So, why did we do it? Well, we thought, when we started looking at some of the things that were going on at Northwest Voice, and at OhmyNews, we thought, "Well, this is a chance for us to give a voice to those who are traditionally excluded from the media" all those very nice things about expanding the audience. And then there was this other thing, you know we wanted to make money. Because one of the problems that's happened, as we've seen this morning, is you've got a whole lot of print revenue and a little bit of online revenue.

Well, what we're trying to see is, there's got to be a transitional mode here. You know, Gutenberg put the Bible out, and it didn't automatically make a bunch of Lutherans. In between there were a whole bunch of people trying to be Catholics. [laughter] And it took a whole lot of time in there and we're still in that transitional phase. So our whole point is, is we're not exclusively online yet. We've got to find a way to make this work. And we did this, as we went through all of these, by the way, are in this website with a hybrid strategy.

Our most our idea was, we'd use the web to gather information. To gather readership. In fact, we worked for a year on something we called "writership," not readership. We didn't really care if anybody read the website. What we were trying to do was get people to contribute. And then, what we would do is we wanted to use that content to fill a TMC product. Well, if you're not a newspaper small ones, especially, probably don't know that term it's "total market coverage." Sorry, I had a mind freeze there. Total market coverage in every small newspaper, medium-sized newspapers, and a lot of big newspapers have these things; they go to every

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household, or at least every household of non-subscribers. And that's how you get your circulation rate up, where you really make the money in advertising. By throwing this thing on. You probably know them as "shoppers," which most of us in journalism don't like to say. But it's we're going to use our TMC product to underwrite our online product. And what we're going to do is something called "driveway ride." And anybody who's in the newspaper business has seen this; you throw these darn things out in the street, and next week they're still out there. You throw another one, and pretty soon you've just got this big plot of cellulose out there. And then, what it is is people are not picking up that TMC.

Well, why? Because most of them are full of junk. You know, four-day old stories, old crossword puzzles, a lot of stuff like that. And a good phrase on that is it's like having a bakery, who's sitting outside with someone's bread crumbs, or croutons, old croutons, and say, "Here, try a sample, and then come in and try our fresh bagels." We're doing all this awful stuff in our TMC, and then no one is reading it. So what we want to do is look at this. The TMC, you can always also call it the "money cow." Because that's where we get a whole lot of our revenue. At the Missourian, we were budgeted to do twenty-five percent of our revenue out of our TMC. This year, we're actually doing thirty-three percent. And that just depends on how you count on it. What we look at, is there's a lot of our other products are based on that TMC. So we have some supplements that get that only go because of the TMC numbers. And a lot of our ad sales are mirrage buys; they buy into the print, and into the Sunday newspaper, and also into the TMC. So it's very hard to put out what ah, the different between. But our general manager knows that, without that TMC, we'd be out of business. Absolutely.

Ah, see, this is where my you guys didn't have QuickTime in here, so it didn't work.

So, we decided to go back to print. And fortunately, you don't have to have slides, because I have the real thing. [unfolds newspaper; laughter] And there's a bunch of them down there, that you can take away a pile of them here. What we did, is we took in our total, we launched something that, we took our product out of our website and started putting it in our Saturday TMC. So this is a hundred percent citizen-generated content, in this newspaper. And it's laid out like a whole-read newspaper.

And all the bylines don't say "by," they say "shared by." Everything is "shared by." Because one of the things we found out, as we were doing this, is there's an enormous difference between covering something and sharing something. Covering is, "I don't know a whole lot about it, but I'm sent out here to try to gather some information and do it." If you are a part of this, and you're sharing it, you have a whole different set of ideals on way of communicating; sharing is an important part of journalism, and it's just one that we as journalists, professional journalists, can't do very well, because it's not our job.

The compelling content is the key. The TMC's, you know, are just full of this junk, and what we've got to try to do is get this pickup failure, and the better thing for us,

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is we didn't have a Saturday newspaper. We had a Sunday through, ah, Friday newspaper. And Saturday became a separate newspaper there. And it was unduplicated. We had our TMC, but it didn't compete with our daily newspaper. It had stuff that wasn't in the daily newspaper. So it becomes very popular, with both the readers and the advertisers.

So, as we do this, is there a future for journalists? That was the one thing that we were charged with finding out, because that's what we do. Train journalists. Yes. We think there's both ah, a future for professional and citizen journalism, because as we go through here it's going to change. And it's no longer a situation where we're just content providers. Frankly, anyone can provide content any more, and thanks to spell checkers, anyone can spell. So. What we find is the American public is actually a pretty good set of writers, pretty good storytellers. But they need guides. They need someone to negotiate them through, to put their material in places where people can find it.

