

ISOJ 2021: Day 1, Panel

Community management and audience engagement: Turning the news into a conversation

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- [Ashley Alvarado](#), *director of community engagement*, Southern California Public Radio (KPCC + LAist)
 - [Darryl Holliday](#), *news lab director and co-founder*, City Bureau
 - [Nisha Chittal](#), *director of audience and engagement*, Vox Media
 - [Bobby Blanchard](#), *assistant director for audience*, The Texas Tribune
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Rosental Alves Howdy, hello again. Welcome back. I hope you had some time to have a break, grab a bite, and maybe I hope you could find a new relationship at our Wonder room. Our great team has solved the technical issues we had this morning. Thank you for your patience this morning. Because when you innovate, you try to do your best. You are experimenting with things. So those things happen. So we are in good shape now, and we are ready to continue ISOJ online 2021. Our last session of today before our party, JFK Journalism Fellowships is offering a party after this panel, but this is a great panel. A panel that is calling the attention in many newsrooms in this country and around the world, I know that. The panel is community management and audience engagement, turning the news into a conversation, a challenge that we all have in news organizations. It's chaired by my friend Irving Washington, executive director and CEO of our beloved ONA, Online News Association. After the panel that is going to have a discussion among them, we're going to have a Q&A session. So stay tuned and get your questions ready for our panelists. So let's get get started. Go, Irving.

Irving Washington Hi, everyone. Good morning, good afternoon or good evening from wherever you are tuning in from across the globe. My name is Irving Washington, and I'm the executive director and CEO of the Online News Association. And for those that may not know, ONA is a membership organization for digital journalists who sit at the intersections of audience, product, business and technology. And many ONA members work directly in audience engagement or oversee the strategy of audience engagement in newsrooms. And for the past several years in my role, I've noticed a common thread in conversations among journalists who are thinking about engagement. And it's this. So often the conversation is centered on making the case and for why engaging with audiences, readers or communities is important. It also typically involves making a case to have our audiences participate in our journalism. This usually takes the form of how to convince someone, something, some entity, or some groups of people on the importance of this. Well, if there was ever any proof of concept in to why every news organization or person thinking about journalism needs to have honest engagement as a core strategy, ladies and gentlemen, I give you the year of 2020. In a year where we face a global pandemic, racial reckonings in the U.S. and abroad, and crises, both political in nature and literally crisis of nature, news organizations who have been strategizing and prioritizing engagements were there for their communities in a year where there was a lot of noise. People wanted to be connected with trusted organizations to answer real life or death questions that they had, literally life or death, and engage in deeper conversations in their

community. They wanted help weeding out the noise. And in our journalism world, we typically framed these strategies as new ways to inform, or connect, or engage with our audiences. But for many people across the world, this is not new. They are engaging with a variety of organizations, and people, and products in their day to day life constantly. This is their expectation. This is the norm. So it's not new for many people. And even the title of the session, How to Turn News into Conversations, but we're not really talking about that. We're talking about how journalism should be based on your community's terms and not yours. We're talking about how in many communities journalism was the only place to get critical information in a time of crisis. And we're talking about how audience engagement improves your journalism. And actually, it doesn't just improve your journalism. It's the fundamentals of journalism. So in this discussion today, we're not making the case for anything. Not engaging with our communities is non-negotiable at this point for the survival of our industry. The fact is that this is what will separate successful news organizations from unsuccessful ones. So with that said, I'm excited to be here with this amazing group. We're going to dig in and learn from what each of you did this year to connect with your audiences. So get prepared to hear from Ashley, Darryl, Bobby, Nisha and Annie for this engaging discussion. And Ashley will be the one kicking us off today.

Ashley Alvarado Thank you so much. I'm going to go ahead and start my deck, if that works for everybody. And first of all, just such a powerful introduction to the conversation. One of the things that has really struck me in the last year, just to what you're saying, that for so long, the question was why engagement? And more and more, the question I'm getting is how engagement? And today from everybody you're going to hear from you're going to see a lot of examples. I thought I would take a slightly different approach and talk about how the news organization where I work is designing for information needs and habits.

As you said, my name's Ashley Alvarado. My pronouns are she/her, and my day job is that I am the director of community engagement at KPCC/LAist in Southern California. You can always find me online. I mean I'm probably really always online. And I'm always happy to field questions too. So even when you talk about the title of this conversation, we're talking about audience engagement. I do want to take a step back and say that when I'm talking about this work, I'm primarily talking about community engagement. And what that can mean can be different for different folks. So when we talk about the work that we're doing at KPCC/LAist, we're often talking about how we close the gap between communities and the journalists who aim to serve them. That includes intentionally working to serve audiences that we've not traditionally served. It means thinking about story selection, how we frame stories, the language that we use, how we're distributing them. It's not enough to just change what you're doing and hope that people are going to show up for it. It's also thinking about how we shape stories and coverage with community members. At the end of the day, and of course I'm always thinking about this, engagement's about removing barriers for participation and creating a welcoming space so that more people can have access to information and feel welcome and served by the information that they need to be their own best advocates.

When I talk about designing for relevance and not just hoping for it, this is something that's not only something that we're doing more often at KPCC, but we're really thinking about how are we developing models that we can replicate? How are we thinking about the things that we can do and develop the muscle memory for? And so because we have such expert engagement practitioners in this conversation, I wanted to just show three of the ways that that we're doing this designing for relevance. The first is something called human centered design. And we actually just wrapped our third human centered design

project, developing a beat focused on the college pathways and nontraditional ways that people are getting to higher education. We've done this work to redesign our early childhood coverage and also to design the way that we were going to as a newsroom approach the 2020 census. If you're not familiar with human centered design, it's a form of design thinking. It's problem-solving methodology that really stops and embraces so much of what we talk about when we talk about engaged journalism and engagement more generally. It's thinking about how do we start with listening and work toward understanding. There's a great if apocryphal quote from Albert Einstein that says, "If he had an hour to solve a problem, he would spend the first 55 minutes investigating and working to understand the problem." So much of what we do or what we've traditionally been known to do as journalists is sitting around the editor's table coming up and deciding what we need to report, and then letting people know that we think it's important. And so instead, as an organization, we're really advocating for spinning the time to investigate information needs, opportunities to understand not only those needs, but the habits of the people that we're trying to serve, and then to work to meet them.

