



# **JOURNALISM IN THE SERVICE OF DEMOCRACY:**

## **A SUMMIT OF DEANS, FACULTY, STUDENTS AND JOURNALISTS**

**A Report of the Proceedings Sponsored by  
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# JOURNALISM IN THE SERVICE OF DEMOCRACY: A SUMMIT OF DEANS, FACULTY, STUDENTS AND JOURNALISTS



BY CHRISTOPHER CONNELL

Sponsored by Carnegie Corporation of New York  
in Partnership with the Paley Center for Media

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# Introduction

The first Amendment of the U.S. Constitution, which famously includes the words, “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press...” leaves no doubt about how strongly the Founding Fathers felt about freedom of expression and of the press as being intrinsic to the strength of democracy. But they also clearly understood that freedom of expression, without wide dissemination of the underlying ideas and knowledge, is insufficient to support or sustain the democratic process. As Thomas Jefferson noted in 1787, citizens need to have “...full information of their affairs thro’ the channel of the public papers, and to connive that those papers should penetrate the whole mass of the people.” The fact is that though Jefferson, relentlessly attacked by the press when he was president, probably often rued the day that newspapers and even muckrakers became prominent fixtures of the American scene, he remained a strong advocate of free, unfettered journalism throughout his life.

Jefferson must have been keenly aware of how the dichotomy inherent in the role of the press in American society—both to serve as a marketplace of ideas and to provide an opportunity for voicing opposition to even the most widely held beliefs—is one of its most critical and unique features. After all, the press is not a commodity. It does not exist solely to enrich the economy or to be a vehicle for advertising, though nowadays, based on the business model of some newspapers, which emphasize profit over the value of news, one might not be blamed for thinking the opposite. Certainly, we must appreciate that the press is powered by the dual engines of business and public service: the former supports its viability and the latter sustains its mission. But undergirding all its functions is the most foundational purpose of a free press, which is to hold us all accountable: government officials, policymakers, educators, philanthropists, business leaders and others, as well as political parties and the electorate itself. In the media, the daily discussion of the nation’s business and the world’s—which, with the advent of the Internet, cable television, and other means of instant access to the news is now on a 24/7 cycle—is the way we take the temperature of our lives, our culture, our society and even our civilization; it is the way we assess our direction and debate where we are going, or should be going, in the future.

Hence, in a democracy, the value of the press is inestimable. Certainly, its excesses must be spotlighted, its ability to damage as well as uplift must always be considered,

and both journalism and journalists themselves must be held to very high standards that may not be compromised—but even with all those potential problems in mind, the weakening, or even absence of a free and vibrant press in our nation is unthinkable. The institution is irreplaceable.

But of course, with freedom comes great responsibility, and freedom of the press is no exception. Our society is built on a system of checks and balances that applies not only to the structure of government but to almost every other facet of the way our nation functions. Inherent in this system is a constant weighing of one idea against another that helps to ensure all voices are heard. Every day, in the United States, individuals and groups form picket lines, engage in demonstrations, pamphleteering, put up posters, write opinion columns, call in to talk radio, write blogs and in countless other ways air out the full spectrum of ideas from the political right to the left and everywhere in-between as well as vigorously debate each other on almost every imaginable subject. But the fact that we engage in these activities is part of what makes us responsible citizens. Without citizen participation in the civic life of our nation, we would likely be living in a society locked down by the kind of totalitarian regime depicted in George Orwell's classic, *1984*, in which it was so easy for facts to be denied and information rejiggered to suit those in power, or Arthur Koestler's novel *Darkness at Noon*, in which reality was manipulated so that fiction easily replaced fact.

We are fortunate, in the United States, to have more than 2,000 television stations, over 200 cable television networks, around 14,000 radio stations, nearly 9,000 newspapers and over 100 million blogs—many of these, naturally, concerned in large part with local issues or, in the case of blogs, personal ones—but, amidst the great diversity of our nation, it is our national press and media that help to provide a national vocabulary for the discussion of the issues that most affect life in the United States as well as our national and international policies. Perhaps now more than ever, in this “age of anxiety,” of globalization, conflict, non-stop opinion and an overwhelming info-glut, we need objective observers and reporters to help us distill the onslaught of events, data and information into knowledge and wisdom. It is in that connection that we should be able to look to the press to assist us in answering the telling questions asked by T.S. Eliot: “Where is the wisdom we have lost in knowledge? Where is the knowledge we have lost in information?”

Eliot's query speaks to the “Home Depot-ization” of so much of the news that we interact with these days. The proliferation of online sources of news and opinion along with cable stations and an extraordinary, seemingly depthless supply of print and electronic sources of specialized, compartmentalized information means that one can pick and choose among the issues one wishes to be exposed to. That may be fine,



up to a point and certainly, it is everyone's right to pursue their individual interests and concerns, but if all an individual chooses to know about or understand is tailored around his or her particular notions or points of view, such narrow vision may well leave them seriously under-informed about national and international affairs that deserve their attention in order to be a knowledgeable and active member of our participatory democracy. One of Carnegie Corporation's early trustees noted that it was incumbent upon philanthropic foundations to have "glass pockets" in terms of how they carried out their work, and the same can be said of the democratic process: it needs to be transparent about how it functions but there also have to be educated, informed and responsible citizens watching what our elected leaders do in the name of our nation and discussing and debating the results.

We should ask the same of our journalists: that they be educated, steeped in expertise, deeply knowledgeable about the subjects they report on and, one hopes, even cultured individuals. It is not enough to simply turn out reams of reporting and then race on to the next story. To understand the underlying ideas and possible ramifications of important, even truly transformative events, requires that the individual conveying the story be trained and informed enough to deal with complex, nuanced information with a richness and depth that cannot simply be pulled out of the proverbial hat. Journalists must do their job with excellence, skill and understanding—and we must do ours, which is to both learn from what is reported to us and challenge it when necessary.

In that connection, journalism professor and columnist Eric Alterman reminds us about the various viewpoints that have been expressed over the course of this nation's history about the relationship between journalism and democracy, including those of Walter Lippmann and John Dewey.\* Lippmann lost faith in the idea that journalism could overcome what he thought of as the public's susceptibility to manipulation, while Dewey believed the Fourth Estate was critical to keeping the public involved in the democratic process. Expanding on this idea, Alterman notes that "the ability to discuss, deliberate on and debate various perspectives" is how the citizenry moves toward consensus. And whether that consensus is *jay* or *nay*—or even *maybe*—about a particular issue or policy, we will only be trying to fight our way blindly through the fog of opinion, rhetoric and rumor if we don't have the eyes of free, independent and excellent journalists to help us see the road ahead. ■■

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VARTAN GREGORIAN

*President, Carnegie Corporation of New York*

\* "Out of Print: The death and life of the American newspaper," *The New Yorker*, March 31, 2008.



# Journalism *in the Service of* Democracy



Vartan Gregorian

## A SUMMIT OF DEANS, FACULTY, STUDENTS AND JOURNALISTS

### Backdrop for the Summit

In 2002, a conversation started among several university journalism deans about the paucity of jobs for students hoping to break into broadcast news. Orville Schell, then-dean of the Graduate College of Journalism at the University of California, Berkeley; Geoffrey Cowan, then-dean of the Annenberg School for Communications at the University of Southern California (USC); and Alex Jones, director of Harvard University's Shorenstein Center on the Press, Politics and Public Policy, got the ball rolling and gathered more than a dozen journalism deans, educators and foundation executives for a meeting held at the California home of Walter H. Shorenstein, the San Francisco real estate magnate and philanthropist who endowed the Shorenstein Center at Harvard's John F. Kennedy School of Government in memory of his daughter, Joan, a former executive producer of CBS News' *Face the Nation*. The conversation quickly turned to broader questions about the future of journalism and journalism education in an era when both newspapers and networks were fighting a losing battle to retain readers and viewers, and when the Internet seemed poised to grab not only eyes but advertisers from traditional news media. It was a penetrating discussion. Not long afterwards, Susan Robinson King, the former ABC News correspondent who is Carnegie Corporation of New York's vice president for external affairs and who attended the meeting, told Schell that the discussion was too important to end there and that the Corporation wanted to include a focus on improving journalism in its work.

Carnegie Corporation president Vartan Gregorian, the former president of The New York Public Library and Brown University, was passionate in his belief that journalists play an essential role in a democracy and that society's need for well-educated, intellectually honest and probing reporters, editors and producers was greater than ever in an era of loud voices and short attention spans. Soon, with Corporation funding, the



Alberto Ibargüen

UC Berkeley and USC deans and the Harvard director were flying regularly to New York where they were joined by Nicholas Lemann, who was then the newly appointed dean of the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism, and Loren Ghiglione, then-dean of the Medill School of Journalism at Northwestern University, in discussions with Gregorian and King about how they might best find their voice to speak up on behalf of needed changes in journalism education and in defense of the highest standards and ideals for an

increasingly beleaguered profession and industry. Soon, the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, a leading force in journalism education and professional development for journalists, agreed to partner with Carnegie Corporation on this effort to raise the standards and stature of journalism schools within the academy. The outgoing president of the Knight Foundation, Hodding Carter, committed Knight resources to the partnership, and Carter's successor, Alberto Ibargüen, enthusiastically embraced the initiative when he assumed the foundation presidency in 2005. Eric Newton, vice president of journalism programs for the Knight Foundation, took a center seat at the table during the deans' meetings.

In May 2005, after three years of soul-searching about what the deans and their universities could do to improve the education of journalists, the four deans and the Shorenstein Center director issued a manifesto called *A Vision for Journalism Education: The Professional School for 21st Century News Leaders*, in which they spoke of the need to elevate journalism education from the trade school model to the legal and medical model of professional schools where students would acquire not only skills but the intellectual depth and curiosity and the commitment to honesty and high ethical standards they will need to uphold the core values of this vital profession. Professional schools "should also strive to act as the consciences of their professions," the deans said.

At the same time, the Carnegie-Knight Initiative on the Future of Journalism Education was unveiled at a May 25, 2005, event at Carnegie Corporation's midtown New York headquarters, with the two foundations committing \$6 million over three years in support of the efforts by the journalism schools at Columbia, UC Berkeley, USC and Northwestern and by Harvard's Shorenstein Center. These campuses—five of

the leading research institutions in the United States—and their presidents made their own commitments of institutional and financial support in the effort to more closely integrate the schools of journalism into the intellectual life of the wider university and to draw upon scholars from other schools and programs to help teach aspiring journalists. In addition to this effort to enrich the journalism curriculum, the initiative launched an ambitious News21 Incubator project in which top students from the five universities, after a final semester of preparatory coursework, would spend the summer working on national reporting projects overseen by campus professors and published and broadcast by both traditional and new media as well as on News21's own web site.

From the start, it was envisioned that several more leading schools of journalism would become part of the Carnegie-Knight Initiative. The University of Maryland, the University of Missouri, Syracuse University and the University of Texas at Austin were added in June 2006, and the journalism schools at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Arizona State University and the University of Nebraska completed the group as the initiative completed its third year. In June 2007, the presidents of Columbia, Berkeley, Northwestern, USC and Harvard announced that each of their institutions was committing \$400,000 to help underwrite the third year of the initiative on their campuses.

This was the backdrop for the January 8-9, 2008 *Journalism in the Service of Democracy* summit that brought together the dozen deans and more than 120 faculty and students from the campuses participating in the Journalism Initiative at the Paley Center for Media in New York City for discussions with top news executives and journalists about the relevance and reinvention of journalism education and the profession as a whole. The following report provides highlights of the summit and the issues, ideas and discussions that enriched the proceedings.