So instead of just being a storyteller, we become a "story guide." And we invite people to the table with this whole notion and a lot of people say, "Well, what about the credibility? What about the libel? Will we lose control? My gosh! We've got all of these untrained people out there!" Well, we've looked at it. Have you guys heard the term "WBC?" That's what most blogs are. It means "whine, bitch, and complain." [laughter] And we said, that's not what we wanted to be. We're not going to be a WBC blog; we're going to actually be something that makes some sense. And that's what we wanted; we wanted to find the things that are good, logical, and work out.

And we could do that by just having some simple rules, the way that newspapers have simple rules. No profanity; no nudity; no personal attacks; no attacks on race, religion, national origin, gender, or sexual orientation. Believe me, that cut out ninety-five percent of our content problems, right there. Really. You didn't get any WBC, because the people that were on the whacko side just couldn't do it.

And so, what we found out is that a whole lot of people had something to say. And they said something about all sorts of stuff. Because you've all had this in the newspaper industry; when I was a managing editor, my main job was to say "No! Sorry. We don't do forty-ninth wedding anniversaries. We only do fiftieth, twenty-fifth you can't do Divorce announcements? No. We don't do that kind of thing. You've got a really neat picture of a gourd that looks like President Bush I'm sorry. We don't do that kind of stuff." [laughter] I can do anything. The web is huge; I can put anything in that I want. And if it fits within our rules, I do put it in. Even if it seems stupid We've got a place to put stupid stuff. [laughter] That's fine. We'll let people figure it out themselves, as long as it's within those rules.

And here's another thing I had in here we have all sorts of things that write we get everybody from, ah, pagans to the slide ahead is from our local Indian temple, with stuff on their religion. Lots of good stuff. Lots of stuff on religion and recipes. They really like and if you ever want to get citizen journalism that really works, have a

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contest where they can put in their own dog picture. Pets? I mean, everybody wants to put a pet in there.

But one of the things we've done with pictures, is we get these cheap, four-dollar disposable cameras; we'll hand someone one. Say, "Just take pictures." And the picture I had here was from a teen dance, and they passed the camera around. But we went down to our local photo processor, and for four dollars got a CD of everything; put up, via Flickr, which we thought was a nice way of putting up a gallery we had several photos on our site, and we just linked to a Flickr gallery. So they had all fifty photos that they could look at. Talk about something every kid in town wanted to look at! That was a great way of doing it, and it was all done with a four dollar camera. And it was fine. No problem at all. We've also done that by having events where we just we've had events where we just take a digital camera, say "Give me your driver's license, and here's a camera. Just go around, take pictures, we'll put it up right there."

The unexpected reader issues that came out of here politics was a lot less popular than we ever thought. [laughter] We launched this thing in order to be part of the election; we couldn't get anyone to do anything on the election. And now, maybe it's because they've got plenty of other places to do that. Religion is far, far more popular than we ever predicted. This is something that, really, people have passion about. And they write well; they write, they'll write from all sorts of different lifestyles, and it's great. And then the pictures of dogs, cats, rats anything. Anything. [laughter] You'll get more of those than you'll ever think.

We've done a bunch of research on it; we've just done a recent research paper, and we're looking at this whole idea of what drives community ah, citizen journalism, and it appears to be community building. That's what people want to do. It's not the idea of getting an alternative voice in politics; that's not really what they're looking for. They're looking for being this, part of this connected community.

And guess who's doing it? The biggest demographic was young, married women, who may have time constraints that keep them from being in the community. And they really take off they want to write. They want to read. Those are the people who are really taking off into citizen journalism. Young, married women. Not the little guys the Gen-Y's, the baby boomers, but the young, married woman group was a good one. And then there's this whole idea of unexpected teaching issues.

One of the big problems we have is all of our students want to write. I mean, that's what they come to journalism school for; they want to write. So you tell them "no." I gave them an assignment that said, here's an assignment: "Go out. Don't write anything. Just come back and give it to me." And they go crazy on that. So we're having to learn new curriculum that's teaching people how to be a guide. And they were also had they were at a loss at how to cover non-news issues. Sports guys, they're really bad. I'm sorry, but they have a real hard problem with doing this. You say, "Go cover little league," and they'll go, "What? What? Little league?" [laughter] You know? "Is there a sports information officer for that?" They can't get this thing,

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with going out what's the biggest sport in this town, as it is at the University of Missouri. It's not football. It's youth soccer. You can go out to the youth soccer fields, and there's a zillion people out there. A zillion. And do we have anybody covering it? No. No. But there's all sorts of people on the sidelines, taking pictures, taking notes, whatever. They're not with us. You know? They're from someone else. And our people have a hard time seeing that as news.