We know, of course, that investing in human centered design, investing in that research process, is not something that every newsroom has the budget or bandwidth for. And so there are a couple other ways that we really work to design our approach around information needs. One is a series called Feed the Conversation. This is one of the things that I'm, even as an introvert, most looking forward to post pandemic, and that's bringing people together over a meal to have a small group conversation. It's thinking about how can we identify subject areas, demographic, segments of the population where we know we have an opportunity to deepen or improve our coverage and then to sit and listen to people talk about it. So in this case, it's, again, in the same way that you would for a design thinking approach, identify stakeholders, it's inviting folks over for that meal to create the opportunities for deep listening. So often as journalists, we think about how are we going to get that sound bite that we need? How are we going to get the answer to the specific question we have? And that's the interview process we're used to. Right. But what happens when we step back and look at prompts that allow for folks to paint a picture for us. This first prompt, and typically when we're doing these gatherings, we have about seven or eight prompts. We have a reporter or other content producer at a table with four to five folks seated around it. And they're just chatting, going through these conversation prompts over the course of lunch. And we think about them in a way, so it's not me as a journalist putting what my assumption of you is out there, and then asking you to feed into that narrative. It's instead saying, how do you self identify? How would you paint a picture if you were imagining what it looks like when the media is getting your story right? How do you recognize it? It's thinking and inviting folks to tell you the things that keep them up at night, or to tell you about a time that they had to make a tough decision and where they went for information, what resources they thought out, and what makes those trusted sources. Another question that we use more in design thinking or human centered design than we do in these conversations, rather, but that I think is important to think about, is just asking somebody to walk you through a recent day. What are the things that jump out at you? What are the things that they remember or prioritize? Where do they put the attention? And how can you design your approach to, again, fit into their daily lives?

Last but definitely not least, going to what Irving was talking about for as far as being essential and serving audiences during this pandemic. In 2020, KPCC/LAist was able to answer personally more than 6,200 questions from community members. That includes Southern Californians, but also people from all over the country and the world who are trying to figure out how to navigate a situation unlike anything that they had faced before. Through that work, we were able to identify trends. We were able to get ahead of stories

that we might not have even told otherwise, and to create content online, on air, and through our virtual events programming that met information needs and were more relevant than if we had just been coming up with ideas potentially on our own. Something else that is we think about how do we have this be part of an ongoing conversation? More than half of people who ask us questions are also signing up for our newsletter. They're becoming part of the KPCC/LAist family. And in addition to the comments and emails we've gotten from folks who are just thankful for a human answering their questions. They're thankful for being able to navigate an unemployment system that is unbelievably complex. But they're also finding us in a way that they weren't before. When we get comments saying, "I had no idea who you were, and then I was Googling COVID and found you. Now I'm never going anywhere else again." Then that means that we have an opportunity not only to win in that moment, but to continue serving and to continue this virtuous circle. I think it's journalism. I want to go ahead and wrap up. But if you want to learn anything else about what we're doing, here's a look at the website where we share our case studies, and again, my contact information. And I'm happy to keep the conversation going.

Irving Washington Thank you, Ashley, 6,200, that is definitely engaging with your communities. Next up, we want to bring Darryl Holliday. Darryl is editorial director and co-founder of City Bureau, and I know a lot of points that Ashley raised resonates with him. And he'll talk about what City Bureau is doing and what he's doing as well with democratized journalism.

Darryl Holliday Thank you. Once this slide pops up, you'll be able to tell where my part of this session is going. So Ashley's presentation was full of great tips that probably put you in a really good spot, so I'm going to bring us down for just a quick moment. If you're at this conference, you're probably already familiar with some of the more dire statistics for local journalism in the U.S. Last year, 16,000 jobs were cut across digital broadcast and print news. Big newspapers are seeing alarming revenue losses across the country. At least 60 newspapers have shut down during the pandemic. I don't think I need to tell anyone here the infrastructure for journalism is both crumbling and being rebuilt, at the same time. We're at a turning point, literally, right this moment, at a turning point. So, I'm excited to talk to the people on this panel about turning the news into a conversation, but more specifically, turning news into collective action, which necessarily involves conversation. Because I think democratizing the means of journalistic production is the best response to our current crisis.

This is City Bureau's theory of change in a very tiny nutshell, and these points appear throughout our three programs. If you already heard me say this elsewhere, my apologies. I tend to repeat myself. But the short version is that the vast majority of the journalism industry is focused on informing the public. This is the news media we're all familiar with. In Chicago, our reporting does this by pairing emerging reporters with more experienced reporters whose work that is published in outlets across Chicago. A smaller but growing segment of this industry is leading the way on engagement, and I think my fellow panelists here are the best around at this. And Chicago City Public Newsroom event series is our main vehicle for local engagement. To date, we've held 138 Public Newsrooms in neighborhoods across Chicago. But I want to take one more step and focus on the equip part of this chart, as in how are we distributing journalistic skills to our communities, and democratizing journalism by bringing many, many more people into the field? I think that news can do all three of these things: inform, engage and equip. And this is not just taken from my first slide. They are going to be less journalists in the U.S. That's already true for some recent years. They're going to be less journalists unless we figure out how to reimagine who can do this work and who it's for.

So City Bureau's Documenters Network is a participatory journalism network, building a more equitable future for local media by training and paying people, anyone and everyone, to engage in local accountability reporting, making civic processes more accessible, and local decisions more accountable. We're currently operating in our hometown, Chicago, and work with news and community organizations to support Documents programs in Cleveland, run by an amazing group called Neighbor Up, in Detroit, run by our friends Outlier Media, and in Fresno, run by Fresno Land. This network exists because hundreds of people supported the time energy. To that end, we've trained over 1,000 people to document public meetings in their area over the last two years. These folks have covered more than 1,500 public meetings across three cities, totaling more than \$180,000 paid out to people who may or may not have journalism degrees, who may or may not go on to work in the field. These are people who want to see solutions in their community and want to be part of the local civic process.

So here's a question that we get a lot, 1,500 public meetings, that's great. What happens to all that content? Where does it go? Who uses it? Put another way, what's the return on investment here? Great question. Really glad you asked. Some of you might know Rachel Dissell, an investigative reporter formerly at the Cleveland Plain Dealer. And actually speaking of cuts to local newsrooms, Rachel was part of the downsizing of the Cleveland Plain Dealer and now works with Cleveland Documenters, the latest program in our network. So anyway, I think Rachel summed up this return on investment pretty well, which is an investment in people for Cleveland. She said, "In just a few months, Cleveland Documenters has assigned and paid local residents to take notes or live tweet government meetings more than 170 times. This central work is filling information gaps, sparking conversations and engagement and adding accountability in our community." So a new section of our website, documenters.org, is making it easier to discover the latest local government reporting from hundreds of documenters in all three program locations every day. You can search a full universe of public meeting times, dates, locations and official records there. The notes, photos, audio, video, live Tweet threads that documenters produce, and the more than 50,000 or so official records that we've collected are full of story leads and tips. These are public meetings that, for the most part, are not being covered by local journalists, and in a lot of cases are poorly attended. But all of them are making big decisions that affect lives in their community. So on our end, bringing people into the conversation of who holds power to account has resulted in a network of people saying they want to be part of that process with local reporters. We're also getting ready to launch a local newsletter that is being tested with newsrooms, organizers, educators, government employees, documenters, and community folks in Chicago. We develop products like the Open Gov Report Card, which applied an accountability framework, and a grade like A through F, to government agencies. And we created tools like Chicago Bill Bot, which takes an on demand tweet requests and tracks local legislation to give folks real time updates. And all of this stuff wouldn't be possible if it weren't for all the documenters who really make up the foundation of a lot of this work.