### Opening Night

It was standing room only for the journalism students and professors who crowded into the lobby and Spielberg Gallery of the Paley Center for Media for the summit's opening night reception. Vartan Gregorian quipped, "At first I thought it was a sit-in." Pat Mitchell, President of the Paley Center,



Pat Mitchell

said the summit's purpose was to "assess the future of journalism and how, as a community, we best prepare the next generation of journalists as well as media leaders." The former PBS president added, "We've reached across the media landscape to bring together the most diverse and broadest representation of that landscape as we possibly could. So, represented here tonight and tomorrow, we will include *The New York Times*, YouTube, CNN, Bloomberg, MTV News, the Associated Press, ABC News, Current TV, Fox News and the Huffington Post." Gregorian offered a short account of why and how Carnegie Corporation took on this challenge, and expressed his personal conviction about the vital role that journalists play in a democracy. He said that teachers ("the most noble profession"), librarians (who "protect the memory of our past") and journalists are "practitioners of three of the most important professions that serve our nation." He added, "In our democracy, journalists are agents of change. Nowadays, everybody is talking about change. Certainly, our society, like all others, needs to change and adapt in order to survive. However, we also need to change in order to stay well. But one thing we cannot allow to happen is to abdicate our responsibilities to our democracy and to our citizenship." The Stanford-educated historian and humanities scholar went on to say that journalists "are in the enhancing society business," and even though the pay is not often substantial—and neither is respect for the profession in many quarters—journalism remains "a wonderful, noble cause." And recognizing the importance of journalism as a foundation of our nation and our society, Gregorian noted emphatically that "universities have a moral, social, and intellectual responsibility to nurture the spirit of independent inquiry that the best journalists and journalism embody." He lauded, too, the dedication of those professors who have found their calling in educating the next generation of journalists.



Alberto Ibargüen, Bill Keller, Vartan Gregorian, David Westin



Arizona State University professors getting “read in”

“Tomorrow is going to be a great day,” said Gregorian, referring to the events planned for the following day. And then he added, “To all the deans, to all the students, to all the faculty who are here, thank you, thank you, thank you for being in the truth business, for being in the democracy business, for being in the citizen business, not just the business of making money. Thank you very much.”

## WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 9

### Panel One: Rethinking Journalism Education for the 21st Century

**Moderator:** David Westin, President, ABC News

**Participants:**

- ▶ VARTAN GREGORIAN, President, Carnegie Corporation of New York
- ▶ ALBERTO IBARGÜEN, President and CEO, John S. and James L. Knight Foundation
- ▶ BILL KELLER, Executive Editor, *The New York Times*

Before turning over the microphone to David Westin, Pat Mitchell quizzed the audience about how they had consumed the news from the New Hampshire primary, which had taken place the previous night. She asked for a show of hands on how many had watched the returns on television, listened to the radio, surfed the web, or done all three. After all that and reading the analysis and reporting in the morning newspapers, she asked, did the audience members now feel “able to move forward into this primary season and presidential election as fully informed, engaged citizens of this country?” The question, posed that way, evoked nervous chuckles. “Laughter is not one of the options,” the former drama teacher chided the audience.

Mitchell said her informal survey was “probably no more accurate than the polls were in New Hampshire, but certainly what we’re here to talk about today is exactly that: the promise of the Fourth Estate, in fact, the mission of journalism and the press in this country to make sure that all of us as citizens are as informed as we need to be ... to strengthen and sustain this great democracy.” She went on:

“What are the lessons we can take this morning from last night’s coverage of this very critical presidential primary, and what can we look at in today’s newspapers and online reporting that gives us some ideas on where we move for perspective, for insight, for analysis, for the kind of information we are all longing for? Well, in many ways those are the lessons learned and the questions to be asked that have brought us here together today, to find new, innovative, thoughtful answers to those questions, as well as, together, to explore ways in which journalism can meet the challenges of a fast changing, evolving media landscape in which there are huge challenges but also opportunities to seize these new technologies that not only connect us but have the potential to inform us as never before.”

Mitchell also suggested that one of the issues on the table for the summit was how the news industry can “engage younger viewers and readers and bring them into the fold without alienating the core audience or undermining the primary purpose of journalism, which is to inform and enlighten. And,” she asked, “how can all this be achieved in a way that continues to support a sustainable, financially viable media business?” The answers to those questions will come not only from the newsroom, but also from the classroom, said Mitchell, “and that’s why there is this particular summit today...and this Carnegie-Knight Initiative.”

ABC News president David Westin said the question before the panel was how journalism education can do a better job of helping to fulfill its fundamental role in the republic of providing the information the public needs to make decisions. Westin, an ABC executive since 1991 and president of ABC News since 1997, asked if journalism schools were really necessary, since many journalists never took a single journalism class. Westin, a *summa cum laude* graduate of the University of Michigan Law School, said he once canvassed ABC producers and correspondents on the question of whether they saw any correlation between attending journalism school and who made the best journalists. “To a person, they said no, absolutely no relationship at all—even those who were rabidly pro-journalism school,” he said. He asked the panel, “Why do we need them, if we do?”

“Well, as they would say in the 1960s, it’s a non-dialectical issue,” replied Carnegie Corporation president Vartan Gregorian. “The fact is we have to deal with reality:



there are many schools of journalism and many schools of communication producing a substantial number of graduates every year.” The issue that concerned Gregorian was whether those schools are producing graduates well educated enough to meet the nation’s needs. Gregorian explained that he shared the same concern about the quality of schools of education, which produce most of the nation’s classroom teachers. “I’ve always felt that universities should be held accountable for the quality of their graduates,” he said. When he became the president of Carnegie Corporation in 1997, two of his board members, Henry Mueller of *Time* magazine and Judy Woodruff, then of CNN and currently with PBS’ *NewsHour*, urged him to use the Corporation’s good offices to improve journalism. Toward that end, “Journalists and teachers need a good education,” Gregorian said. “All other issues aside, there’s no arguing with that fact.”

Alberto Ibargüen, president of the Knight Foundation, said that a journalism degree is more akin to an MBA than to a medical degree. “You’ve really got to go to medical school to be a good doctor, but you don’t have to go to journalism school to be a good journalist,” he noted. Carrying the analogy a step farther, Ibargüen said “lots of brilliant business people” don’t have MBAs, but the degree nevertheless commands respect and signifies that its holder has been taught to think more broadly and perhaps more deeply about management challenges. But, the former *Miami Herald* publisher added, in the absence of talent, “there’s nothing an MBA is going to do...to make you that brilliant, insightful leader.”

Ibargüen—like Westin—a lawyer by training, said he sees a real tension on campuses between the pressures that schools of journalism face “to deliver quality in an academic sense and to meet the practical needs of newsrooms.” The professors who get tenure “are people who publish, who do the traditional kinds of things.” He went on:

“It seems to me there is very little that’s traditional going on in journalism today. The people and places that ought to be experimenting most...are the places that seem to experiment least. The journalism schools ought to be real hotbeds of experimentation because they’ve got the facilities, the right minds and the right age group to experiment. Maybe for the first time, this is a point where journalism schools can lead the industry rather than the other way around. And, rather than try to teach what I used to do when I was a reporter or an editor, maybe this is an opportunity to develop a whole class of people who understand new technology and new ways of using it. People who naturally use new media as opposed to those of us who have learned it really do have a different way of thinking.”

As an example, Ibargüen cited the job that the staff of the college newspaper at Virginia Tech did in identifying students among those killed by a gunman in the April 16, 2007



Susan King

massacre on the Blacksburg, Virginia, campus. They “beat everybody because they were already on Facebook and talking to each other,” and seeing things that the established media did not know how to find. “I think we need to figure out how to deal and manage and lead in those new areas,” he said, adding, “Journalism schools should be real hotbeds of experimentation.”

Bill Keller, who majored in English at Pomona College (where he also started an alternative newspaper), confessed that he was

“a convert to the cause of journalism schools.” If he’d been asked the same question a dozen years ago, “I would have said, ‘Journalism schools—ehh.’ I didn’t go to a journalism school and we at the *Times* don’t hire people straight out of journalism school. We hire them from major newspapers where they’ve already had experience.” In the past, his advice to someone seeking a job at the *Times* would be to “follow the traditional route: go find a decent local or regional newspaper, apprentice yourself to that mythical grizzled editor who will teach you the skills and the values of journalism, build a body of work and learn by doing.” But Keller, a Pulitzer Prize-winning foreign correspondent who became the *Times*’ top editor in 2003, said, “A lot of those local and regional newspapers no longer exist. Many of those grizzled editors have been bought out...Nobody has the time to take you under their wing and teach you basic stuff.” Keller, who went to work for the Portland *Oregonian* after college, added, “I’ve come to think of journalism schools as maybe the last resort in a lot of cases” for imparting the wisdom that students need to become good journalists.

When making hiring decisions, the *Times* executive editor said, “I don’t look at whether people went to an Ivy League school or a community college, because if a job candidate is a reporter, I’ve got clips. If it’s an editor, I’ve done some serious vetting with people who worked with them. That’s what I’m going by. But the fact is that if 50, 60, 70 percent of the people I’m hiring spent some time in journalism schools, then it matters that that time be useful.”

Ibargüen said that investing the time and money in a journalism degree was “an indication of real commitment to the craft.” Westin agreed that it served as “a self-selection mechanism, because the passion, the commitment of a reporter is more important than almost anything else, and people who go to journalism schools tend to have self-selected.” If they are willing to go through all that is required and spend the money on tuition, “they must be pretty serious about it,” he said.

Gregorian suggested that news organizations might want to do what the admissions offices at elite universities do and develop scales to rate the quality of students coming out of various journalism schools and to differentiate a strong grade at a weak school from a middling grade at a very tough school. And the employers don't have to confine their search to graduates from Ivy League schools. Experience will show them which regional or provincial colleges are strong, and "after a while you build a tradition, you know which schools produce a good product," said Gregorian. "We are interested in not just the technique but the content of what they learn. Are they well educated? Well cultured?" And, he continued, whether the journalism school is at Columbia or at Arizona State or Nebraska, it is also important to see whether the program is drawing on the talents of the entire university faculty and not just "parked in the outskirts of the university."

Good journalists need to know how "to translate unstructured information" that people now are bombarded with from governments, corporations, political parties, foundations and others seeking to control opinion, said Gregorian. The public relies on journalists to help dissect and analyze these mounds of information, and to separate fact from opinion and "spin" from real knowledge. If the Carnegie-Knight Initiative succeeds in raising the standards for journalism education, then perhaps in a few years, when Bill Keller next speaks about journalism schools, he'll be able to state, wholeheartedly, that "here is the proof that journalism schools are important for turning out good journalists," said Gregorian.

Westin said some ABC correspondents told him their journalism education had been too academic and theoretical and not practical enough. That reminded Westin of professors he encountered in law school who boasted of never having taken the bar exam or practiced law. "It is an interesting question whether the academic side and the practice side can be fit together," Westin noted, asking, "Are they in tension with one another in the context of a journalism education?"

Ibargüen said that some journalism schools lean toward the academic side, while others may have a more practical orientation than most newsrooms. What matters is who they hire to teach future journalists. "If the rest of the university respects only Distinguished Professor X who has published unreadable treatises...and if only other people who had the same academic training know how to read them, then that's a real problem for a place that I think ought to be experimenting with how to get ahead of the newsroom down the street or back in New York or Miami or Los Angeles," Ibargüen said. The Knight president went on to say that journalism schools should be looking "for people who have created start-ups or who have worked with new methods of community-building on electronic platforms" and who also possess a bent toward

ethics and an understanding of “the purpose of all of this” in the context of both communications and technology. Too often, people in the digital world care only about the technology and not “what you ultimately do with it,” he said. In 2006, the Knight Foundation launched its Knight Brothers 21st Century News Challenge, which will award up to \$25 million over five years for experiments, products and prototypes that use digital technology to help citizens better connect with their communities. In that regard, Ibargüen talked about a young technology whiz who sat in on a meeting of Knight’s journalism advisory committee. Afterwards, Ibargüen asked the young man what he’d heard that surprised him. His reply was that he didn’t remember when he was in a room full of people who, for a day-and-a-half, mainly talked about values and journalism ethics. The young man related that, in his world, “We’re really talking about the latest gizmo.” Clearly, said Ibargüen, all of that needs to be part of journalism education.

Westin asked Keller what he wished journalism schools would do more of or do better.

“I used to say I had exactly one semi-original idea about journalism education, and it was that nobody should get through journalism school without the experience of being written about,” the *Times* executive replied. “My sidekick and managing editor, Jill Abramson, who teaches a course from time to time at Yale, actually did it last year.” When Keller went up to New Haven to deliver a guest lecture, “the students were still enthusing about what a strange experience it was having a fellow student call up their mother and interview her” for their assigned profile.