We also had a real interesting problem we find out, journalists are a lot more shy than we ever thought. They have a hard time working with the public. It's easier to work with public officials, but when you go out there and say, "Go talk to a soccer mom, or a member of this church congregation" much harder for them. So we're having to work with some interpersonal skills that we didn't think we'd have to work with. And but it's working. This has become a very interesting part

So, all under the umbrella. Let me just tell you that. We believe in being part of the daily newspaper. We let them do politics. We let them do the other things. We're just a safety valve. My editor says, someone comes in now, says, "I've got a forty-ninth anniversary picture that I want to run." And instead of "no," he says, "Yeah, I'll give it to Clyde." You know? "MyMissourian, they'll go in there." So, if it's, it's something, I'll put it in. And they love us, because we take all the pressure off, and they can do their job right. And that's what that, to me, is journalism. Thanks a lot!

[applause]

DAN PACHECO: What's that?

ROSENTAL CALMON ALVES: You're a PC person, or another web another Mac?

DAN PACHECO: I'm a PC person. [laughs]

ROSENTAL CALMON ALVES: Good. Good.

DAN PACHECO: OK. So, I'm Dan Pacheco. Nice seeing you all. And I'm just to, kind of, give a little bit of background, I work at the Bakersfield Californian. It's a family-owned newspaper in Bakersfield, California; about three hundred thousand people there. I live in Colorado, which is a whole other story. Telecommute.

And I'm here to talk, really, about participatory media. And really, just to this is the only thing I'll really say about the Northwest Voice. A couple of years ago, we started something called the Northwest Voice; my colleague, Mary Lou Fulton, was really behind that, and I kind of came in about that time. And that, really, was to our knowledge really one of the first true citizen journalism sites and publications that are out there. We've since, kind of, moved beyond we haven't moved beyond it, but we've expanded. And that's what I'm going to talk about today. And I've put all of this under the umbrella of a "participatory media."

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So, just really quickly, I want to talk a little about why are we doing this? It's because media has changed a lot. And I'm not going to talk too much about this, because we've heard a lot. But really, it's, you know, the big changes. The line between reporters and readers is blurring in a big way. Reporters are getting scooped by bloggers increasingly. You have, you know, collective blogs, like citizen journalism, but also other things, like Slashdot, that people are using. That's a technical site. And another one pops up every day, that I see.

Readers are really expecting more of a conversation with, with the media they consume. It's not just about going and reading content, and then leaving. So I don't even use the word "readers" anymore; I use the term audience, because I think that an audience, hopefully, if we stay within our time limits you'll have a conversation with us. We want our publications, and our web sites, and our mobile services, to be much more like this, this intimate gathering of people where we can have some back-and-forth, rather than just us in the ivory tower, delivering something to you, and then we kind of all go home and we don't talk to each other.

I think, most importantly this is something that is, that I think is really how we're, kind of, going beyond just "citizen journalism" or whatever you want to call it. This is not just happening with news. And what I see is this kind of "participatory media" conversation movement it's been happening for a while. It's been happening since the Internet started, and I believe before that, with bulletin board systems and other things. And what we're seeing now is just a critical mass of people who are now doing this, because they have the tools, they have the technology, they have the passion, and they're allowed to do it.

So I've been watching the social networking sites, like MySpace, Facebook, which is relatively new, LinkedIn, Tribe, a bunch of these, the last couple years, thinking, "Ah, maybe there's something there" now, obviously, it's huge. Rupert Murdoch bought MySpace for I forget how much, it was many hundreds of millions of dollars. I heard Facebook is up for sale for two billion. It's just, I mean this is, like, a really important area, I think, for newspapers to focus on. And that's what our site, Bakotopia, is really about.

Real quick: why is participation important? Why should you, within your media organization, embrace participation? And one is that, as audiences fragment, community can really tie people back together. So you see, again and again, people have less time, more choices; there's more technology that allows them to do more, but with less time. So they're gravitating towards the one or two things they care most about. And in most cases, to do that in a newspaper even a newspaper website requires a lot of hunting and pecking. When they when someone who's really into mountain biking finds, like, a great local mountain biking community, where people also publish news about what the mountain bikers are doing, they'll just kind of stay there. And they may not go back to their newspaper or TV station or radio stations. I think that's the fundamental force that we need to that participatory media can help us deal with.

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And successful community products will serve niches; "one size fits all" doesn't really get you very far any more. The niche audiences really expect to communicate with each other. And so it's not just about reading content, or even posting content; it's about meeting each other. "I want to meet other people who mountain bike, or cycle, or other stay-at-home moms," or whatever it is that somebody is really trying to they're trying to find somebody who meets their needs, in their position in life at that point. And I think, most importantly, it's impossible to serve if you really want to pursue a niche strategy, it's impossible to serve every niche just with staff. Because you are going to have thousands of staff members that you can never pay.