But I will say my favorite part of the network is the community of practice that is growing and that involves paid assignments, free trainings, Web chat, other workshops. But it really boils down to generating relationships between people who have not been invited to play a role in the power of politics. We're talking about turning the news into a conversation here and community management. With documenters, we're seeing what happens when a community leads its own conversations about local news and civic action. So these folks are sparking conversations that live beyond the documenters network, and they are conversations that wouldn't have happened without their involvement. Because they think

of things that we don't. They know people who we don't know. They bring energy and resources to the space when, honestly, some of us may be tired. They remind us why we're doing this work. They aren't just making our journalism better. They're making journalism that looks like our city.

All right, I said I would repeat myself. Here it is. Turning the news into a conversation that really should be about challenging who has the power to produce and distribute local information. I think that conversation can be had in ways that bring journalists closer to the public and literally brings more people into our local newsrooms. So the next three years or so, City Bureau will be working with local individuals and partner organizations to continue growing people powered movement for accountability reporting in local news. And I'm looking forward to the ongoing conversation on how to reimagine the role of the journalist to meet local information needs.

Irving Washington Thank you, Darryl, and you did not bring us down at all. I think there are a lot of people excited about the documenters and the work that you're doing. I think your teasing up our conversations we've had about the title of this session. So looking forward to dig into that because we've had some disagreements there. But next up is Bobby Blanchard. Bobby is assistant director for audience at the Texas Tribune, and he will be talking about how the Texas readers when the power went out.

Bobby Blanchard Hi, good afternoon. I am so happy to be here. Like you said, I'm talking about how we launched a new texting service during a February winter storm and how that relates to our audience and engagement efforts. My pronouns are he/him. You can find me on Twitter @BobbyCBlanchard. And like you said, my title is the assistant director of audience, which is just a really fancy way of saying I run the Tribune's audience team. And so for those of you who don't remember or didn't follow the news at the time, because let's be honest, two months ago is 24 months ago in the current news cycle, the Texas winter storm was a disaster for the state on the scale of a major hurricane. Analysis reveals that nearly 200 people died in Texas during this winter storm, and we are still counting the dead. Almost 70% of ERCOT customers, that's the state's power grid, lost power, and about half of the state's population was affected by water infrastructure problems from complete outages to boil water notices. And I am myself am part of that statistics. This winter storm really revealed that the state was ill equipped to deal with the cold, and the state's infrastructure was just not ready. Making matters so much worse is that people had few places to get crucial information from. During this moment of terrible crisis, the state didn't really have a communication strategy. The governor was telling people to use Google. And so we asked ourselves, what can we do, and how can we help fill this need that isn't being met? And that led to us launching a text service in less than 24 hours. We worked with a company called Subtext, and we got this up very quickly. Time was of the essence. People lacked Internet or good cell phone service, which means it was hard to read our site or see our social media. That drained a lot more power than just SMS texting for people who were trying to conserve cell phone battery power. This was also a way for our readers to ask us questions or pass along tips, and we got more than 2,700 readers sign up for text alerts during the winter storm.

We launched this very quickly through an entire team-wide effort on the audience team and people on the product team. We tested multiple possibilities. The text message, emojis, line breaks, links. We wrote out scripts for frequently asked questions. We planned the tone, and the voice, and created a template to work out of, as well as some basic style roles. And we set the bar for what we would send people out over text message. Texting is the most invasive way to talk to a reader. It's the most intimate. So we have really high bar

for what we sent people, and that bar was essential information that would help people live their lives during moments of crisis. And we sent people a lot of information. We shared what we knew about water restoration. We told people where they could find bottles of water. We told people the CDC guidelines for boiling snow to get water if they couldn't even get water out of their taps because many people had frozen pipes. We reminded people to not sit in their car in a locked garage to heat themselves up because that could lead to carbon monoxide poisoning. We gave people everything we could to help keep them safe during this moment.

We also used this for our own reporting. One of our sources that we texted ended up in an article about water challenges across the state. Readers shared with us what she was going through, and that in turn inspired our coverage. And she became one of our sources in our coverage. We also answered readers' questions. Readers asked us things like, where can I get water? Are our bills going to be impacted? Why am I still without power? How did this happen? What can we do to ensure it never happens again? And we use those questions to inform our editors and reporters what they're asking, and that helped kind of inspire storylines. A lot of these things we're already working on, so I hesitate to draw a perfect one to one. But this definitely informed the newsroom and informed our journalism. You know we sort of answered individual questions on one on one basis. My favorite example of this is a reader name, Yeoville, who lives in Austin, and her pipes were frozen, and she just could not find water. And so we sent her information about water distribution sites in her area. And she texted us back shortly, a few hours later. "Thank you. You saved me," along with a photo of just stacks of bottles of water. And she said, "I was third in line to get water." This is one of the things that really helped us keep going in the winter storm, because a lot of the people who walk in our newsroom were impacted by these very same things. And a lot of people in Texas, actually, readers texted us things like, "Thank you, thank you, thank you. Thank you for the update. You're literal life savers. Thanks for this valuable information. We love you, Texas Tribune. Thank you. You rock. Thanks for this text service. Thank you for doing this update. I love it. Thank you. Heart emoji." Just again and again, we heard from so many readers who were grateful for the service because they couldn't find this crucial information anywhere else. And these kind words and kudos or a lifeline to many of us who struggled and were going through the same thing. Like I said previously, this was helpful for us and helped us keep doing our jobs.

And I've been thinking about this a lot lately because in the past year we've seen this play out again and again, where newsrooms and journalists are filling an essential need left by public officials. Journalists earlier this year were stepping up and helping people register for vaccines because residents in their communities literally couldn't figure out how to use these vaccine portals that were not intuitive and not easy to use. Journalists have been a lifeline to communities for the past, really the past year, during the pandemic. Always, but especially in this moment, a never ending moment of crisis. And so while the winter storm is over, we haven't stopped texting our readers. We don't text them every day or even every week, only when the need is high. We text them essential information that changes how they live their lives, be it pandemic precautions or vaccine eligibility. Here you see examples of us texting people about Governor Abbott rescinding the statewide mask mandate or texting people about vaccine eligibility expanding to a broader group of people. And we're going to keep texting those readers because if history has taught me anything, we're still in a moment of crisis, and there will be many more moments of crisis to come. So thank you for having me. I was really enjoyed speaking to y'all today, and I'm happy to take whatever questions you'll have.