Keller said he admired the effort that Columbia journalism dean Nicholas Lemann has made to launch a two-year master’s degree program at the university in addition to its traditional, intensive one-year master’s degree. The extra year is intended to add to the intellectual depth of Columbia’s J-school graduates. “Certainly, you want people to come out of journalism school knowing something more than how to write inverted pyramid style,” said Keller. On the skills side, Keller said it would be good for students to learn database skills and how to approach communities for their reporting projects. But he added that it is also important for schools to impart how important the notion of values is to the practice of journalism, and the intellectual discipline of being able “to suspend your prejudices and report against them. The ability to distill an idea from a complicated mess of facts and kind of show your work, explain how you got there—those are teachable things. Obviously, it also helps if you have talent.”

Gregorian agreed with Keller and added that a well-educated student “has something to say, something to ask.” Gregorian said he always worried when he heard people say, “It’s a free country, I can say whatever I want.” In that context, he said that he always told his students, “If we have nothing to say, what difference does it make?”

Westin posed the question of whether journalism schools should be preparing students to be generalists or specialists. Keller said there was room for both, but “specialists tend to be the exception in the newsroom. That’s partly because people who are drawn to journalism have a kind of form of adult ADD and they—we—pride ourselves on our ability to be dropped in a strange place at lunchtime and file an authoritative sounding story by dinnertime.” Small newsrooms especially need generalists with “the skills to pick up a subject quickly, write about it well and with a sufficient humility that you don’t make stupid, pseudo-expert mistakes,” Keller said.

Gregorian said faculty at American universities have grown increasingly specialized since the 19th century. At the same time, generalists are needed among the professoriate who can make sense of the increasing volume of information and fragmented body of knowledge that confronts individuals and societies in the 21st century. Likewise, he said, “educated, cultured journalists are important in order to put things together, to make sense of things...You don’t want uneducated journalists to provide the kind of trivialization and vulgarization of issues that will cause more damage.”



Eric Newton

Ibargüen said the news medium “lends itself to the generalist. It’s the old mile wide, inch deep nature of the newspaper. But there are some interesting experiments in trying to bring in more expertise,” such as the expert panels that Minnesota Public Radio employs. As a publisher and “recovering lawyer,” Ibargüen said there were occasions at the *Herald* when he would read an account of some legal proceeding and say, “Wait a minute. That cannot be. That’s not the way the lawsuit is likely to have worked.” As newspapers and television networks struggle to remain authoritative, “the bar has been raised for the generalist newspaper and the media organizations” and they will need to draw on expertise outside the newsroom to remain competitive, he said.

Keller mentioned a skill that foreign correspondents need, but that is seldom taught. The *Times* sends foreign correspondents in large numbers out into the world every year and provides advanced language training, “but we don’t train people in the art of working with a translator, which is an exceptionally important skill. That’s something that can be done really well and really badly,” he said. “Yes, it’s good to have some specialized informa-

Keller mentioned a skill that foreign correspondents need, but that is seldom taught. The *Times* sends foreign correspondents in large numbers out into the world every year and provides advanced language training, “but we don’t train people in the art of working with a translator, which is an exceptionally important skill. That’s something that can be done really well and really badly,” he said. “Yes, it’s good to have some specialized informa-

tion, but the skill you most need is the ability to talk to an expert and extract the information the expert has and then talk to a rival or contrarian expert and distill a balanced and intelligent point of view from that. I would value that skill above any narrow expertise.”

Westin asked if the explosion of information available through the Internet is fundamentally changing journalism and what it does.

Gregorian said, “For the first time in world history, each individual now with Internet access has his or her own Library of Alexandria. You have the entirety of humanity’s knowledge at your fingertips.” But if the mind is not prepared, if it is not searching for the right questions to ask, Gregorian continued, all that information “becomes a dead weight, not a dynamic source.” He then posed the question, “How do we synthesize and how do we present all this information? The emphasis cannot be on retrieval alone. I am all for getting information faster, but once you’ve got it, what do you do with it?” Furthermore, he asked, “Who is the arbiter of whether or not what you’ve got is correct, that it’s not misleading? You need the kind of critical minds that universities can provide to ask the critical questions and put that knowledge to use for the common good,” he concluded.

Westin said that these days, “Theoretically, everyone with a cell phone camera can be a reporter for ABC News. Now, how do I know who these people are? How do I vet all this? Do I turn a blind eye to it? This changes what we do, and I don’t know the answer.” Keller said he and his colleagues worry a lot about these issues. “As we master this technology, how does it change us?” he asked. News now spreads so fast that the audience reacts “almost instantaneously,” Keller said. He elaborated about how this impacts coverage of the current presidential campaign:

“The cycle of stories now happens in the course of an hour rather than the 24-hour news cycle. That poses a real challenge for a news organization like the *Times*, which aspires to be authoritative. How do you protect the reporter’s ability to really report, not just once over lightly, but to reflect, research and compose a story in a compelling way when the Internet is this great open maw, open 24 hours a day? We’ve tried to build in some buffers that allow a kind of quick service for the immediate need to know what happened and still protect a reporter’s time for reflection and deeper reporting, but it’s hard.”

Gregorian observed, “The Internet has empowered the individual to transcend one’s society. This has major sociological and political ramifications, especially in countries that are governed under authoritarian, totalitarian rules. By logging on, you are defying the whole system.” In the past, it was possible to smuggle papers out of a totalitarian country, or to get clandestine broadcasts on transistors, “but now, for example, a woman

who is told not to go to school for religious and other reasons, or who is not able to go, can access the world's knowledge through the Internet. We've never had this kind of revolutionary situation before," Gregorian said.

### Questions from the Audience

Jan Schaffer, executive director of J-Lab: The Institute for Interactive Journalism at the University of Maryland's Philip Merrill College of Journalism, said the curriculum taught at many journalism schools is still very static "in a time when all around us the landscape is evolving very rapidly and news is no longer a static proposition." The heart of what is taught in medical or business schools may not have changed, "but in journalism, a story is not always what it has been in the past. We need to do stories that allow people to graze on information and at the end of the day form their own master narrative of the events that happened," said Schaffer, a former business editor and Pulitzer Prize winner for the *Philadelphia Inquirer*. Teaching journalism these days "doesn't require Ph.D.s necessarily, but a bit of entrepreneurship and creativity" and to "figure out how to convey information in a democratic society without a narrative arc, as much as we all may love that." Pushing back against the summit's framing notion of journalism in the service of democracy, Schaffer asked, "Are journalists really allowed to have civic aspirations?" She asserted that journalists' overriding commitment to objectivity is such that they may not feel comfortable with taking a stand in favor of democracy.

The panel did not buy that.

Westin asked if she was saying that journalism students do not feel comfortable with being in favor of democracy. Schaffer replied, "We in journalism schools teach students to be so objective that we cannot be in favor of some of the basic values of our country." It is different with "citizen media" that does have civic aspirations, she added.

Ibargüen said technology "is changing the way people think about news. We come from a world of 'I write, you read,' or 'I broadcast, you listen.' That's how the people who run our organizations typically grew up. That's a very different paradigm from what we're dealing with now."

Keller replied, "I would like to state for the record that I think democracy is pretty great. I've never been in a conversation where people stood around the newsroom, saying, 'Oh, no, no, no, you can't be for democracy.' And not just for the First Amendment, either. I like the country." He said the Maryland professor was "articulating a notion of objectivity as a kind of straitjacket, and I don't think that's what it is. It means independence. We don't operate in the service of a company or a political party or even our country, necessarily. We're not beholden to anybody. And in presenting the information, our job is not to tell people what we think, or what they ought to think, but to

provide them with enough information to make up their own minds about what they think. That's my standard of objectivity."

Westin said he would be "very troubled to find somebody who worked with us" at ABC who didn't share his belief in the important constitutional role that the media plays in informing the public. "Apart from any ideological concerns, I just don't think they'd be very good at their job," said Westin, who once clerked for the late Supreme Court Jus-



David Westin

ice Potter Stewart, a champion of freedom of the press. He added, "I'm very surprised if that's going on in journalism school."

Charles Whitaker, a professor at the Medill School of Journalism at Northwestern University, asked about the tension between teaching the craft of journalism and serving as "a laboratory of innovation." It is expensive to attend journalism school, and the pay for entry-level news jobs is "abysmal," he said. "How do we address that tension without some support from industry or foundations?"

Ibargüen noted there are other models for acquiring a journalism degree "that are not Northwestern," which is a private university. "I'm not sure there is a one size fits all." Gregorian said he hopes the day will come when university presidents decide that journalism graduate programs are so important to society that all students will receive two-year tuition remission. Short of that, institutions need to think creatively about student aid and consider forgiving loans as some do for those who become schoolteachers. Westin mentioned the importance of diversity, both racial and ethnic, and a "diversity of viewpoints," to the profession.

William J. Drummond, a Berkeley professor, recalled that when he got his start at the *Louisville Courier-Journal*, "a lot of editors had never gone to college." Over the years, "we've gradually professionalized this to the point that we don't have a lot to say to the person who works for minimum wage or the people who shop at Wal-Mart." Drummond, a former foreign correspondent and Washington reporter for the *Los Angeles Times*, asked how the media and journalism schools can "cope with the fact that we've lost touch...and become more and more elitist."

Keller said, "I don't think education and professionalism negate your ability to write about the poor." Although the *Times'* audience "is certainly more affluent than blue collar" and many readers send their children to private schools, "we still write an awful lot



about the public school system in New York City” and about the uninsured who rely on emergency rooms for their care, he said, adding, “I would never claim it’s enough, but we do try to focus attention on people at the bottom end of the economic scale. That’s not quite the same as writing to them or for them. I don’t know what the solution to that is.”

“Maybe the solution is writing with them. It might not fit the *Times*; it might be better in another paper, but use new technology to include all of the community,” suggested Ibarгүйн, whose foundation works closely with the 26 cities where the Knight-Ridder chain once owned newspapers. One thing that concerns him is that nowadays, “if you’re not digital, you’re a second-class citizen.” Ibarгүйн said. The Knight Foundation is trying to figure out how to include those people “in that public square.”

In a brief afterword, Carnegie Corporation’s Susan King said the discussion had illuminated “the power of this Carnegie-Knight initiative.” The partnership between Knight—long the primary funder of efforts to improve journalism education and training—and the Corporation, which has a decades-long commitment to higher education, “is ending the discussion that’s been going on for years: is journalism school an intellectual pursuit? Is it a craft? It is both,” King said. “The journalists of tomorrow have to be the smartest people in our society, and they’ve got to be the most flexible and technology oriented.”

King and Knight’s Eric Newton gave a brief charge to the audience before it split up into separate breakout sessions on the News21 experience, on how MTV is covering the presidential race from a youth perspective and on the journalism curriculum reforms underway at Columbia and Syracuse universities and elsewhere. All dozen campuses will have students participating in the News21 reporting effort this summer.

Newton said the News21 initiative in its first two years already had “demonstrated the creative power of young people” along with “the critical thinking of the really terrific professors who have led them through their stories.” The 2006 participants focused on homeland security issues, while the 2007 group examined religion in American public life. “They managed to do important national stories in both traditional and new ways, and get a big ride in the national media and also create very cool, very new digital tools. They have shown that journalism schools have a role to play in the future of news. They rose to the occasion, and I think this army we have here today can take it even further,” said Newton.

“To sum up,” said Newton, “it’s really simple. All we want is for you to think about new forms of truth-telling—a fair, accurate, contextual search for truth—in a totally new technological era, and create some innovations that will help keep the human race from destroying itself. No pressure,” he said with a smile.