So, I think that participatory models really help here. You can let the community help you, with self-publishing I put advertising in here; I believe self-serve advertising and citizen media are really interlinked, and will become increasingly so. It's really two sides of the same coin. And, you know, I'm just going to venture I think, in the future, I could see thirty percent of our editorial and ad staffs evolving into being more "thought leaders" and facilitators, who help other people publish and communicate with each other. And maybe it'll be more than thirty percent. Time will tell.

So, Bakotopia. And I'm going to show you what Bakotopia is. When I joined the Californian a couple of years ago, there were several audiences that they decided they wanted to target, that the newspaper just wasn't through no fault of its own, just wasn't reaching very well. And one of them was the young audience. When you see all those graphs from this morning, you can just tell every year, young people are reading newspapers less and less and less, and that spells out doom for the future, right? If we don't do something about it. So when we created this, we decided, "Well, we need to do something that is really separate from the newspaper." It can't have any connection with the newspaper brand, because that has a certain "lame" factor [laughter] that we didn't want to have to deal with, right? It just does. And so we gave it a kind of "underground" flavor.

And, by doing that, we you know, mostly unintentionallywe kind of had this dream of doing this, and then it actually came true, which is we ended up creating a generic, multi-brand community platform, technology platform, that allows us to do this for many audiences. So we're now in the process of just popping out all these niche sites it doesn't really create a lot, many more costs for us, because we have the capability of doing this. So what started out as Bakotopia, it then took over NorthwestVoice.com, and we now have a Southwest Voice, and really, seven sites, one of which is Bakersfield.com, which is the website for the newspaper. And that just started, and we'll be rolling out more functionality there. So it's been a really great experience: something that we didn't expect, but we're trying to capitalize on now.

So here's, kind of, a screenshot of Bakotopia, and I'll just is this connected to the Internet? So I'll just, kind of, click in if you compare Bakotopia to a traditional citizen media, or citizen journalism, site, the first thing you'll notice is, well, there's really no journalism per se on there. This is really an audience-focused community product.

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So people go to Bakotopia to buy and sell things; bands go there to publish their music. And then, increasingly, people will just sign in just to get their face up here. So you see here, these are the people who signed in who also had a profile and had a picture in their profile, most recently. So I'm not going to click into these, because they're totally unfiltered. [laughter] Although I just want to point out, our users are really good, and I think it's because it's a small, niche community. We don't have problems with people acting out of line, that you have on a bigger media site. And I believe it's because they they don't want to screw it up. And I find that very fascinating.

Because, you see here, some of these people I actually know this person, here. I know her. "G Girl." So, "G Girl" is her name is Glenda Robles, and she's been in a band in Bakersfield for some time. She publishes her latest music up here, which I can't play, because of the sound. But it's all on a Flash media player. And that's about the only thing on here that's reviewed. I can see things she's interested in, so I can see, "Ah, she likes chili con carne." So, let me click on that, and I can see four other people here are into chili con carne. If I'm into chili con carne, I can click this button, and say, "I'm into that too!" [laughter] I can get registered, and my profile will then show up in that as well.

So this is really one of my favorite features I've ever worked on in interactive space, including when I was at AOL and AOL Community, because it's so there's always this problem, where you never know there's always a bunch of people around a table, right, thinking, "OK, what should we write about today?" or "What should our taxonomy be for our next community site?" And everyone says, "Hmm" Nobody's going to say, "I think chili con carne is a really big thing," right? But the community, through this feature, tells us what they're into. And so we can capitalize on that in the future. And which is a lot of fun. So.

And you can click into other people's profiles. This is actually my profile here, "Spud," that I created. And that's a whole other story, there. People can rate Spud, based on how hot or how cool he is. [laughs] Leave their comments. It's just so, really, you look at this, and none of this really looks like journalism, per se. But what we've found is that people are increasingly going out to clubs and posting music reviews, for example. There's some bloggers out there who discovered the site, and they'll post the first couple of paragraphs of a blog entry about some kind of event, and then have a link to their blog, and they're using it in that way. So we're starting to get news, but we didn't start as news.

And I just think it's I think it's worth pointing out, because I don't think that, to reach audiences, I don't think news is always the best way to reach every audience. And with a younger audience, that has definitely proven to be the case, in Bakersfield. So. Just, really quickly here, it just kind of shows you our traffic is really driving up. That spike you see there I had to take the numbers out, because we're not allowed to share our numbers. [laughter] But that spike was when we launched user profiles, and the user profiles have taken over.

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And if you look down here, bottom left, this really surprised me; on Bakotopia, the actual reading of content is like the last in the list, and the fourth most popular thing is viewing profiles. And then people posting, anything. So that, to me, says, for this particular audience, for the MySpace generation, connecting is a key activity, something that they're looking for. They're already doing it on a lot of sites. And when you have something local, where they can meet people who are only in their area, it really jells.