Irving Washington Thanks, Bobby. It really resonated the point you made about the need that journalism is fulfilling, so I'm looking forward to talking to you about that. Next up, we have Nisha Chittal. Nisha is the director of audience and engagement at Vox.com, and she will be complementing Bobby's presentation, also talking about serving your audiences during a crisis and taking a different take.

Nisha Chittal So, as Irving said, I'm going to talk about serving your audience during a crisis, and the crisis that I'll talk about is more broadly the entire past year that we've lived through, the coronavirus pandemic. So a little bit about me. I'm Nisha. I'm the director of audience and engagement at Vox.com. And I've been working in audience development and engagement for over a decade, and I've led teams and shaped audience strategies at places like MSNBC, NBC News, Racked, the Travel Channel and others.

So the thing I want to sort of hone in on a little bit today is audience call outs, and how we at Vox have used this tool, especially during the coronavirus pandemic, to shape and inform our reporting and to really better serve our audience. So kind of the first step before we think about any call out, is we go through sort of a list of questions to establish what we want to try to do with this call out. What the goals are? What the purpose is? And that also helps us decide what is the best medium for this? What is the best platform? Where can we reach the audience that we're trying to reach? Some of the questions we always ask ourselves are who is the audience we're trying to serve? Who's the audience we're trying to reach? How can we best serve them right now? What do they actually need from us? Where can we best reach them? Journalists love to gravitate towards Twitter, and I love Twitter, too. But Twitter, I think it's really important to emphasize, that Twitter is not the only place, especially when you're trying to reach the audience. Twitter, is a place where journalists and media over index. But if you're trying to reach more of your readers, I think they're often in other places besides Twitter. And then also thinking about what is our ultimate objective? And what is our goal for this call out? Not every audience call out serves the same purpose, so you want to make sure that your editorial teams and your engagement teams are clear on what you want to get out of it. Some call outs are more effective for finding specific sources. If you're looking for very specific sources for a story, sometimes you might be looking to collect a wide range of personal stories and experiences that you can incorporate into your reporting. Sometimes you're looking to cover underserved communities and both find out what those communities want from you as a news outlet, and also to hear their stories and to make sure that you're hearing their voices and perspectives that you can incorporate into your reporting. Some call outs are about creating a sense of community among readers and audience members and allowing them to participate, and be featured in your journalism, and feel a sort of shared sense of community, which I think also became important throughout parts of the past year of the pandemic. Creating a sense of community online helped people to sort of bond and get through the challenges of the year. And then getting audience input and feedback on your coverage I think is always valuable. And then also hearing questions the audience wants you to answer for them. This is something we do very, very frequently and really focus on not just trying to guess what our audience wants and therefore what stories should we cover for them, but directly asking them what they need from us.

So I'm a big proponent of you don't need to have fancy proprietary tools to engage with your audience. You can simply use tools that already exist. We are big users of Google Forms, and we use them for the vast majority of our audience call outs. And then really we're just focused on asking the audience directly what they need, and what they want from us, and also what they want to tell us. So a couple examples of call outs we did in the past year. Just a very sort of broad one that we started in the beginning of the pandemic,

and we ended up getting thousands of responses over the past year, was just what questions do you have about the coronavirus pandemic? And this was really helpful to just get a sense of what people wanted to know, and what they were wondering about, and what we could help them with, like how we could serve them. And it really helped us and our newsroom to stay in touch with the big questions that people were asking over and over again about the virus, especially when it was new and there was so much new information. So that's more of sort of we want to hear your questions so we can answer them call out. We also did a lot of call outs that were about hearing from our audience and their experiences. We did quite a few call outs that were about how people were impacted by the pandemic, and we wanted to hear their stories and their experiences.

Speaking of tools that already exist. Another tool we love to use for audience call outs is Instagram's questions feature. I'm a big proponent of meeting people where they are and reaching them on the platforms that they're already engaging on. So Instagram has this wonderful built-in Q&A feature, and we've begun doing sort of a regular franchise that we call Ask Vox, where we have our reporters take questions through Instagram. So we use the questions tool, we collect the questions that our audience has, and then we have a reporter record video responses answering each of those questions. So Umair Irfan is one of our science reporters who's really become one of our experts on the COVID vaccines. And so we knew that, especially in the last couple of months as the vaccine rollout really started to accelerate, people in our audience have had tons of questions about the vaccines. Which one is better? Who's going to get it? What will the rollout look like? What will happen after people get the vaccine? Will it make life normal, or do we still need to take precautions? And so people were able to submit the questions that they had in a platform that they were already on, like we really wanted to meet them where they were. And then they were able to get direct responses from one of our expert reporters.

We did well over a dozen, at this point, audience call outs around the pandemic. These are just a snapshot of some of the call outs we've done in the past year that were related to the coronavirus. We started in the beginning with kind of the big, broad things of what questions do you have about the coronavirus, and how is the coronavirus impacted your life? As the year went on, many of our reporters started to come to our team and say, "I really want to do a story about a specific theme." Maybe it's service workers, and how they've been impacted. Maybe it's health care workers who are on the front line. Maybe it's sort of more of the stories about how coronavirus is impacting our home lives, so couples who are living together, or how people's habits have changed in quarantine, or how they've experienced telehealth services, how they've experienced dating in the pandemic. We had all kinds of reporters from different desks in our newsroom coming to us and wanting to do audience call outs to shape different types of stories about how the pandemic had impacted people. And that ended up informing many stories that we've done over the past year. We did several service driven pieces based on the questions people submitted in our big questions callout. We heard from people that they wanted to know, especially in the beginning, they wanted to know about cleaning questions, when we still thought that the coronavirus could be spread on surfaces. They wanted to know how to talk to their kids. They wanted to know how to manage their anxiety and practice mindfulness. They wanted to know how to make their own face mask. So we wrote, our newsroom, many service pieces that were directly answering the questions that we collected. And then we built a guide that you see here that housed and packaged together all of these service pieces that were directly informed by the questions our audience sent us. And then we also had stories from readers across the world, too. So this category of stories about how people's lives had been changed and impacted by the pandemic. So we had many pieces that featured stories from sources around the world who we found through our crowdsourcing

call outs. People talking about what the pandemic and what isolation and quarantine looked like in Iran, and China, and Italy, and Singapore, and South Korea. We did a call out specific to restaurant workers, and how their lives and their work was impacted by the coronavirus. We also did a sort of a service story on how to make a mask. And then as a follow up to that, we asked readers to share their photos of their homemade masks with us, and did a piece showcasing some of those responses. So we were really able to integrate our readers into our reporting and make them feel like they were a part of Vox and a part of our reporting. And we're able to showcase people from all around the U.S. and all around the world in our reporting, and better highlight some of these other underserved communities, and reach different audiences in different communities with our crowdsourced reporting. That is it for me, so thank you.