## **Panel Two: Reinventing and Reinvigorating the News Environment**

**Moderator: Geoffrey Sands, Director of McKinsey & Co.'s Global Media Entertainment and Information Practice**

### **Panelists:**

- ▶ AMANDA BENNETT, Executive Editor/Enterprise, Bloomberg News. Former Editor of the *Philadelphia Inquirer*
- ▶ JIM KENNEDY, Vice President and Director of Strategic Planning, The Associated Press
- ▶ BETSY MORGAN, CEO, the Huffington Post, and former General Manager of CBSnews.com
- ▶ JOHN STACK, Vice President, Newsgathering, Fox News Channel, and former NBC News executive
- ▶ JIM WILLSE, Editor, the *Star-Ledger*, Newark, New Jersey

Pat Mitchell called it a good sign that so many conversations were taking place in the corridors and stairways between sessions. “It means that many of the issues that have been put forward already this morning and in the breakout sessions from which you just returned have been exactly the questions that you came here hoping to discuss,” the Paley Center president said. “Not that anyone has answers at this point, but we know that an exciting, stimulating dialogue has begun.” While the opening panel concentrated on the challenges for journalism schools in a changing media landscape, “This panel will look at those same issues as they are occurring and creating challenges in a news environment,” she said. As the industry grapples with declining circulation and fragmented audiences, “The issues are still the same: trying to stay relevant as a business and as a resource for information. This is not, obviously, just an old media problem. These issues are facing all media companies across all sectors,” said Mitchell. “New media are hardly immune to the tumultuous changes in the marketplace.”

Geoffrey Sands, who led an earlier McKinsey & Co. *pro bono* study of the news industry for Carnegie Corporation, said the panel collectively represented more than a hundred years of newsroom experience. “If we don’t get these problems licked by lunchtime, maybe they are more profound than we thought,” he quipped. He began by asking the panelists what change in the newsroom environment had had the most profound impact on them.

Bennett said, “Obviously, for me personally, it was the sale and breakup of all the newspaper organizations and the recombination, which is why I’ve got the job I have now instead of editor of the *Philadelphia Inquirer*. The biggest insight I had from that moment was not what you would expect. It was going overnight from being the editor



Amanda Bennett, Jim Kennedy, Betsy Morgan, John Stack, Jim Willse, Geoffrey Sands

of a major newspaper in a major metropolitan city to a reader of that same newspaper. The way I approached that newspaper changed 180 degrees.” She amplified:

“What happened to me is I immediately became a consumer of the newspaper in a way that the news organizations that I’d worked for pretty much rejected. I went to consuming a newspaper in terms of, *What can I do with this information?* That was a way of approaching news that newspapers just rejected terribly as too pragmatic, too consumerist or whatever, yet every morning when I pick up the *Philadelphia Inquirer* from the day I left it, until this morning, I read the news as, ‘*What can I do with this? What can I vote for? What can I buy? Who can I call? Who can I write a letter to? How am I going to use this?*’ The utility factor is absolutely paramount.”

Bennett said this is the approach that guides Bloomberg News. “At Bloomberg, it’s one of the things we do. It makes everyone nuts, but every single day it’s, ‘How are the people who are buying our terminals going to use what you write?’ If they can’t use it, we are not going to write it,” she said.

AP’s Jim Kennedy said it was “not so much the change in the newsroom per se, but the change in the culture.” The industry, he noted, is dealing not only with the movement from print to online, but a generational shift as young people adopt the tools and habits of the digital age. “They are totally different tools of consumption than the audience had when those of us on the panel started in the profession,” said Kennedy. “We’ve got to respond to that. Otherwise, you’re sending your hard efforts out into the ether.” He added, “We have to recognize how people are consuming news in totally different ways and we’ve got to change what we do to adapt to that.” AP used to take the stories it put out on its wires for newspapers, and took the same text and distributed it to radio and television stations, he explained, saying, “That’s not good enough anymore. You’ve got to differentiate those news reports across platform and you’ve got to target the audiences.”

Betsy Morgan said the Huffington Post comes in after stories break elsewhere. “We pick it up once the story is written. We do some original reporting—not a tremendous amount—and we spend a lot of our time linking out to AP stories, Bloomberg stories, *Star Ledger* stories, even a few Fox News stories,” she said. “That’s where we really go into action. What the Huffington Post has done is build the community around the story. We rely on the notion that news is not a one-way medium of ‘here it is sitting on a television or in a newspaper or magazine,’ but it’s a conversation. News is a loop. A story gets developed. The blogosphere, the community that comes around a topic or story wants to talk about it, wants to help it evolve, wants to debate it, wants to discuss it. This is a big part of the business we are in and the business that we are building.” One good example, she said, is what happened after the assassination of Benazir Bhutto in Pakistan. The Huffington Post linked to the major news sites covering that story and the violence that erupted across Pakistan. “We now have well over 4,000 comments on that event,” said Morgan. “That community and those comments and the conversations that are happening between different people, along with what bloggers are saying—making that into a real web community is what we are building.”

At Fox, John Stack said, “the biggest change and challenge is utilizing technology in the correct way. We still have to get down to basics and try to take available information and illustration and get it correct.” He said it was interesting that this summit was taking place on the day after the media got its predictions about how the New Hampshire primary would turn out completely wrong. What the media needs to do is focus on “proper utilization of what’s available and using it to make news deliver better as opposed to making it faster,” he said.

Jim Willse said, “The most profound change in my world is that the business model of newspapers that we all grew up with has blown up, it’s gone. It’s that simple. In one way or other, we’re all rassing with that and trying to figure out what that means for the future.” Willse, a former editor of the *New York Daily News*, said that in preparation for the summit he had gone back and read the Carnegie Corporation report on what publishers, editors and network executives were saying when this dialogue began several years ago. “The question then was what is the proper profit margin for big media companies, 15 or 20 percent?” he said. “It’s like a journey back in history.” Now, Willse suggested, with the implosion of their revenue from advertising and other streams, newspaper leaders must ask, “How do we preserve the values and verities we are all subscribing to here in a diminished newspaper economy?”

Sands, who serves on the board of directors of the Public Broadcasting Service and is a trustee of the Paley Center, said that he was struck by the wide range of answers to his question. In most industries, when leaders are asked to identify profound changes, they

pinpoint only one or two things. “It illustrates the complexity of this environment when you get five related but distinct answers and how profound the problems are, ranging from very fundamental things like what is the value that you’re providing to your audience, what’s the business model that supports it and what are the technology changes that are taking place that are changing the nature of what you do every day?” He asked Morgan what impact participatory media and citizen journalists have on what the Huffington Post decides to cover and how it covers events. “Does it make it easier or harder, getting all this feedback from readers?” he asked.

“In a lot of ways it makes it harder,” said Morgan. Faced with 4,000 comments, “you think as a reader, ‘How would I possibly dive into that?’” she said. The Huffington Post’s strengths lie in strong editorship and technology that allows it to “parse” the responses into different “buckets” that make it easier for readers to follow and respond to different threads of the conversation.

Stack said, “Even technology needs an editor. I think, journalistically, we need to at some point be traffic cops and vet the information as well as get it out in the appropriate way.” In the last five years,



Jim Willse

he said, some people have misused their ability to comment on the news and, “by being maybe half a step ahead of the technology, have been able to project their views and their agenda on the public.”

Willse welcomed having “a more participatory relationship” with readers. “Models like the Huffington Post remind us it’s not a bad time to get rid of this sort of priestly function that newspapers have taken onto themselves over the centuries where we’ll tell you what you should think and you can maybe write us a letter and we’ll maybe read it and we might even print it, to opening the windows and making it much more of a two-way equation. That’s got to be healthy and in the long run make it a more viable product.” Willse said the *Star-Ledger*, the nation’s 15th largest daily (circulation of 372,000 on weekdays and 570,000 on Sundays) has borrowed a page from the Huffington Post and the British *Guardian* newspaper’s web site for reader responses called Comment Is Free. “We call it NJvoices.com. The idea is that it’s a living op-ed page. The readers and a stable of regular bloggers are invited to say whatever they like about the issues of the day,” said Willse. “It’s changed for the better how we think about the paper.” Now in their story conferences about what to put on page one, instead of just asking “What are we going to put on the front page that’s important?” Willse said that the *Star-Ledger*

editors also discuss, “What can we put on the front page that people might want to talk about?” This is “not quite the same thing as citizen journalism,” but it is one way that “digital technology is proving to be our friend.”

At Bloomberg, Bennett said, editors “can see in real time who’s clicking on our stories. The 16-hit story, everybody knows about right away.” She called this “both an incredible blessing and a curse.”

Similarly, Morgan said, Huffington Post editors have a software package called LiveStats that “shows them in real time how the story is doing. It shows them where traffic is coming from, where we’re linking out to, how that audience is behaving, where they are going from that story. It is amazing for an editor in real time to watch that pattern, and also to watch each other’s patterns. There’s a little bit of competition up in the newsroom over whose story is doing better.” She said she would “love to get us to a point where our audience can see that, too—that full transparency of the news consumption process.”

Kennedy said that as a wire service that is distributed to nearly all news organizations, the AP takes a different tack to connect with audiences. It enables its content to appear on places such as the Huffington Post where it is subject to comment by bloggers, “but we do something else as well.” It has a relationship with a new organization called NowPublic, which is a community of news junkies. “Our editors talk to their editors and we actively try to cultivate contributions from a larger universe of citizens—the people who are up on the news and care about the news and who might be in places where professional journalists aren’t,” Kennedy said. This has produced some of what he called “money shots” on big events where AP did not have its own reporters or camera crews in place, but he predicted that, over the long haul, this collaborative process will contribute to a more comprehensive view of the news. In a natural disaster, it might help AP visually document entire neighborhoods. They may not have professional-quality pictures, but they can show whose houses burned and who had to evacuate, he said. Using the sports metaphor for professional and amateur partnerships, Kennedy called this “a pro-am approach.”

Sands said all the research suggests “that people are becoming very promiscuous in their use of news. They go to lots of different sources. That may be a good thing for the public but not from a business standpoint. How important is it to keep people engaged in your brand, and if that’s important, how do you do that in this environment?” Bennett questioned whether “web-hopping” matters as long as people are coming to your web site on a regular basis. Kennedy concurred, saying, “It’s not a destination world anymore. That’s how the web started, as just another version of the newspaper or television show. It’s a distributed world now. You go one place and link to another.” This frustrates people who think they can build new versions of the old model and make their money

from ads on their main web site, he said. “That’s not the world any more. Even the idea of bookmarking a news site and always going to it is almost quaint at this point.”

Willse said that this reality forces news organizations to think about their brands differently. “One of the hundreds of mistakes newspapers have made in this area is trying to hang on to this monolithic sense of themselves,” said Willse. “We’re still trying to get rid of the idea that we’re a department store of information.” Newspapers now are going through what the networks experienced when cable television came along to provide serious competition. “We used to have the printing plant, which nobody else had, and, likewise, we had a bunch of trucks. Well, the Internet blew that away, and it blew away the notion of some sort of geographic market that was inviolable. We are just now catching up with what that means to us.” Newspapers, said Willse, are just beginning to understand “that their stock in trade is not going to be printing and distribution, it’s going to be content” and synthesizing information into something approaching knowledge or wisdom. Newspapers also must figure out how to distribute content and advertising “in a whole host of ways that we never had to confront before.” But the difficulty newspapers face is that they are going to have to produce high-quality coverage, from long-form narrative journalism to coverage of City Hall, “with diminished resources because there is less money coming in the door.”

Part of the challenge is defining what news is, said Stack. “We face the dirty word ‘demographics’ and the absolutely startling statistics that the youth of America are not going to the same sources of news and information” that their parents’ generation did. “That’s something we have to reverse or we’re looking for an even bigger change than we’re talking about here today.” In a center named for broadcast pioneer William S. Paley, who built CBS from a small string of radio stations, it is instructive to recall that Paley first looked at the radio business primarily as a vehicle for selling cigars, said Stack. Advertising was at its core, and it led CBS into news, entertainment “and other very worthwhile things that became a very important part of the last century. But at the core of it was capitalism. That’s an interesting thing to keep in your mind.”

Sands said in that era, the relationship between the media content and the advertising that supported it was “symbiotic. Now, you could argue, in some ways, that the medium and the advertiser interests are on divergent paths.” Advertisers are willing to pay only a few pennies “if you come up on a search,” but they will pay dollars “if you provide an environment that is more engaging to your audience and if they feel some real connection to it,” he said.

Bennett suggested that Apple’s success with iTunes might hold out hope to the newspaper industry. People now willingly pay to download music that a few years ago they were sharing for free. Sands said the challenge “is finding something valued enough

that people will pay for.” With iTunes, most of the profits redound to Apple, the device maker, not to the artists or the music producers, he noted. “It isn’t clear that finding the Apple solution is going to be a panacea for news and journalism.”