We also allow people to upload music, as I said, and we have a podcast, and this thing we call "Bakotunes Radio." And the way it works is, when people every week, people upload their music. Matt Munoz, our new product manager that I kind of passed the torch to, he will go through all that stuff and create a podcast every week of the best music that people uploaded. So, it's all of the music is reviewed, mostly to make sure that they're not putting up Twisted Sister and we'll get sued. But he then goes through, and he'll highlight the best music, and we now see people creating songs just so they can get into the Bakotunes, which is pretty cool. I talked about interests

Oh, just one really important point about social networking. So, we launched social networking about two months ago, and we're still kind of fine-tuning it. But basically does anyone here who's used LinkedIn? Like, raise your hand. That seems to be the most popular among groups like this. The way LinkedIn works, is you can invite your friends in, or your coworkers, so that they can see your friends, and friends of friends. And this is pretty much the same way and MySpace works that way.

And so the nice thing is, if you're you have your profile, you can find your seven best friends, invite them all in. They all get user ID's, and so they can show up down here, and have their pictures there, and be listed as your friends. That's automatic marketing of your site, that you don't pay for. Which I think is a great thing, because what we learned when we were rolling out these niche audience products is that marketing something locally is difficult and expensive. So the more you can do to let the users market them market you by marketing themselves, the more money you're going to save and the more traffic you'll get.

So, how does social networking and media really relate to journalism? I think: A) It gives people a sense of ownership, of something that's connected with your brand. So it's, "My profile, my space, my blog. I own it, but it may be on your site." And I think that's an important thing, when people feel more disconnected from the media brands, and they feel like they're not really covering them well.

I think that persona and identity are central to enabling civil conversations. If you have an anonymous for the most part, an anonymous community, where nobody knows who's doing what, then all of the bad people are going to gravitate there and just post a bunch of drivel. If everybody has a reputation in the system, they're going to be a lot more careful about preserving their reputation.

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And, finally, it's a great way to drive frequency on your site. I'll go online to read a guestbook post on my profile long before I'll go online just to read a news story, and that's just me. But I think it there's a lot of people who are that way, too.

So I was going to mention, we built around technology, and I'll just go over this really quickly; a lot of people ask us, "Well, why did you build your own thing?" Well, for one, when we launched Northwest Voice, we used a vendor, and we quickly realized we couldn't there was no way to roll that out to seven sites, or twenty sites, or fifty sites, in an economical way. So, really, all of our sites are on one platform. It's really one site, with seven different skins. And, eventually, it may be fifty skins. And the users don't need to know that, but we know it, because we're saving fifty times we're spending one-fiftieth of what we would.

What we want to do with Bakotopia, nobody was enabling that, as a vendor, and we don't want to create something that was made-to-spec for the lowest common denominator newspaper customer. I don't know if you all see this with the vendors you work with, but most of the time they're out there getting requirements from, like, a hundred different newspapers, and then they give you what everybody wants which is not always what everybody needs. So that's what led us in that direction. We've talked about that

And here's just some quick screen shots of other brands we have So Mas, this is targeted to Hispanics, who are English-speaking, in town. We call it "affirmational media," because it speaks specifically to Hispanics, which is about forty percent of Bakersfield. They've never had anything that's just for them, and they love this site. There's a magazine that goes along with it.

And then, here's the other we have a site for newcomers that just launched, called NewtoBakersfield. It's, sort of, a softer sell for people who just moved to area than delivering a newspaper. What we can say now is, "There's information on the site that tells you about, you know, about where to find a good dry cleaner, but also you can meet people who like to mountain bike." And I think that's a really key thing for newcomers.

And then, a few others. I mentioned Bakersfield.com. So here's just a quick preview; we'll be launching this in a couple of weeks. Every user on our site, on Bakersfield.com, the flagship newspaper site, will be able to turn on a user profile, and do all the social networking things that you can do on Bakotopia. I think it'll be really fun; it'll be really new and different, because right now people go to Bakersfield.com to read news stories and check out classifieds. We don't know if they're really going to want to go there to hook up with each other and express themselves, but it was so it's been pretty, relatively cheap for us to do this, because we own the technology, so this is our next big experiment. It may be a huge success; it may just, kind of, fizzle. But it remains to be seen.

And, lastly, my feeling about how can citizen media really help with a lot of the money problems? My hope, and I don't know if this will come true, my hope is that,

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if we can let the people communicate more, day-to-day, about their communities and human interest stories, that that's one way to allow us to focus more on public service journalism, which we all know is important. So I always say this, because I don't ever want people to think that I think every like, reallocate resources to citizen media. I think that would be a disaster. Rather, we should allow the people out there to fill in a lot of the gaps that we're not covering, so that we can then you know reporters will be able to spend more time on the stories that matter. And what I see is the opposite, and it really disturbs me. And so, I just kind of challenge everybody: like, definitely invest more in your public service journalism. And don't do anything in citizen media at the expense of that, because that would be, really, contrary to our goals, I think.