Irving Washington Thank you. I really love to see the global perspective of the call out and those responses there. Next up, we have Annie Z. Yu, who is the director of engagement at Politico. Annie, I'll leave it over to you.

Annie Z. Yu Hey, I'm Annie. I'm the director of engagement at Politico. So basically, my team, we oversee social management and storytelling, audience engagement strategy, whether it's with enterprise projects or new product launches, and just distribution and off-platform partnerships. So I wanted to talk about making national news a little bit more accessible. I think, when it comes to really creative engagement work, there is so much opportunity to to play with it, especially when you're working with local news. You have an audience that's already deeply invested in what's happening in their community. It's much more clear to those readers why the work that you're reporting on will directly impact their lives. But when it comes to focusing on national news, a couple of challenges that I think about all the time, I think the first one is to just make sure that you're proving why this work is relevant to their lives, and why they should care about it. I think the second thing is to really make sure you're working harder to pull back the curtain from national news, and make sure that people feel like you're not just some inaccessible, kind of mysterious, huge news organization. That this is a group that has real humans and real journalists behind the work, and they are intentional about how and why that they report on things. So these are just going to be two really simple things that we focus on Politico all the time on my team.

Super simple tips that anybody can implement, but they have really high payoff for us in terms of reader value, delivering news to those readers, and then just to show them why they should trust us as an institution. So the first thing is really just thinking about explaining the news. I think a lot of times we're immersed in storylines so deeply that we might forget about the context that some of our readers might need in order to understand this story. So I think about this all the time in terms of two kind of different buckets. I think the first one is like, are there technical terms and concepts here that just need explanation and further elaboration? What are the prerequisites for someone to be able to come into the story and understand it? So I think this first example was one that we did with a huge investigation that we had with our tech policy reporter. She was looking into documents that shed a lot of light on the FTC's investigation into Google back in 2012. So that was kind of the basis of the story. The whole thing was about like, here's what we discovered about what the FTC knew back in 2012. But it was really illuminating for us on social media. We did like first of all, let's just check if people even know what we're talking about. Right. Like raise your hands if you actually remember the story of when Obama's FTC investigated Google, and it was pretty interesting for us to see that it was basically an even split. Half the people had never heard about that news. Either they just weren't following it then, or they just missed it for some reason. So that's always something I want to think

about as we go into a story to explain those like technical, whether it's a technical term or it's just a story line. So in terms of terms, right now, we think a lot about like, do people know what reconciliation is? Or if we're targeting some social rollout plans for the census in a couple of weeks, it's like, do people understand why the census numbers matter? And like, do they know what we mean when we're talking about reapportionment? Right. These are kind of really easy barriers. They're not easy. They're clear barriers. But what I mean by easy is we can start there. We can say, OK, let's kind of take a further step back when it comes to this specific audience on this platform and explain what these things are.

And the second thing outside of like a technical term I think about a lot is storylines, and this Google one is an example of that. Like people just weren't familiar with this story. So first we need to kind of step back and explain what that was and catch people up. I think a recent example is also the scandal around Matt Gates. Like, oftentimes we kind of assume people know what exactly are the details around the scandal with Matt Gates, but a lot of people don't know. So what is the way we can kind of include those readers as we keep talking about this thing, in case every time they see our post, they're like, "I know there's a scandal. Not super clear what it is, though, so I'm just going to move on with my life."

Another thing we think about on my team when it comes to explaining the news is really identifying what is causing a lot of confusion right now, and how can we bring clarity to our readers? So we do a lot of social Q&A's exclusively for this. What I mean by exclusively, is that it's not based on a story. We pull aside a reporter or an editor to do something exclusively for our readers who are just a little bit confused about something. So the most recent one we did was this week on J&J's COVID vaccine pause. So obviously that was a huge point of confusion for a lot of people. A lot of people had a lot of concerns about like what if I just got it last week? Do I have to worry? When is this pause going to end, et cetera? So we brought in our health care editor to kind of answer some of those questions. Here's an example, during the limbo period of the 2020 election, when everybody was talking about whether there are ways to forcibly remove President Trump from office. There was also a lot of misunderstanding and disinformation out there about certain aspects of the 25th Amendment. And then there were just so many questions that a lot of people didn't seem to have an answer to. Right. Like really granular things, like exactly how many cabinet members would have to vote X in order for something to happen? Like those kind of granular details weren't really in a lot of places. So this is an example where we pulled our senior legal affairs contributor, Josh Gerstein, and asked him to do a quick Q&A for our readers, just for Instagram.

And like I mentioned earlier, it's not just about like whenever there's confusion happening. I really care about like whenever there's disinformation that's being spread around. So this example, this was us directly addressing the fact that, "Hey, there's a lot of people talking about X." In this case, whether Republicans can just ignore Biden's win and send Trump electors to the Electoral College. So let's kind of break that down, and be like, "Here's why that's actually really unlikely. Here's why that alarmist post you saw at this other place probably isn't going to happen. And then let's talk about how the process actually works." So in terms of explaining news, this is something that actually has worked really well for us last year. I think a lot of news organizations popped up coronavirus specific news products last year, for obvious reasons. One of ours was a nightly coronavirus newsletter. So on social, we decided to kind of take that name reporter and do a IGTV series with her explaining just like whatever it was that was the biggest topic of confusion or contention for the week. So this was not only a success in terms of traditional metrics of just like, "Oh, it reached a lot of people. It provide a lot of news value." But I think another really huge takeaway for me here was that this is the single news product we offered specifically for

social that gave us the most positive feedback. Like people had a lot of praise for her. People got attached to a reporter. Her name is Renu. They would comment on her posts if she skipped a week and asked, like, "Where's Renu's video for this week. We want an explanation from Renu." So that was just a really interesting observation for us in terms of like it was a successful way where we built a relationship with a reporter and our audience. And to the point where they missed her and asked for her when she did not deliver a video that week.

And the last thing I just wanted to really quickly talk through is just a really simple way to pull back the curtain. This is something a lot of news organizations do, but it's so, so simple. And anybody can do this, like any reporter can do a Twitter thread explaining how they got the story, or how they reported something, or how they first found X document. So really simple, really common. But it is so impactful. For us, we consistently find a lot higher reach, more engagement, and a lot more positive reception any time we find a way to intentionally give readers a behind the scenes look at our journalism. So this specific example is back on that same Google example, and it performed more than twice as well in terms of overall impressions and reach than anything we posted on the main institutional cap, which has millions of followers. So just a quick little tip to not discount the power of being able to pull back that curtain for our readers. So that's it for me now. But let me know if you guys have any other questions, and I am happy to answer them.