Amanda Bennett

themselves, ‘How long is it before we can get rid of TV listings, movie listings, maybe even baseball scores’,” said Willse, who hastened to add, “our paper is not going to be the first to go down that road. Somebody else can be the canary in that mine.”

Sands asked what impact these severe bottom-line pressures were having on “what you can accomplish as journalists.” Kennedy responded, “The scary proposition is this whole thing has been attacked from a cost-cutting point of view” with no end in sight. “If you keep throwing content out, then you really don’t have anything left.” News organizations have to actively manage their relations with the search engines, such as Google, Yahoo, and AOL, “because that’s where people are starting their experience,” Kennedy said. The social networks and YouTube bear watching, too. “Those are the things we have to actively manage, because given a choice, the distribution powers will try to give it away for free.”

Morgan, who spent 10 years with CBS, said YouTube has flourished because it makes it so easy for people to upload and watch videos, whereas news organizations had clunky viewers that took “four minutes out of your day to watch.” They “missed the monetarization possibility,” she said.

Willse said the mainstream media “has this tremendous inability to get out of its own way. One of the biggest challenges the big media companies are going to have is to be innovative and nimble.” He said all the interesting technological advances in the industry over the past five years “have been created by small companies not burdened by old ways of thinking and their own bureaucracy.” But he suggested the *Star-Ledger*

Speaking from a newspaper perspective, Willse asked, “What is it we have that is truly of value—stuff that you can’t get from anyplace else?” The *Star-Ledger* was the first major newspaper to kill off stock tables, which cost \$3 million a year to print. “It dawned on us that this is information nobody uses except maybe Uncle Charley to see if GM is still in business.” It poured some of the savings back into expanded business coverage, which in turn attracted readers and advertisers. “In every newsroom in the country people are asking



has learned “a couple of tricks” about the video game. “We started posting our video on YouTube and grabbing all the video that other people posted on YouTube and created a web site called TVJersey.com. We glommed what people were glomming from us,” he said. They also figured out “that Facebook could be a fabulous resource for us come NCAA basketball tournament time.” The *Star-Ledger’s* creation, Bracket Boy, has its own space and following on the networking site. During March madness, “all you need is a couple of people at the University of Michigan and 64 other schools to come to our site and trash talk each other.” Both these initiatives have attracted advertisers’ interest.

Sands asked the panelists if they saw any evidence of a talent drain.

Willse responded, “Amazingly, I haven’t seen that.” The students who apply for *Star-Ledger* internships—many from the universities represented at the summit—are “amazingly talented. Their resumes are astounding. There is a very vibrant, robust talent pool out there that still believes, still hears the music. God bless them,” said Willse, a New York City policeman’s son who is a graduate of Hamilton College and Columbia Journalism School. Part of the attraction seems to be that they share the belief in the civic value of journalism and its capacity to “do good and make change.” They also are confident about their ability “to ride the wave” of technological developments and not be swept away by them, he said. Bennett echoed those sentiments, saying the intern pools at Bloomberg and the *Inquirer* were “extraordinary.”

### Questions from the Audience

Betsy West, a visiting professor at Columbia, asked what impact the instant feedback loop had on the journalism that organizations pursue. Bennett joked that to boost ratings for her enterprise stories, “I embed the word ‘Viagra’ in every headline. It works really well.” But they do face that question at Bloomberg, with a recognition that they are offering “a portfolio of available things for people to do.”

Morgan suggested that technological developments redefine editorship in a way and that perhaps Google should have been represented on this panel. Google sits at one end of the media spectrum as “pure technology—no editors, lots of engineers, and the algorithm will just get smarter,” while mainstream journalism sits at the other end. “Most of the conversation today has been how you operate in the middle.” The feedback loop at Bloomberg and Huffington Post probably leads those editors to different decisions “and hopefully they are making better decisions,” Morgan said.

Susan King asked if they were engaged in “a run to the bottom.”

“I don’t think so,” said Morgan. “I don’t think we’re seeing it on our site.” Seventy-five percent of the content on Huffington Post the day before this summit dealt with the New Hampshire primary, not the latest travails of Britney Spears, she said, and an editor,

not an algorithm, made that decision. Kennedy said that “the value of these new metrics is to look at them over time—over a week, or a month or a year.”

Adam Glenn, an adjunct faculty member who runs Columbia’s News21 program, said that while capitalism may be the core of the news business, “the core of journalism is democracy.” He asked the panel for ideas on how to better distinguish between those two things and how to “take what we’re doing in the news business and bring it back to the community.”

Stack said he thought both journalism and capitalism were important to democracy. As for the news business, he expressed a firm belief that “the most important part of what we do is the capital J aspect of it. We’ve got to get it right or we won’t stay in business.”

Kennedy said, “You have to have a lot more empathy for the audience, get to know them at a deeper level than I’ve seen in my 30 years in the business.” To strengthen their community ties, newspapers should “invite citizens into the office, teach them how to blog” and perhaps even ask them to cover things that the newspaper lacks the staff or resources to cover on its own.

Janice Castro, a Northwestern faculty member, asked how those in the profession should be retrained to connect with new and larger audiences. This has been traumatic for many newsrooms, she said.

The AP’s Kennedy said, “For starters they’ve got to be able to work across platforms. In a big organization, we’re trying to bring those skills into the existing organization. I’m very encouraged by what I see when I go out to journalism schools—people using the new tools” and college students using new techniques. But for mid-career people, “absolutely, you have to be cross-platform to work in a major news organization at this point, or at least facile,” said Kennedy, a former business editor of the AP and founding director of its multimedia department, the Wire. They don’t have to be the “person who’s got the camera on their head and the pen in their hand, but they need to understand how a certain story ought to be told, whether it’s a video story or a text story. Visual journalism is going to be more and more important.”

Bloomberg’s Bennett took issue with Kennedy about the need to work across platforms. “The one rare commodity that the marketplace is trying to beat us on is figuring out how you tell a story—a real story.” She expressed the fear that those now in love with technology will suffer the same fate as long-form journalists who “fell in love with our own capabilities. I don’t think that cross-platform capabilities are going to protect us from that artistic self-indulgence. I don’t know that simply being able to post video is going to stop us from doing that.” Bennett says there is “a lot of really cool stuff you can do on the web” that is a waste of time. Morgan interjected, “And that’s seven minutes long when it should be 30 seconds long.”

Willse said journalism schools should be teaching students how to use databases. He prefaced a plea to the journalism professors at the conference with the remark that, “One of the internal ironies of newspapers is they hate change. The only thing they are worse at is communication.” To the professors, he said that without abandoning the mission of teaching great journalism and how you do it, “I would ask if you can’t also encourage the bright minds on your faculty and in your student body to think about the answers to some of the questions that are floating around here, such as how to subsidize, underwrite, great journalism. If we don’t solve that problem, great journalism won’t exist.” The newspaper industry has always been “awful about R&D,” he added.

Kennedy said, “We should be really optimistic about the forces of the generational shift. The same people who brought about the new consumption patterns are going to be the people who deliver the new professional journalism. The young people I see coming into the business bring to it a native sense of what is too long, too short, and what is the right way to approach a story. They come to journalism with that orientation. They don’t have to learn it. That’s something old farts who are running operations or in faculty can really learn from their students. I think we’re at a moment in time when the students can teach us something.”



### **Panel Three: The New Journalist in Action**

**Moderator:** David Doss, CNN Senior Executive Producer, Anderson Cooper 360°

**Panelists:**

- ▶ JON ALPERT, Cofounder and Codirector, DCTV
- ▶ STEVE GROVE, News and Politics, YouTube
- ▶ CHRISTOF PUTZEL, Correspondent/Producer, Vanguard Journalism, Current TV
- ▶ PAUL STEIGER, President and Editor-in-Chief, ProPublica

The summit’s final panel provided an opportunity for journalists on the cutting edge of new media to talk shop and share experiences about where they see audiences heading and opportunities opening up in these changing times. The moderator, David Doss, a long-time executive producer for top network news shows such as ABC’s *Primetime* and NBC’s *Nightly News With Tom Brokaw* and now senior executive producer for CNN’s *Anderson Cooper 360°*, jokingly pointed out “the tie and the non-tie” sides of the panel, with Doss and former *Wall Street Journal* managing editor Paul Steiger in the former category, and documentary filmmaker Jon Alpert, YouTube’s Steve Grove and Current TV’s Christof Putzel in the latter. But as the conversation developed, it became clear that more united these five than divided them.



Jon Alpert, Steve Grove, Christof Putzel, Paul Steiger, David Doss

Steiger, with four decades of experience at the *Los Angeles Times* and *Wall Street Journal*, is also the editor-in-chief, president and chief executive of ProPublica, the new, non-profit news entity formed to produce “investigative journalism in the public interest.” ProPublica has received a promise of \$10 million a year in funding from the Sandler Foundation and the support of other philanthropies; its board of directors includes the presidents of the Knight Foundation and the Pew Charitable Trusts.

Jon Alpert’s hair has turned grey, but in his casual black knit shirt and black slacks—not to mention his black belt in karate—Alpert still looks very much like what he is: a pioneering, independent news documentary and filmmaker who started on the streets of lower Manhattan and built his nonprofit Downtown Community Television Center (DCTV), now housed in a landmark firehouse, into a powerhouse media center. DCTV has won 15 Emmys and three duPont awards and trained thousands of eager students on the techniques of storytelling and news gathering.

Three years ago, Steve Grove was a graduating Harvard senior who, in the year before the formal launch of News21, got to work at ABC News as one of the first ten Carnegie Fellows (an internship program created as a partnership between Carnegie Corporation and ABC News) on a team investigating lax security at U.S. nuclear facilities. Today, after reporting stints at the *Boston Globe* and ABC News, Grove is the head of news and politics at YouTube, where his duties include arranging the Democratic presidential candidates’ debate that aired on CNN and other joint primary election projects with the *Des Moines Register* in Iowa and WMUR-TV in New Hampshire.

Christof Putzel, a third-generation journalist, created an award-winning documentary about AIDS orphans in Kenya even before graduating from Connecticut College in 2002. As a correspondent and producer for Current TV’s Vanguard Journalism department, he has reported about the exploitation of child gold miners in the Democratic

Republic of Congo, examined the rise of neo-Nazi skinheads in Russia, and became the first American to report from Mogadishu, Somalia, after Islamic extremists seized the capital in 2006.

CNN hired Doss to team with Anderson Cooper just two months before Hurricane Katrina struck the Gulf Coast and devastated New Orleans and scores of other communities. It was reporting that grim story and its aftermath that Cooper famously challenged Senator Mary Landrieu (D-Louisiana) over the slow federal response to the disaster. “It was a breakthrough moment for us. He found his voice,” said Doss.

He asked the panelists who in this new media landscape would pay the bills for in-depth reporting and investigative journalism, and whether this posed any ethical concerns. “What are the checks and balances we have to worry about in terms of idealism?” Doss asked Alpert.

Alpert, whose news documentaries have often aired on the major networks and HBO, said, “The problems are more with access, especially access to an audience.” In the old days, a few individuals and corporations controlled access to the airwaves. Even with foundation support, ProPublica will have “to find an audience” and find ways “to get your stuff out there,” Alpert said. He told the story of how DCTV—now an organization with a \$3 million annual budget—got its start in 1972:

“We solved the funding thing basically by using inexpensive equipment before anybody else did. We used small cameras and I bought an old mail truck for \$5 at a Post Office auction and that was my television station. I put two old black-and-white TV sets on the side, parked it on a street corner, and played the tapes. If people liked it they sat and watched, and if they didn’t like it, they went on to the subway. Over the years, we’ve gotten a new version, called the Cybercar, which is a 40-foot long bus with a TV wall on the side, one of these Times Square video walls. On projects for which we have difficulty finding a broadcast partner, we’ll take our TV station to the people, we’ll park it on the street corner, play our tapes, and we’ll have a town meeting. We’re just doing a bigger and better version of what we did 35 years ago.”

Doss asked Grove where that fits into the YouTube world.