And then, finally, we have ideas for making money. But Rosenthal is telling me to move on. So. You can ask me the money question; I'll answer it.

[applause]

BARBARA BRY: It's always hard to be last on such a good panel. And Voice of San Diego is very different from the other three people that you heard from. First of all, it's a stand-alone; it's not part of a print publication. Second, it's non-profit. Third, it's very small; the annual budget is probably what Yahoo makes in one minute.
[laughter]

So, why and how was Voice of San Diego started? I'm not going to use PowerPoint when I speak; I'm going to show you some of the website while I speak. An outline of my remarks is in PowerPoint, and I gather will be on the website for the symposium. So, first of all, I want to take you back to San Diego in the year 2004. We were having a city pension fund crisis, and a large, unfunded liability that was just coming to light. We had issues about a downtown ball park and other downtown redevelopment. There was concern over how a developer had been picked for a large piece of land adjacent to our airport. It was clear that the mayor was showing no leadership, and a retired venture capitalist and philanthropist started asking, "Where was our media, and where is the media?"

And, at that moment in time, Neil Morgan, who had been an editor and columnist at the San Diego Union Tribune for more than fifty years, left. And he left involuntarily. And Buzz called him up immediately, and the two of them had lunch. And at this point, Neil Morgan is 80, and Buzz Wooley is 67. And they like to joke that, over lunch, the two of them thought up the idea for Voice of San Diego. They like to call themselves the "two old fogies."

And Buzz promptly emailed me. San Diego is a small town. I had been in San Diego for over twenty years. My early career was as a business and political writer for the Sacramento Bee and the Los Angeles Times. I had spent the last part of my career on the founding team of two Internet companies, and Buzz and Neil decided I had the right credentials to head up Voice of San Diego initially. And my commitment was to give them a year as I realized it was a seven-day-a-week job.

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Buzz put up about \$350,000 in seed money in the fall of 2004, and I started working in getting a website developed, choosing a back-end, and hiring a staff. And also hiring a large number of people whom we called "contributing voices," who would write for us on a volunteer basis.

I'll read to you the mission statement for Voice, which is slightly different than what it was at the beginning. And it's a very lofty mission statement: "To consistently deliver groundbreaking investigative journalism for the San Diego region. To increase civic participation by giving citizens the knowledge and in-depth analysis necessary to become advocates for good government and social progress." In shorthand, I liked to say that Voice is like NPR, except we're on the Internet and since we don't get government funding, we can be more controversial.

Some early decisions were how to structure ourselves, and we decided to be a non-profit. And we applied, and it did become a 501(c)3 a process that we, actually, didn't get we didn't get that designation til we'd actually been publishing for several months. We felt that, as a non-profit, we would be viewed as more credible. And credibility was extremely important to us in this moment in San Diego's history.

We also decided we would have a small staff of paid journalists real journalists, with real journalism training, and that we would pay market rate to these people. In addition to me, there were two full-time political writers and a half-time education writer, an assistant editor who also did some of our web stuff, a part-time technical guru, and a part-time office manager. We were about five and a half FTE's. And, since then, the staffing has expanded to about ten. I spent October, November, December, getting all of this organized, and we were able to launch the site in February.

And one of the most important things I did was recruit the contributing voices. And we wanted to make sure that they represented diverse perspectives and constituencies, so that we would not be labeled as a "Republican newspaper," or a "Democratic newspaper," or a "Green Party newspaper," or whatever. So, for example, I recruited two men with the same last name of Davis, who couldn't have been more different. One, Peter Q. Davis, was a Republican banker in town, who had run unsuccessfully for Mayor. The other, Mike Davis, was a left-wing professor, who had written a left-wing view of San Diego history. But there they were; the two of them were two of our eighty contributing voices.

We also made the decision that we would only be on the Internet. And that was primarily to keep costs down. Some of our initial challenges. So, here we are, with the staff of five and a half paid people; what do we do? What are we going to focus on? And we decided, initially, it would be city government and K through 12 education. We knew it would be hard to cover an entire region with our limited resources. At the beginning, here I am, recruiting a staff to something that doesn't exist. I mean, I posted and that is a challenge. I also had to recruit the contributing voices to something that didn't exist. And get their permission to have their names

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on the website, from day one. I had to we had to establish credibility. In our case, since we were going to report, to be reporting the news, we had to be credible.