Irving Washington All right. Thank you, Annie. Excellent presentation. If you're anything like what I am right now, you probably have a million questions going on in your mind, hearing all of our amazing panelists. Fortunately, we get that opportunity now to dive into our conversation. So let's dive in with this discussion.

And we're back. All right, we have a task ahead. We're going to power through this 30 minutes because there's a lot of things that we can talk about. And since this session is turning news into a conversation, we're going to lead by example and have a natural conversation to make this not a panel. We will lead by example on that, and we encourage you to do the same. Please submit questions in the Zoom, or YouTube, or where you are. And we're also checking on Twitter as well, too. So please add questions, and we'll moderate that. So all of you all talked about engaging communities in different ways that were very complimentary, but they were also different in some regards as well, too. So to start out, I think it is good to just level set on definitions, so we're all clear on that. And what I mean is we don't have to agree on definitions, but just let everybody know where you're coming from with the definition as we continue the discussion. So I will start quickly, as few words as possible, define audience engagement to you. Bobby?

Bobby Blanchard What I always tell people is it's my job to make sure that everything the Tribune does finds an audience, and everything our audience needs help with, they can find with us. And I think that is really embodiment, the bridge that the work that we try to do is. We are both distributing our news to the people, and we'll also taking back what we hear back to our newsroom and trying to ensure that the journalism that we do is reflective of those needs.

Irving Washington Ashley?

Ashley Alvarado I'm the least confrontational person you're ever going to meet, but I'm going to just say that I think of audience engagement and community engagement differently. And the audience engagement is really thinking about how you can super serve an existing audience. And with community engagement, we're thinking often both within

our existing audience and outside of our existing audience, and how we can close that gap between communities and the journalists who are aiming to serve them.

Irving Washington Nisha?

Nisha Chittal I really think about it as serving your audience and making sure that you are empowering them with the information that they need to know to feel more empowered as a citizen and to make better decisions in their lives.

Irving Washington Annie?

Annie Z. Yu I would say I define it as meeting audiences where they are, and truly listening to them, and actually allowing that to impact your journalism in some way.

Irving Washington And Darryl?

Darryl Holliday I might be the dark horse here. I don't really consider myself an audience engagement professional. I want to see a world where more people can own local journalism, right? The work shouldn't be for an elite few. Like the Democratic picture that we want, it means that more people need to possess the skills that we have, whether that's an event, or a workshop, paid assignment, a story, whatever it is. How do we get more people involved in this?

Irving Washington That's great, actually, by a show of hands, that's also a good start, how many people identify as an audience engagement specialists? OK, that's good to know, and I think how do you incorporate that so as throughout the newsroom overall? So we're getting a lot of questions in here. I think one way to start, there's a lot of "how to" that people want to know. But then I think there's also the strategy level, where we are now fast forward to your project, they are lovely presentations by the way, amazing things that you are doing. But can you bring us in the beginning of that? So, A, did you know these projects you were working on were going to be lovely presentations that we will talk about today about the effectiveness of audience engagement? But can you bring us in on some of the messiness possibly of how some of those projects got started? I won't call anybody, but who feels compelled to start there? Because I think it's helpful to bring people in where it didn't necessarily start out a certain way, or you didn't know where it was going to go.

Ashley Alvarado I don't know if this is answering that question, but what I will say is when I started at KPCC, I was the entire engagement team. The idea of having a team seemed kind of ridiculous. And so what got us to the point, in part because I can never take credit for everything, but part of what got us to being able to have a team and to try the messy work was just a constant practicing of engagement internally. So thinking about what are the ways in which people on staff can experience engagement so that we're not only equipped to do the work, but we realize some of the value in it? And that meant spending a lot of time getting to understand the information needs and habits of our colleagues. It also meant working to find ways to create a little, I'm a big fan of the power of FOMO, and how can we get excitement where there might not be some? So a colleague and I literally ordered a bowling pin off of eBay and create a trophy out of it, that we would then give out at staff meetings. And got some great advice about saying, "OK, well then let's just not say, 'hey, great job on that engagement thing you didn't know you were doing.' But 'hey, great job. How did you do it? Why was it worth it?'" And then to continue to build the same kind of enthusiasm we're hoping to get with our audiences internally so we could do more.

Bobby Blanchard Yeah, if I can jump off on that point. When the Tribune hired me in 2016, I was Tribune's social media manager, and we were an audience team of two. It was me and Amanda Zamora. And the way that we kind of grew our team and grew the capacity of what we did was by making a case and saying like, "We did this positive thing, and it had this positive impact." So like a lot of that, kind of similar to the trophy thing, like we had a headline hoedown channel, where we walked on headlines together to make them more audience friendly, and we celebrated people who came with good headlines. We had like a candy bowl for a while to give out to people. So, like, I think a lot of this work is, you said this at the beginning, Irving, a lot of this work is making the case in the newsroom and a lot of that is showing the impact of that work. For the texting service, I mean, that was the definition of a mess. Like we were without power, or water on some of my team. I had power, but no water. It was a disaster across the state. And we were watching this kind of as fast as we could to fill an essential service. It very much felt like duct tape and strings behind the scenes. But because we had built up a team that was so much bigger than just two people, it worked so much more efficiently than that.

Irving Washington I want to talk about looking at some of the questions that are coming in, and there are a lot of questions, which is great. To summarize a lot of these, some of them, as said at the top, is a lot about how do you convince to not measure just growth for growth sake, and how are you measuring engagement? And a lot of these stem on making the case for impact. Darryl, I'm going to put you on the spot and resurface an ONA 20 slide that I saw from you, which said, "Tracking impact sucks because how we define impact sucks."

Darryl Holliday I did say that.

Irving Washington Elaborate.

Darryl Holliday I mean, I think a lot of journalists here, journalism organizations, are used to kind of the Chartbeat style of metrics, which I would say are more aligned with ad revenue than mission. Like unique clicks by page. Sessions. The bounce rate. Like what we put on this page to make money? I get that. We all got to do that. But counting clicks won't tell you if people care. They won't tell you people care, or why they care, or what they do about that. And I always think about this thing that Jonathan Stray said in a presentation like 10 years ago, which is that journalism has no theory of change. And I would say that that's, for the most part, still true, 10 years later. A theory of change defines long-term goals, maps backwards, then defines necessary preconditions. Right. And I'm no sure engagement is always enough. Like engagement for what? To save democracy? To get readers? To make money? Maybe. But what's the long term goal? And I would say that is to shift power. So what is the long term? Why do we do this work? So I'm saying tracking impact sucks because how we define impact sucks, that would be the Chartbeat style. We need better metrics around what does engagement do? What does it mean to people? What do they do upon being engaged or equipped?