“That’s a really interesting story to hear,” replied Grove. “Can you imagine if you were a YouTube user and to get your content out you had to put a TV on a side of truck and drive around town? I think you’d be in rough shape.” YouTube offers people an opportunity “to show your content globally on a platform that a lot of eyeballs are on,” he added. As for idealism, Grove said the Internet has made the barrier to entry so low that lots of people now can reach a large audience with videos expressing their ideas and

values. “I mean, Jon was probably seen as sort of a kook for going around with a truck with a couple of TV screens on it trying to get people to watch his stuff. There are millions of Jons today who have a message, have a story, and they want to tell it, and the Internet allows them to do that a way that just didn’t exist before,” Grove said. But this is not journalism in the traditional sense. “Is YouTube journalism? Does somebody from YouTube belong on a journalism panel right now? We don’t consider ourselves a news organization,” said Grove, answering his own questions. He explained:

“In some ways, we’re sort of like a giant video source library for what’s taking place around the world today. If you’ll forgive a military analogy, sometimes I like to say YouTube is sort of the first in, and the last out when it comes to any breaking news story. Cameras are everywhere. Broadband access has proliferated across the world. YouTube has a very low barrier to entry and has a high audience in terms of video. People who are covering news can do so with their cell phone cameras, their video cameras, get it online right away, with many more eyeballs on it than maybe traditional journalists could do. Then, when traditional journalists in certain situations are kicked out, YouTube can be the last vestiges there with people who are still reporting on the story. We saw that recently in Myanmar when the military junta there essentially kicked out most traditional journalists. It was citizens and a few plucky reporters with cell phone cameras who essentially continued to cover the protests and use YouTube as their platform.”

Grove said it is hard to know how accurate the words are in a blog, but with video footage, “you can see George Allen call his opponent’s campaign worker a ‘macaca.’ You can see a fellow being tased at a Kerry rally. That doesn’t really lie. That is truth.” As far as YouTube is concerned, if network reporters want “to turn the camera on themselves and add some commentary, that’s great,” he said.

Turning to Putzel, Doss said that it appeared that Current TV—the collaborative cable network aimed at 18-to-34-year-olds created by former Vice President Al Gore and Joel Hyatt—was trying to “go one role past the citizen journalist.”

“Yes, we’re not YouTube,” agreed Putzel. Current is “trying to democratize the media and we are embracing the idea of people making content with us, but we are very, very careful, because we want that content to be accurate. We want to be telling those stories the best possible way we can and the closest to the truth. But we want that coming from not just me as the journalist who happens to be on TV; we want that from the user.” Current is “like a filtered YouTube sometimes.”

Putzel said there “absolutely” was still room for idealism in journalism. “None of us

should be here if we don't believe that. But we just have to proceed with caution." One of his biggest stories sprang from watching raw videos that Russian skinheads had posted on the Internet [Note: not on YouTube] showing themselves beating up immigrants. "I didn't understand it. I went there and found out who was doing what, what was happening, and how they were using the Internet as a way of spreading propaganda. That took a lot of effort and a big team to actually tell that story correctly, and tell it the best way we could," said Putzel, who spent part of his childhood in Moscow where both parents were posted as foreign correspondents. But it started with "these guys running around with video cameras."

Grove said television can "amplify" the impact of mere videos. "TV is still by far the best experience to consume news. We saw that in the debate with CNN," he said.

Doss asked Steiger where he fits into this new media world.

"Well, we'll find out," said the veteran newspaper editor. "I think that what is happening now is nothing short of miraculous in terms of the ability of people to communicate with each other and to communicate with masses or audiences they find—or that find them. That's very powerful and very positive." At the same time, metropolitan newspapers and, increasingly, broadcast networks, have seen their business models destroyed, Steiger said. "Those business models rested on the control of the audience that Jon was talking about. That control has been obliterated. In general that's a good thing," but it doesn't bode well for coverage of news overseas and for investigative reporting. It is very expensive to put foreign correspondents in the field, Steiger noted. "You can fill in a lot of the gaps" with existing transmission mechanisms and citizen journalists, but not all of them.

"I'm not troubled by the fact that so much of what goes up now is either idiosyncratic or partisan, because they compete for attention in the marketplace of ideas. I think that's all good, and you get important facts adduced," said Steiger. The saga of the Russian skinheads is one example. But as big city papers retrench and cut their staffs, what you won't get "is the kind of sustained, well-trained digging that produces something like the *Wall Street Journal's* coverage in 2006 of backdating of options." That expose, which won the 2007 Pulitzer Prize for Public Service, required the *Journal* "to crunch enormous amounts of numbers" and exhibit the backbone to withstand threats of lawsuits by companies that flatly denied doing anything wrong. "They just said it was luck. It wasn't until the *Journal* kept pounding away at the story for week after week after week where you had chief counsels or independent directors saying, 'Do we have a problem?'" Steiger said. Eventually 150 companies 'fessed up to the Securities and Exchange Commission that they had backdated options, and dozens of executives lost their jobs. That is the sort of journalism "that produces change," said Steiger. It will continue to be

done by the *Journal*, *The New York Times*, the *Washington Post* and other major papers, as well as *Sixty Minutes* and other investigative television news shows, he added, but other papers may not have the resources or will to do this work. That is why he has turned to the philanthropic world to support ProPublica.

Doss asked Alpert how the proliferation of voices and outlets affected the work he once did alone. Alpert has lots of experience in making hard sells. He told of one instance when he lined up the MacArthur Foundation to pay for commercial time to show a report of his on Uganda during the *Today Show*. The network “got cold feet,” and the show did not air. More recently, he enlisted outside support to pay for a trip to Russia, where he reported on the Putin regime’s crackdown on the independent press. *The NewsHour with Jim Lehrer* on PBS aired his piece, but only after getting assurances that Alpert’s funders had no hidden agenda. ProPublica may encounter similar difficulties placing its investigative reports, Alpert said.

More recently, a partnership with the Discovery Channel fell through, and DCTV is still searching for a broadcast partner for a series of national town meetings it wants to hold on the 2008 elections “We have a foreign broadcaster who will put up enough money to actually make it happen, but I want Americans to see this,” said Alpert. He has come to the conclusion that “the only place we have to go is the web. It’s a realization after 35 years that if I continue to knock on the same doors, nobody’s going to open them.” When Alpert added that he was now looking for “the proper web partner,” YouTube’s Grove piped up, “I’ve got a potential partnership for you.”

Asked if YouTube can tell whether the videos uploaded to its site are “true,” Grove said, “We don’t vet content. Our community vets content.” He continued:

“They can rank it, they can discuss it, they can share it, they can embed it, they can blog about it, they can respond to it with videos and everything else. We really have a ‘wisdom-of-crowds’ situation going on where people point to what they think is interesting. Sometimes that’s news. Sometimes that’s dogs on skateboards. Sometimes that’s kids falling off trampolines. But all of that content is on one chaotic sea of video.”

In the political arena, YouTube tries to create opportunities “where both news partners from the world of journalism can display their content and also where citizen journalists can post content and have a chance of being seen and heard, to find their voice and to kind of rise up through the ranks. One who did that was James Kotecki, the Georgetown University student who started posting political video blogs from his dorm room in early 2007. His feeds proved so popular that candidates Ron Paul and Mike Gravel came by to do interviews. Grove said he recently crossed paths in New Hampshire with Kotecki, now a reporter for Politico.com.



Grove said eight hours of video content are uploaded to YouTube every minute, and hundreds of millions of videos are viewed each day. Grove added that some news organizations “use YouTube as a feedback system.” Reuters and Dow Jones both have their own YouTube channels. “They look at how people are responding to what they put up and they sort of adapt,” Grove said. “It’s like your own kind of polling system.”

Doss turned the conversation briefly to the polling debacle in New Hampshire where “we all blew it by predicting the wrong winner.” He asked Grove for his insights. Grove said, “I actually talked to somebody right outside a polling booth before she went in.

I said, ‘Who is it? What are you going to do?’ She said, ‘I don’t know. I’m an independent. It’s between Mitt Romney and Barack Obama.’” Grove smacked his head in frustration and added, “New Hampshire is a tough one to call” (The young woman came out and said she settled on Romney.)



Questions from the Audience

Doss asked Putzel about how Current TV was doing financially.

“We’re profitable. In fact, we’re the fastest growing cable network in the world and in history. We were expecting to turn a profit, hopefully, in five years. We were profitable in one year,” the Current correspondent replied. “And we pay our contributors.” He told the journalism professors, “Your journalism students can have an outlet now and we will pay them cash” on a scale ranging from \$500 to \$2,000 for a four-minute piece. “We’re finding new ways to connect with our audience,” said Putzel.

Putzel, who confessed he didn’t read newspapers growing up, said he and his colleagues aspire to tell the “compelling stories” and pursue the type of investigations of which Steiger is such a master. He expressed confidence that those skills would “trickle down in some way” to a younger generation that communicates visually, not in print. “There’s always going to be a market for good stuff,” Putzel said.

Steiger welcomed the tribute and the suggestion that new journalists would find ways to carry on the tradition of in-depth reporting. “I respond to that very powerfully, because we’re coming from the other side,” said Steiger.” At ProPublica, he continued, “we need to find a way to use the best of the old ways of getting the information and the best of the new ways of communicating it.” He said he was “just blown away” by a recent demonstration that a young woman in the *Wall Street Journal’s* San Francisco bureau gave

about how to plumb Facebook and Google to penetrate the ranks of big corporations. Given a company's name, in short order she found 20 contacts ("a friend of a friend of a friend of hers") who used to work there, Steiger marveled. "We need to bring those strands together—your ways of communicating, our ways of getting the information."

Doss asked if the broadcast journalists no longer had to worry about reports that might offend corporate sponsors.

Alpert said his biggest worry these days is about paying experienced documentary filmmakers what they deserve. "Current and YouTube are very, very wonderful opportunities when you're getting started, but if you're trying to support a family or buy an apartment in New York City," you're going to need some other means of support. He explained the predicament:

"I've got four or five people that we've invested 10 years in training in how to do investigative documentaries, and it's brutal trying to keep these people fed. Their skill set is such that they deserve to be rewarded, but there really isn't the income from these things and a lot of these models don't provide it. We're really looking to see what the next metamorphosis is going to be. Is there going to be a higher level of support and an interest in something that is more highly curated and rewarded for the people that are making it? We don't know the answer. This is the brave new world out there."



Christof Putzel, Paul Steiger, David Doss

Doss said CNN, like all the networks, is concerned primarily about ratings. Ads are sold across platforms, so advertisers cannot buy a spot solely on *Anderson Cooper 360°*. They also are charged for the ad to run on CNN's web pages and other platforms. Doss, who has spent 30 years in broadcast journalism, said it is not uncommon to find that "five times as many people read about it online as actually saw the program." And that "is a good thing. Sponsors are happy that way."

Doss asked Grove if YouTube might ever move in the direction of allowing "the—dare I say it—editing of citizen reporting?" Grove replied, "'Editor' is almost seen as a dirty word around YouTube, believe it or not," he said. "YouTube is a platform. We see opportunities like debates, partnerships with mainstream media organizations as chances to amplify what's taking place on YouTube and to help give our users more exposure and more access. That was really why I really wanted to do the debate. We thought this is a great way to give people from all over the country, all over the world, in fact, access to the next leader of the free world through video." He said YouTube regarded this as "more of a public service" than an opportunity to generate revenues.

Steiger questioned how YouTube polices content. "You'll put up anything and then if it gets negative feedback that's really serious, you'll take it down or just not do it again?" he asked. Grove said, "The way YouTube works is our community polices our content. If offensive content is uploaded, users flag it. The longest anything lasts is about two minutes." A YouTube team watches the flagged video and decides whether to yank it or let it continue to be viewed. "It's an amazing system," said Grove.

"So somebody could upload a snuff film and it would stay there for two minutes?" Steiger asked.

"If even," Grove replied.

Doss opened the discussion up to the audience.

George Sylvie, an associate professor at the University of Texas at Austin's College of Communication, asked the two young journalists how their organizations define news. "At YouTube it sounds like viewers determine news. But what about those human beings behind the scenes?" he asked.

YouTube lets "people define it as they want," said Grove. They come to YouTube knowing that they are not going "to get straight news all the time." Putzel said that Current TV has had to grapple with this question since "a third of the content we have on the air is created by our viewers. We created two distinct brands. One is called VC2—VC squared—that is our viewer-created content. Another is called CJ, which is Collaborative Journalism. We try to make a distinction between the two." Some are mini-documentaries about non-news topics, but others are real news, like the reports filed by a team of five CJs that Current deployed to cover the primaries. "We've got guys

overseas finding themselves in the middle of war zones, coming back and getting the information to us very quickly so we can get it on the air,” he said.