We also had to attract readers; how were we going to do that? And we were able to launch in February of 2005. We made some decisions early on I'm not sure they were the right ones but we made decisions not to have any blogs at the beginning. And that was with this concern about credibility, we were afraid of losing control. And we wanted to edit everything. And we did edit everything that went up on the website, even the things that came from our contributing voices. We published almost every letter to the editor. Unless you had profanity in the letter to the editor, we published it. If it was a controversial topic, we tried to have both points of view. We were as a 501(c)3, we could not endorse an elected official running for office. But we could take a pointed view on an issue, and we did do that on several occasions.

There were some surprises. Number one: I was surprised at the amount of free content that came in once word got out about us. But it took a lot of time to identify, recruit, edit, and work with the guest columnists. And that was a lot of my time. I was both the CEO and the editor; so I was wearing two hats. So I was worrying about the money and the marketing, as well as putting out a quality product. And that was very, very challenging.

So I'll show you a little bit of the site. This is just, sort of, the bottom of the homepage. There, you can see pictures of some of our guest columnists, who are essentially all these people are all unpaid. James Goldsborough was a very well-known foreign affairs columnist at the Union Tribune who quit about two months before Voice started, and writes for Voice pro bono now. This is, sort of, what one of our sections looks like. This is the government section. As you can see, we now have corporate sponsorship. This is the education section this is some of our contributing voices; we felt that listing them on the website was very important, in terms of giving us credibility and showing that we wanted to represent many views.

Of course, a financial model was very important. As a 501(c)3, we could get foundation money, and we did get some local foundation money. We relied on corporate sponsorship. We started a membership program, similar to what NPR does. And we had wealthy individual donors. So here's some more of that The marketing was mostly word-of-mouth. That was one reason for the voices A lot of radio and TV appearances, articles we got some articles in local publications. We spoke to every community group that asked us, and we let other websites use our content with a linkback to Voice.

One of I know we're sort of out of time, so I'm going to wrap up quickly. One of my most proud moments was last August, at the San Diego Press Club awards. And our site, which had only it was for the year ending June 30th, and our site, which had only been up, really, for about five months of that year, won the award for best web news site in San Diego. And our staff won seventeen awards. And they only, really, had five months of writing to win these awards. It was awesome. And Andy

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Donohue, our political writer, won first, second, and third place in the "breaking news" category. I felt like a proud mother. [laughs]

The challenges for Voice to continue to increase readership, and to use multimedia and interactivity. Chapter one, for me, was getting up there and proving we could do it. I think Voice has to go to the next level, which is to add this interactivity to the site. And I'm hoping they will. I left in September, given my time Andy Donohue and Scott Lewis, another young reporter, are both doing reporting and serving as editors, and I'm very pleased with the kind of journalism they're doing, and I'm sure that they will take Voice to the next step. So now, having gotten back into journalism, I wanted to stay back into journalism, so with my husband, we've launched an Internet radio podcast about entrepreneurship, I think Jon Stewart meets Jim Collins, and it's an irreverent, bold look at entrepreneurship and taking control of your life. Thank you.

[applause]

CLAUDIA ANTUNES: It's a question for you, and you although everyone can respond, if you find appropriate. The first question is: What do you think are the differences between the content? Because you insisted differently from her, for instance, that you wanted to keep some control over the content of the website, and so on. So what were was or were the main difference between the content your reporters produced, about San Diego, about anything, and the content produced by the local, traditional newspapers, or by the Los Angeles Times, or by the newspapers of the area?

And you. About the who is although there is this kind of interaction between readers and who ran the website and so on, when you see the hierarchy of news that appear when you open the front page of Yahoo News, this is these are the same news everywhere, I mean. So is this interaction influential over what you're going to put firstly in your news page, or not?

BARBARA BRY: That's a very good question. When we started Voice of San Diego, we believed that the media was not covering the issues in our region the way they needed to be covered. So we were filling a void, and by the response from the community, I think that's so. I also think a competitive newspaper market is good. I believe that the Union Tribune is a better newspaper today because of Voice, even though it's small; they take us seriously. And we've been told, anecdotally, our existence has fostered some changes in that newsroom.

CLYDE BENTLEY: One of the things we found is that the newspapers have some constraints on what they content for good reasons. Their greatest asset is their credibility. And keeping that is important to them. Being part of the newspaper organization, what we get is a different level of content.

For instance, we had a really great series from a wrestler, who documented his own climb to the state championship. And it included a story by his mother, and one by

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his father, of what it was like to raise a kid who became this. And it was I mean, could our sports staff of the paper have done that? Well, they would have done a feature story. It sure wasn't the same as having someone talk about it that way.