Irving Washington Nisha and Annie, how do you all think about that from a national global perspective? There are very real needs, I think Darryl makes some good points, but there are very real needs about the business of news organizations. How do you kind of put all that in the same space in your roles?

Nisha Chittal I think you're right. There are very real needs, and it is an inescapable reality that we have to think about traffic. But I think the more you can make sure that traffic is not the only metric that your newsroom is dependent on and by which your

newsroom measures success, the better position you'll be. I'm so curious about Darryl's ways of tracking impact. That's something we're constantly working on, is how to track impact and report that back. Those are things that we incorporate in our reporting that goes to run the newsroom, to leadership, to executives, things like that, to reinforce that. All those people certainly look at traffic metrics, but we also want to make sure that they are looking at impact metrics, whether something was cited in a piece of legislation, or whether it was shared by a really high profile activist, or forced a private company to change a policy as a result of our reporting. Those are things that we really try to celebrate, and amplify, and tout and make sure our leadership sees them, and our newsroom sees them. And then in terms of the more like analytics stuff, I mean, I think page views are a metric, but they're not the only one. We also look at audience loyalty. We look a lot at repeat visitors. Someone might come in through search or social. And that's a great entry point, but then are they truly loyal to your news organization? Are they staying and not just reading that one article they found on Google, but are they staying and reading multiple things? Are they coming back multiple times a month? Are they coming to your home page? We look at a lot of those metrics to to understand not just scale and size, which is not the only thing, but how loyal are people? And do they understand what distinct value you provide? And do they come back often?

Annie Z. Yu Yeah, I don't know if I have a perfect answer either, but I do always try to highlight and shout out internally in the newsroom when we do have a success that has nothing to do with reach, or impressions, or page views. I think one of the things I mentioned in my presentation was the overwhelming number of positive response we always get when we use a certain reporter named Renu with her IGTV series. And that was a metric I really honed in on to be like this is the one thing by far that gives us the most amount of people saying, "Thank you for this. I love this. Thank you for these reports." I think that's really impactful. Another thing I would say is back in the presidential debates this season, we had a call out that didn't necessarily get a lot of reader questions, which to some people's metrics would be like, "Oh, that was not successful." Right. Not a lot of people submitted questions, but I counted it as a success because one of those questions was such a good question that we incorporated into our coverage plan for the second and third presidential debates. And we're like, we're assigning a reporter just to cover this angle because we think it's a really important topic. So that to me was a successful call out, because despite the low numbers of questions we got, it's like we had a tangible line for like we listened to our readers, and we did something, in that we let that impact our reporting as a response.

Irving Washington So speaking of engagement, our audience is very curious about tools and workflow in this group, so let's do a little bit of a lightning round because I know some people want to dig into the weeds of what specifically are you using? Let's do like the top tools. Let's do one like a top tool, lightning round, and then let's do like a lightning round on workflow. List one to three top tools that you are using. You mentioned some in your presentation. You can double down on those, but if there's additional ones. What are one to three top tools you're using for engagement with your audience? Ashley, I see you thinking.

Ashley Alvarado I think hard. I would say Hearken, Ground Source, and Typeform.

Nisha Chittal I can go next. I said this my presentation, but we're big users of Google Forms. We also use the Instagram Q&A feature a lot, and those are two that we use for direct audience call outs. I would also say, like we use Google Trends a ton to understand

what audiences generally are searching and asking questions about and looking to learn more about.

Bobby Blanchard Yeah, I would plus one Google Trends. It's really useful to find emerging questions that you might not find otherwise. We also use CrowdTangle, which is really useful to monitor social groups and what people are talking about on social in various places, as well as Instagram Live. We also use Screendoor for call outs. It's an expensive tool, but it's a useful one that we are able to organize big call outs around.

Annie Z. Yu I think mine would actually be on the social storytelling end. Like I'm a huge fan of test accounts. That sounds very basic, but I think it makes a world of difference, especially when you're gearing up to do live Q&A's, or live interviews, or anything. And I've seen a lot of other people use institutional or personal accounts publicly as a test. And it's just nice to be able to do it privately.

Darryl Holliday I'll be really brief. I say this too much, but Airtable. Airtable should sponsor us. I love Airtable so much. It does everything. Well, it does a whole lot.

Irving Washington Short and sweet. OK, workflow, everyone doesn't need to do this. Whoever feels compelled because I need workflow is a very loaded question. But what are the top tips around workflow? I know a lot of the projects here were call outs, participatory in nature. What are sort of the top tips in workflow that you would let people know about? Because, of course, we all have it figured out, right? This is a conversation. No one said we have it figured out, but where have you seen some bright spots in workflow?

Nisha Chittal I would just say I think this is like my favorite soapbox about audience work. But I would say, like, talk to your audience team early on in the reporting process. I think that is like the best workflow tip I can offer. I think these kinds of projects are much more successful when the audience team is not just thought of as like, "Oh, we go to them after this is done, and they'll market it, and push it out on all these channels." But when you talk to the audience team early on and incorporate them into the reporting, we can help inform the direction of the story based on audience questions. Like we can provide insights and things that can help to inform the reporting process too. That's my one workflow tip.

Irving Washington A lot of the questions also are centering on working within newsrooms and again explaining the importance of audience engagement, and the workflow, and what you're doing. I want to pull up something someone wrote with Open News, the Source, earlier, a couple of days ago. And I just want to get people's response to it because I think this feeds into some of the questions on that directly. "One thing I want to highlight is I think most journalists intrinsically understand that attracting an audience is essential. Journalism should make an impact, but it's hard to make an impact without readers. But there's often a strong resistance to the activities that help publications grow an audience. Sometimes it's individual ego. Sometimes it's newsroom distrust of the audience team. Sometimes it's disdain for the entire audience or analytics function. Sometimes it's disdain of the audience itself." Darryl, you are nodding your head. What the affirmation there for you?

Darryl Holliday I was going to plus one. What I was thinking in my head was disdain for the audience itself part. I think that's often overlooked. We talk about trust a lot. Do people trust journalists, journalism? I would reverse that question. Like, do we trust people? Do we trust the audience, the community? I think people sense that. They feel it. And it

manifests in the workflows, in the selection of tools. Anyway, I'll pass it over, but I can talk a lot about this.

Ashley Alvarado I want to plus a thousand everything Darryl just said, everything that's in that post. There really is, we have these questions of we want community members to read and consume our work. We want community members to listen to us. We want community members to trust us. But until we're willing to do any and all of that with our communities, to see folks and respect folks, and value folks, then it's just not going to happen. But the thing I can say, like to get all emotional, with my whole heart, though, is like when you do this work, when you get to see the impact, when you see those tweets and those posts, and you get to experience what it looks like when somebody experiences being seen, and valued, and heard it is such a renewing power. And it's something that, you know, I've just in all of the different jobs that I've had, I've never experienced anything like it.