Sylvie asked if the young journalists would advise the professors at the summit to consider “maybe teaching the definition of news differently, since you’re more plugged into the age level of people that we’re dealing with every day.”

Not at all, Putzel responded. He acknowledged that as things are changing so fast, “some of the older generation is, uh, a little not so cool with this.” Some journalistic elders are appalled at this trend to democratize the media. But he offered this advice to the academics at the summit:

“It’s probably the most important time in history to be a journalism professor because what students really need is that solid background that you have and those things you value. That’s not changed. The ethics haven’t changed or they shouldn’t change; the need for balance doesn’t change. All that’s going to be changing is the way news is being communicated and the way it’s coming out. The way that you have defined news and that made you want to be a journalist and teach journalism, that should all stay the same.”

Brad Flora, a graduate student and News21 Fellow at Northwestern, said he had considered uploading his stories to YouTube, “but I’ve been really worried about creator’s rights. Does Google own that if I put it up there?” He also asked if YouTube was taking steps to keep marketing companies from subverting its rankings. Grove assured him, “You own your own content. We are not a download service, we are an upload service.” He also said that YouTube has smart engineers keeping a careful watch for attempts to game the system.

Ryan Thornburg, an assistant professor at the University of North Carolina School of Journalism and Mass Communication, asked if YouTube has “people that look at your content for the accuracy of statements made.”

Grove said, “We don’t for a couple of reasons. That’s not really the philosophy of YouTube. We aren’t in the business of making determinations of truth. We let the YouTube community say what they think is truth.” As an example of how this works in politics, Grove said that the campaign of then-Republican presidential contender Mitt Romney posted its own video in response to one that aired footage from Romney’s 1994 debate with Senator Edward Kennedy (D-Massachusetts) that highlighted how his positions have changed on abortion, gay rights and other issues. Grove called that “a great moment in evolution of what we call YouTube politics—figuring out how to make sure your message is in the flow with everyone else’s. The Romney campaign [was] actually tremendous about this.” [Note: As of this writing, the attack ad on “The Real Romney” had been viewed 315,000 times; the Romney response had drawn 33,000 views.]

Doss said, “Anything that goes on our air goes through a lot of filters,” including fact-checkers and those who make sure the material complies with the network’s standards and legal standards. But he said CNN was going through a reinvention, with Anderson Cooper “the tip of the spear in that reinvention,” seeking to make shows that are “interesting, vital and energized” without sacrificing accuracy.

Doss wondered “at what point do lawsuits start flying” when the new media take a shot at a big corporation. Putzel said Current TV has a strict legal department that vets its reports before they air. Doss asked if anyone in the room teaches media law. Would it make any difference if an offensive report was prepared by someone without the traditional grounding in the law that journalists receive?

Dean David Rubin of the S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications at Syra-



Cynthia Gorney

cuse University said, “That excuse of ignorance won’t work. The basic principles of defamation, privacy and obscenity apply to you as they apply to everyone.” He predicted as more case law develops, “we’ll have a better sense of the degree to which individuals involved in the new media companies are liable, how much checking one can expect and what is normal journalistic process and so on. But basically, if you are going to defame somebody on YouTube or Current, that’s no different than if you are going to defame someone on *Anderson Cooper 360°*.”

Grove said that “our terms of service account for everything you’re talking about” and repeated that YouTube was “a video hosting site” that is completely different from a media company. Rubin rejoined, “You apparently have put yourselves into the position of editors because your flag system then alerts human beings, i.e., you, to go and look at material and make decisions as to whether to leave it up or not.” If YouTube decides to leave up a video that turns out to be inflammatory, they may well wind up as one of the targets in a libel suit, he predicted.

Dean Jean Folkerts of UNC Chapel Hill observed that for a panel on new journalists, “it’s a little hard to not notice that all of you are male. In fact, most of the presenters today have been men, and yet 70 percent of the students in our journalism schools are women. I wondered if you’d all comment a bit about gender balance in the new journalism world.”

Putzel said his boss at San Francisco-based Current TV was a woman and she and others were up in New Hampshire reporting the primary, while he had been sent to

New York to take part in the panel. Most of the staff at Current TV are women, he added. Grove said, “The point you’re making, essentially, is that you don’t want journalism to be an old boys’ club, right? I don’t think it is. One of the neat things I might say about YouTube is it is empowering a new group of people to become documenters of their experiences.”

Doss added, “I would say almost as important, we’re all white boys, too.” Diversity remains a major challenge for the broadcast networks, said Doss, who has served on diversity councils at NBC, ABC and CNN. Seventy percent of the staff of *Anderson Cooper* is female, but minorities represent only a small fraction. Although the networks regularly recruit at conventions of black, Hispanic and Asian journalists, “somehow that’s not translating into the right pool of really smart, energized people moving up through the ranks.” Doss also said his show had to “beat the bushes” last semester to find racially diverse interns despite the fact that “working with Anderson is a very cool thing.”



Jean Folkerts

ent in the new media opportunities.” Putzel said Current pays interns and has a college outreach program. He introduced its coordinator, who was sitting in the front row.

Steiger said that at the *Wall Street Journal*, even when the newsroom budget was being cut, he refused to cut the budget for 18 paid summer interns. “I cut other things instead because I think it’s the seed corn. If you have a screening process, you can find people who will help you. You get almost as much as you give through that process, and it makes them that much readier when they’re looking for jobs.”

Daniel Sheppard, a student from the University of Nebraska, asked Putzel if paying the creators of videos resulted “in more polished content” and if that changed the

Several deans suggested that CNN would have better luck if it paid its interns, and one said that “it’s only privileged students” who can work for free. Doss said the expectation was that they would get course credit for the experience. Stephen Shepard, dean of the new Graduate School of Journalism at City University of New York, said, “You can’t have it both ways. You can’t bemoan the lack of minorities in the profession and then not pay students to come to work as interns.” He said CUNY provides a stipend for its students on unpaid internships.

Alpert said DCTV has “more interns than we know what to do with.” They are not paid, but they get to attend free classes “that make you flu-

demographic of the viewers. “We hope it makes a big difference. If we’re paying you, it’s got to be good,” Putzel replied. The audience demographic for Current TV is ages 18 to 34, and it is now available on cable systems reaching 50 million homes in the U.S. and 12 million in the U.K.

Grove said YouTube’s audience is actually 18 to 55, and it gets just as many viewers under 18 as it does over 55.

Rubin asked if there would be a role for student journalists in New York-based ProPublica. Steiger said yes and he will try to mount an intern program this summer. As for using students as stringers, “It would depend on the story,” he said. If ProPublica enlisted the help of journalism schools and their students on a project, “I would want our editors to control it, not the professors.” But he added that rule was not as ironclad as it once was with him. “One thing I don’t want to change is, we’re down the middle and we’re going to work really hard to get it right,” he said.

Grove encouraged the journalism deans and their schools to make use of YouTube. “We would love to see all of you have your own college journalism school YouTube channels,” he said, that could attract “all these eyeballs and drive them back to your web sites and get your students more exposure.”



Carnegie Corporation’s Susan King summarized the day’s discussions, touching on many of the issues noted by panelists and audience members alike.

To Dean Folkerts’ point about the dearth of women on the panels—all three moderators and 10 of the 12 panelists were male—King said, “What has amazed me, in the 12 journalism schools we’re working with, there is only one woman dean.” She also voiced pride in the fact that Steve Grove was in the first class of Carnegie Fellows. The Corporation vice president, who personally helped arrange those internships at ABC News, said they jump-started the program in 2005 “because we didn’t want to have to wait for a year until News21” and she “wanted the industry to see right away some of the power in the journalism schools.”

“There is something very exciting that’s happening here,” said King. She called the caliber of the panels “superb” and said the summit also demonstrated “the power of a media center that’s connected to the industry to help journalism in a big way.”

It was clear from every panel that major changes lie ahead for the news business, “and you are part of that change,” said King to the summit participants. The Carnegie-Knight Initiative will move forward for at least three more years, she noted, as “a complete collaboration” between Carnegie Corporation and the Knight Foundation (the Corporation had contributed a larger share of financial support to the initiative in its earlier years),

along with the 12 universities. “Everyone here is an equal partner in the initiative,” King told the deans.

King emphasized that, “My job is to do only one thing: not to see this as a series of grants, money that goes into your individual institutions, but to make sure that a decade from now, when people look back, they can see that something important happened over the six years of this experiment. It’s got to mean something in terms of journalism education.”

She said Vartan Gregorian asked her to leave them with one word: collaboration. “Clearly the Knight and Carnegie Corporation collaboration has been powerful. But I think you’ll all agree today that the collaboration across your campuses and across the faculties and amongst yourselves has also been very powerful,” said King. “Three years ago, people would have said 12 schools would never collaborate like this. You were all competitors. Collaboration is very powerful, and it’s especially powerful at this time of change, particularly as we go forward as a consortium of 12 institutions focused on innovation, on upholding the standards, on the idealism of journalism.”

She reminded the participants of what they had heard from the last panel: “This is the most important time in history to be a journalism professor.” In the initiative’s early days, the deans sometimes asked themselves, “Is there a reason for us to exist today?” King recalled. “Well, if you were trying to figure out why you’re necessary, I think you heard it here today.”

Pat Mitchell brought the summit to a close with a wish and an observation.

“I just wish I were the age of two of our panelists and starting all over,” said the Paley Center head. “Certainly, we leave here today knowing it’s cool to be doing what you’re doing in the classroom, studying what you’re studying. And you are the ones shaping the future that we’ll be talking about next year at this time.”



## ► Breakout Sessions

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*The following are highlights of the breakout sessions that were part of the Journalism in the Service of Democracy Summit.*

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### THE NEWS21 EXPERIENCE

**Moderator: Bob Calo, National News Coordinator, News21, and Associate Dean, University of California at Berkeley Graduate School of Journalism**

Calo conducted two breakout sessions on News21—a component of the Carnegie-Knight Initiative on the Future of Journalism Education—by showing a clip from a *Simpsons* cartoon where a panel of reporters is being introduced by a Dan Rather-type anchor. When the last panelist is identified as a reporter from *The Washington Post*, a kid in the audience jumps up, points at him and laughs, “Ha, ha! Your medium is dying!”

Calo, a veteran news and documentary producer formerly with KQED in San Francisco, ABC News *Primetime* and NBC’s *Dateline* who joined the University of California, Berkeley faculty in 2001, said the travails of the traditional media were no big secret. “When something’s in the popular culture, what it means is that everybody knows there is a crisis, even the *Simpsons* viewers.”

News21 is an experiment that each summer sets up model newsrooms on the Berkeley, University of Southern California, Medill and Columbia campuses and sets ten graduates to work on innovative reporting projects under the supervision of faculty who serve as the editors. Four students from Harvard also are hired for the ten-week project, which in its first summer (2006) broke stories on homeland security that ran in *The New York Times*, on the Associated Press national wire and produced a documentary on the life of young American soldiers posted overseas. That show received a full hour’s airing on CNN’s *Anderson Cooper* program. The second News21 group examined faith in American life.

Calo said the News21 experiment “was a bet that money, a semester of specialized intensive study, a professionally funded ten-week production period, a group of really talented young reporters, and a commitment to innovation and bravado could really get universities in the game of media production.” He recalled that when he first joined the Berkeley faculty in 2001, his first thought was, “Why aren’t we news producers?”



**Bob Calo**

walked away,” said Calo. With a production budget of a couple of hundred thousand dollars, stipends of \$7,500 and travel budgets of \$2,500 for each student, Calo likened it to trying to pull off a Pulitzer Prize-caliber series in ten weeks while “working in the teeth of the challenge we were just talking about.”

“You basically take on all the things that are driving all the other news media people crazy,” said Calo. “I couldn’t do this with 40-year-old reporters. I could only do it with people who are really at ease in a digital world.” He said some graduates of the program, with their technological savvy, find themselves being asked to advise network executives and senior editors on how to reach young audiences. “They’re giving away the keys of the kingdom to children,” he quipped.