DAN PACHECO: I just want to kind of throw one out there. We really Our system allows us to moderate have content that's moderated or not. And we base that decision on the audience. So, for the young audience of Bakotopia, everything is completely open, because we know that the product just wouldn't fly if everything had to go through "the man." [laughter]

Whereas, with the Northwest Voice, Southwest Voice, the more traditional models, that are reaching people in the suburbs and things like that, where there's something that's printed that goes to their doorstep, we we we edit everything that comes it. Not only because we think it's important, but because if we don't, if we let any typo out that someone contributed, even though they wrote it, it's our fault. They tell us that. They get mad at us. So I find it interesting that citizen journalists really want editing. [laughs] It really surprised me.

CLYDE BENTLEY: Absolutely.

BARBARA BRY: They do.

ELIZABETH OSDER: And then, on the other question it's a great question. Which is, just for a matter of perspective, I was speaking on behalf of what my responsibilities are at Yahoo News, which is to bring those features into the experience. And you're correct; it seems like a traditional, a very traditional experience.

Our job, like anybody else and I think Dan spoke very articulately about it is to grow our audience, and to understand the different audiences we have. And I'm engaged in making additions to that product that are based on an understanding of people who want to engage and use those tools. You can have it both ways. You know, where the point between old and new is it's not exactly clear yet. We can operate in both those areas.

We have a lot of people who navigate through the site in a traditional way. And then, around our network we have people who come entirely different use experiences. People who come with links to News from Mail, or so it's a very complicated audience, how they get to us. And so, those people who come directly to News are well-served by that organization. But I'm looking at some of those other niches, within the network.

CLYDE BENTLEY: By the way, there's something that I for the money-crunchers in here, I thought I should say. Our total expenditure in sixteen months of new funds, funds that we weren't always spending, was a little less than a thousand dollars. So, we did this all that was one of our jobs, was to be able to make this so low-cost, that a weekly newspaper could do it. And we did.

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MAJOR HIGHFIELD: I was recently speaking with Robin Hammond, who is an online community expert with the BBC, and they're actually having a problem of having too much user-generated content. And they're facing the problem of, "Well, do we keep an open door approach, or do we actually identify specific individuals who we can rely on?"

And I was just wondering what your take on that was. I mean, I'm not sure if you're big enough to have that problem yet, and in the future, if you do run across that problem, do you start limiting it, or do you say, "OK, well, you're good; you're bad, go away."

CLYDE BENTLEY: We are already having the problem that some of the things on our front page last on the front page less than an hour. And then they rotate off, because something CNN talked to us a little bit about some site they wanted to do, and they were having the same problem. I don't think this works very well for national sites. It works very well for small, local sites.

ELIZABETH OSDER: I think Oh, sorry.

DAN PACHECO: Sorry.

ELIZABETH OSDER: Oh, I was just going to say, again, that ours is a little bit of a different scenario, but my understanding is that, over time, authorities will emerge. And low-hanging fruit of user-generated content is ratings and reviews. You can allow and this is not to say that we only believe in the citizen sorting, because I think it's always a question of how we, as producers, can facilitate and create conversations as well. You know, it cuts both ways.

But there is a lot of power in allowing users, you know, to create to rate people, to review, with the kind of models you saw emerging on Amazon, and helping the people bubble the good stuff to the top. And that's one way of sifting and sorting. And I don't know that the BBC is using that. It's a good problem to have. And, as producers, we can always harvest the great stuff and make it greater.

And that's where the new form team is. That's the person who never wanted to get the gig, and move to New York, and go to the New York Times like, do the drill. Who didn't want to go to journalism school, who has fire in their belly and passion, and there's a chance to shine light on them in this world.

DAN PACHECO: We haven't really had that problem, per se, with stories. But I we're going to be launching commenting, tied into our platform, on stories, on Bakersfield.com pretty soon, and I anticipate that we'll see a lot of that I think the user profiles on Bakersfield.com, that we could have some issues around that. And moderation will become more important.

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But what I found is that, with the niche audience, which is mostly what in my group we've been focused on, it's not a problem, because it's kind of like going into a club, and you recognize each other. And that makes a big difference. Whereas, if it's, like, you know, I think Yahoo and when I was at AOL, it was the same way, and I think on any newspaper site, if you open that up and make it really easy for people, and especially if you allow anonymity in there, you definitely need to have even if you don't review everything, you need to have some kind of hammer, so that you can play Whack-a-Mole with people. [laughter]

ELIZABETH OSDER: You play a lot of Whack-a-Mole?

DAN PACHECO: [laughs] Yeah, I bet.

CLYDE BENTLEY: If you signed up for OhmyNews I don't know if any of you did it's very interesting, because one of their ways of control is you have to send them a photocopy or scan of your driver's license, so that you are really registered.

ROSENTAL CALMON ALVES: All right! So, great panel!

[applause]

BARBARA BRY: Thank you, everybody.

ROSENTAL CALMON ALVES: Don't move, because we don't have a break. We have another great panel now. Actually, it's a very good segue, because we're going to have a panel now on how all these things impact on newspapers. And on websites of newspapers.