Bobby Blanchard Readers are only going to respect you as much as you respect to them, which is why it's so important. I think everybody on this Zoom call, or this presentation call, every audience journalist I've ever known, or community journalist I've ever known, like they lead and work from a place of extreme empathy. And that is what makes them effective at their jobs, is because they're able to empathize with their audience and understand what their audiences' needs and are asking. If you look at when we did the texting service during the winter storm, it was our readers who asked the best questions. And I think making those things available to your audience and then like understanding where your readers are coming from is as crucial to this, to journalism as a whole.

Nisha Chittal Yeah, I just want to add, I think that some of this is like a remnant of like the top-down approach to journalism that J-schools teach of, like, "News organizations set the agenda, and you determine what is important to people," which is what I was taught in journalism classes many moons ago. But it is different now. Right. Like literally the title of this panel is like news is more of a two-way conversation now. And I think there is this sort of an old school mentality of like "We the journalists, like in our in our office building, like set the agenda, and tell people what is important." And I think there is a little bit of that, but that's not completely gone. And it shouldn't completely be gone because sometimes audiences want things that maybe you don't want to cover or aren't right for your news outlet. But I think there needs to be much more of a balance these days of not just covering the things that journalists personally are interested in and think people should know about, but also covering the things that audiences want to hear from you, and what they need to know, and what they are asking of you. If we got rid of journalists setting the agenda completely, like, do we want to end up with an Internet full of memes from TikTok? No, not entirely. But like, I think there needs to be more of a balance there. And we should, and I think we have come to in the past few years, give the audience more input and more power in shaping the news agenda.

Irving Washington We're coming right up on time. And we didn't get to a topic that I know we want to talk about. But let's close this as final remarks, and that is burn out. I did a tweet last week about burn out that people are still liking and sharing. I know this really resonated with a lot of journalists within audience engagement. So in final remarks from everyone, and we also have questions in the chat from how do we protect journalists, their safety doing this work? How do we look at this from a systems approach as well as doing that? And then also just filtering the noise in some of these call outs because they're all not positive. So if you all could just give some final words in the last two minutes that we have

here, which is a very big question to close with, but it's really important. And at least if you could tease out some thoughts, I know people can find you all on Twitter to think about it more. So who wants to tackle that first?

Nisha Chittal I'll go because I loved Irving's Twitter thread last week, and I sent it to so many people. And I completely agree with so many of the things you suggested. What I wanted to say on this topic was I think audience engagement people can often feel like a very particular type of burnout. And many times people doing this type of work, especially if you're doing like online specific engagement, like people on these types of teams can feel like you need to be online 24/7. You can't miss a conversation. You can't miss a Twitter cycle. You can't miss a breaking announcement from the president at 11 p.m. And we have to be there to tweet it at 11:01 when it happens. And that I think leads to burnout. I think even many social media managers I've worked with over the years feel like they need to be online, even on their off days, and they can't ever take a break from their screens because they might miss something. I don't have all the solutions. But Irving had great solutions in his Twitter thread. Go check it out. But I think newsroom managers and leaders really need to create space for audience folks to be able to like, these people in these roles should be able to take breaks from the Internet too and be able to unplug. And I think also consider how important is it to tweet the breaking news at 11:01 that happened at 11:00. Like does that serve your audience in the best way possible, or can you provide them something more thoughtful and nuanced the next morning? But I really want to push for supporting audience people to be able to take breaks from the Internet so that they don't burn out.

Bobby Blanchard For the editors, managers and executives who are watching this panel, supporting your audience team members, frankly, often mean staffing up better. I've spoken to so many audience and social editors in the past couple of months who say they don't feel like they can ever take a day off without screwing over their fellow team members. PTO is meaningless if you can't take the PTO. And so I would say if someone's looking for solutions, there's one. Hire more people.

Annie Z. Yu I like that. I think there's another flip side of that. It's like either we hire more people, or we have to cut our losses somewhere. Like we really have to be willing to pick our shots, and be like, "You know what, in this Saturday event, we're not going to staff it, and we're going to live with that." So it's kind of an either or, but we have to, like as newsroom managers, be able to accept one or the other.

Ashley Alvarado But don't assume that your team knows it's OK to logoff. Don't assume that people know the stresses that you're experiencing. We have to be willing to verbalize whether we're talking about line staff or managers.

Darryl Holliday I'll plus one everything here and be brief. This is a mindset shift, right? I would absolutely plus one what Ashley said, especially. There are ways to respect, be better to your staff, that don't involve wholesale shifts. It's like a constant process of understanding when people need time off. Go on vacation. If you work in a news organization, please go on vacation. Take that time off. If you run a news organization, please let your folks have that time off. It's a whole mindset shift.

Irving Washington All right, well, that will wrap this up, I felt like we could have kept going. We were doing popcorn here, but I think we covered a lot. So we will hopefully continue this at the reception coming up later. So I'll turn it over to Rosental.

Rosental Alves Yes, indeed, I mean, this was a perfect segue because we are now getting ready for a party, and we really need a party. And I mean, this panel was brilliant. I love it. I was a little afraid in the beginning because you were pushing back with the conversation and engagement. We are not going to do that, etc. But in the end, it ended up exactly what my best dream was. So thank you so much. Thank you so much for that.

So that's our last session of the day. Thank you, all of you, who have been participating since this morning. You know, all of those sessions we started a little bumpy in the beginning in the morning. But we are now firm, and everything is going well. So thank you to our sponsors, Google News Initiative and Knight Foundation, as well as Univision Noticias, which has been sponsoring our interpretation into Spanish. So we are very thankful for that. The day isn't quite over. Like we were saying. We are going to have now a party. It's party time. We here in Austin, Texas, we work hard and we party hard. So join us for the welcome party happy hour, sponsored by the John S. Knight Fellowships at Stanford University. Bring your own drink. I'm sorry that we cannot provide this time a drink to you, but bring your own drink just in a few minutes. You can also bring something, finger food, and join ISOJ'ers from around the world during this online social event that is about to start. We use a great platform called Shindig, which is very intuitive. It is easy to find your friends and colleagues, make new friends, and mingle and network as you would have done if ISOJ was here in Austin in person, as we wanted to, that hopefully it will be again next year. Follow the link in the chat to join us on Shindig. Thank you very, very much again. And I'll see you back tomorrow for work in the morning with Katharine Viner from The Guardian. It's going to be great to have her opening the day tomorrow. But now, just in a few minutes, take a drink and come to our party. Bye bye. Thank you very much.