The News21 veteran said there were some tensions between the sponsors’ desire to see the fellows’ stories “make a big splash” in the major news media and the desire to see the professors and their top students “be really innovative.” The schools leaned heavily in the first direction in 2006 with homeland security projects that broke national news, but did not drive much traffic to the News21 web site. They took the opposite approach in 2007 as students built an interactive News21 Faces of Faith web site (<http://newsinitiative.org>) packed with content that registered more than 3,600,000 page views in that one year.

Each school took a different angle on these stories so as not to “bump into each other,” Calo explained. In 2006, Columbia’s take was to examine which corporations were profiting from homeland security contracts. Northwestern looked at surveillance and privacy issues, USC examined immigration and border issues, and Berkeley sent fellows with video cameras to U.S. military installations in Muslim countries around the world to chronicle the lives of young soldiers.

Every school gets the odd clip out, but beyond that, how can we be players? How can we get off the sidelines?” The newly graduated fellows were well positioned to look for the audience that “brilliant” journalists such as David Westin and Bill Keller have lost, he said. And the cutting edge News21 incubator also served as a way to “transform the schools and faculties. Trust me, there’s some transformation that has to happen,” he said.

“We want our stuff to be seen and we want to find that audience that has

Calo said that with the web, “a bottomless pit,” the young journalists had “definitely overdone it at times,” producing as many as 30 articles and 50 web features on their topic. He said future News21 teams need to learn “how to be discriminating and make choices about what’s on a site.” Another problem is that the News21 crews “roll up the tents and turn into pumpkins at the end of August,” just as their stories are still circulating and generating responses, he said. They are looking at how to “expand the length of time we’re in play.”

“One of the things we learned is that if you want to build a web site for people to come to, you’ve got to give them something to do,” said Calo, who pointed out several interactive features on the Faces of Faith web site.

Judy Muller, the former ABC News correspondent who is now an associate professor at USC and who coordinated News21 there for the first two years, said, “It is the most exciting project I’ve ever been involved in as an instructor. I think it’s going to save our profession.” But some faculty “are not quite on board” and feel threatened by the new techniques the News21 journalists are using, she said.

Asked by University of Texas professor and Knight Chair Rosental Alves if the News21 work had been documented in a way that other campuses could learn from, Calo said, “we blogged it” and posted a thousand photos, but there was no systematic research beyond the measurement of web visitors. “Obviously, the media liked what we did,” Calo said. “You tell me when was the last time a news network put an hour of what used to be student work on in prime time?”

University of California at Berkeley professor Lydia Chavez expressed curiosity about what impact News21 was having on the journalism curriculum at other schools.

Abigail Foerstner, a lecturer at Northwestern’s Medill School of Journalism said, “We have a News21 seminar that precedes the actual newsroom environment of News21. The curriculum of the News21 seminar allows students to build on the expertise of their university and other universities.” Medill’s new class of fellows will be visiting both Berkeley and Harvard this May, she said, “so we are building on the resources of the academic and scholastic community all around us.” Medill is attracting graduate students who are switching careers “because they feel journalism is a field that can make a difference,” she added. “They came into these seminars with an immense amount of momentum and an immense amount of interest in utilizing the whole university as a forum to help them build these stories over the summer.” As an example, she introduced Medill graduate student Brad Flora, who put together Medill’s extensive web feature on young Christians displaying their tattoos at a music festival (see “Christian Tattoo: The Needle for the Nail” on <http://newsinitiative.org>).

Toni DeAztlán, a Berkeley alumna, said she traveled the country interviewing people

for her News21 story on “God, Sex and Family,” which examined how religious beliefs affect people’s personal life choices, and now finds herself carrying out similar assignments as a producer-editor at NBC News. “It’s something they have never done before,” she said. “They have me going around the country with my camera, reporting, then I come back and edit my footage, which gets broadcast to six million viewers. NBC wants to know how can we expand this? It really is like the future of journalism. It’s been a very cool experience.”

Karla Bruning, a News21 fellow from Columbia who had concentrated on print journalism, said, “Everything I know about multimedia I learned during News21. I produced long- and short-form videos, a Flash web site, and learned how to edit in Avid.” She added, “Most of that I learned from my fellow fellows.” She added, “News21 gave the fellows an assignment and a budget and said, ‘Go to it.’ And we did. That was the really exciting thing about it.”

Paulene Bartolone, a Berkeley fellow whose story on polygamy among U.S. Muslims ran in the *San Francisco Chronicle*, said, “I learned that I really like to be working in big teams and to produce large, multimedia projects.”

Calo closed the second of the two breakout sessions he conducted on News21 by reading a letter from another fellow who said News21 had showed the young journalists “how to make powerful stories” for print, broadcast and the web. “Print students shot video, broadcast students made slide shows, everyone blogged and published. They thought about things in new ways,” the fellow wrote. “That’s the easy part. The hard part is how to make it happen. How do we make digital reporting successful? How do we penetrate the communities we cover?”



## **CHOOSE OR LOSE: THE MTV ELECTION**

**Moderators: Ian Rowe, Vice President of Strategic Partnerships and Public Affairs, MTV, and Gary Kebbel, Journalism Program Officer, Knight Foundation.**

MTV, the cable television channel that started with music videos in 1981 and later expanded to a wider array of youth culture programming and reality shows, has mounted a “Choose or Lose” get-out-the-vote campaign in every presidential election since 1992, and this time around it is partnering with the Knight Foundation on a project called Street Team 08 that has 51 young people from all 50 states and the District of Columbia serving as citizen journalists throughout the primaries and through the November 4, 2008 elections. Each is blogging, posting videos and producing stories from his or her state that are posted on the Street Team 08 web site (<http://think.mtv.com/>

Campaigns/street-team-08/). Kebbel called it “an interesting partnership, one not many people would have thought of more than a year ago.” But it fits for both sponsors, with MTV’s interest in proving that young adults are not as apathetic as commonly depicted, and Knight’s passion for community journalism and engagement.

The 51 citizen journalists had just been brought to New York City a few days earlier for training in the techniques of online journalism. “The passion, the energy, the excitement was palpable,” said Kebbel, so much so that when they all finished their presentations, “you wanted there to be another 51 be-



Judy Muller and Lydia Chavez

cause it was so fascinating. You left the room filled with hope. Just from that evening, I’d say the goals of what Knight had been hoping for have already been answered.” He went on to explain what he meant: Apart from losing revenues and circulation, newspapers are losing readers “and influence in the community, losing some of the functions that are absolutely necessary to the strength” of a democratic society, Kebbel said. “It’s more than just a symptom of a problem in a particular industry. It is a bellwether for the health of a democracy. If those who supply the information, if those who organize the community, if those who help the community identify itself, explain itself, gather people together, identify problems, search for common solutions—if the people who did that are becoming fewer and fewer and are becoming heard less and less, what happens to democracy?” The Knight News Challenge—a larger, \$5-million-a-year effort embracing many initiatives, not just the project with MTV—is an attempt to find out if some of these same functions can be performed online. For example, asked Kebbel, “Can the communities that a good newspaper used to reach by telling those living on the north side of town what it was like to live on the south side of town” be recreated “online in the place where digital natives now live, in the environment that they feel comfortable in? Can we still have the necessary functions that support and extend a democracy? We’re trying to find out,” said Kebbel.

To skeptics who say that the Internet is only about virtual communities, not real ones, Kebbel offered this rejoinder: “I don’t vote virtually for president. I might play in Second Life, but I don’t live in a virtual community. Kids don’t go to school in a virtual



Ian Rowe, Gary Kebbel

community; you don't pay virtual taxes. Geography is critically important, not only to our daily lives, but again, to the function of a democracy. It is how our democracy is organized. Therefore, the tools of today need to be harnessed in service of that democracy. We're trying to be the research and development arm that helps do that."

Ian Rowe, who previously served in the White House as director of strategy and performance measurement for USA Freedom Corps, President George W. Bush's initiative on volunteer service, said, "My job at MTV is all about how we can use the superpowers of MTV for good. How do we take this enormous youth brand that is so widely distributed across the world and use it to engage young people in some of the most important global and domestic issues facing their generation?"

"As adults, we sometimes forget the angst that young people have to go through" as they grapple for the first time with issues in their personal lives, from their sex life and identity to trying to get into college or land their first job, said Rowe, wearing a black MTV tee-shirt with the legend "Consume Mindfully." After years of hearing how apathetic young adults were, in 2004 MTV set a goal of boosting voter turnout from the 2000 level of 17.6 million voters ages 18-to-30 to 20 million. "A lot of folks said it would never happen," said Rowe, but nearly 22 million cast ballots in November 2004. In the midterm 2006 elections, 10 million 18-to-29-year-olds voted, or 25 percent more than in the previous midterm elections. And while 35 percent of young people surveyed by MTV in 2003 said they were following the presidential race closely, this time around 58 percent said they were following it closely, Rowe said. In the Iowa caucuses, youth involvement almost tripled.

Never before have young people had “a more massive array of tools to learn about and express themselves on any issue that matters to them,” said Rowe. “They can self-publish, self-organize.” They no longer have to ask themselves in frustration, “Why is ‘the Man’ not talking about my issues,” he said, whether those issues happen to include genocide in Sudan “or the fact that my high school in Detroit sucks.” Young people aren’t buying newspapers or going to *The New York Times* web site for their news, he said. When a gunman killed dozens at Virginia Tech, “our audience learned about a lot of that information from MTV and Facebook groups,” said Rowe. “We can say that is either a bad thing or a good thing—but it is what it is.”

Street Team 08 will be covering stories that other media ignore, like what the election means for Native Americans, how young people are affected by the crystal meth outbreak and what it is like to be the American child of once-illegal immigrants, he said. There have already been MTV/MySpace presidential dialogues with Senators John McCain (R-Arizona) and Barack Obama (D-Illinois) as well as former Senator John Edwards (D-North Carolina). “Any candidate who chooses to ignore the youth vote is missing a massive opportunity and doing that at their own peril,” said Rowe.

As for the fact that young voters are still the age group least likely to vote, Kebbel said, “We’re hoping this project elucidates how much of this is a chicken-and-egg question: if you have youth reporting for youth on the devices that they use every day, does that change the level of involvement? Are they now being spoken to in the way and in the media where they are most comfortable?” This will eliminate the excuse that they are being ignored, he said.

Jonathan Maher, a student from Harvard’s Kennedy School of Government, asked what type of reporting the Street Team would be doing. “A lot of reporting in new media is just opinions,” not investigative work, he said.

Rowe said the Street Team has been trained on reporting techniques and told that their role was to come up with and pursue factual stories, “not just to give their opinions.” Kebbel said some full-time MTV reporters expressed jealousy that the Street Team would get to do one- and two-minute pieces instead of the shorter news bites they usually do.

Asked what MTV’s audience is, Rowe replied, “MTV’s sweet spot is 12-to-24. We dominate in that age range.” Its political programming is geared toward ages 17-to-30, but it also draws younger teens. And the Street Team will be covering state and local election races and issues, not just the race for the White House.

If this project works as well as Knight anticipates, Kebbel said, “It tells me we ought to go to AARP next. Why not?”





## TAKING THE INITIATIVE

**Moderator: Thomas Kunkel, Dean, Philip Merrill College of Journalism, University of Maryland\***

Dean Kunkel, whose school joined the initiative in 2005, said at the outset, “We haven’t done a good job of telling people what the Carnegie-Knight Initiative is and what it’s about.” He took the opportunity to offer his own short history.

“It really started with Vartan Gregorian,” said Kunkel. He described the Carnegie Corporation president as an intellectual and an immigrant to the United States who has been a dean, a provost and a president as well as “a news junkie” who worries about the state of journalism and journalism education in this country. “He was aware that journalism and mass communication schools are not accorded the same respect on the great research campuses that other schools are,” and also aware “that’s not the case with the schools invited into the Carnegie-Knight Initiative.”

Kunkel continued: “What he’s trying to do is say, ‘We need to create a movement here and you, the schools in the Carnegie-Knight Initiative, are the leaders in your field. We want to help you, but we need you to carry the day,’” he said. “The main idea is that we need to build better journalists” and the way to do that is to make them better educated. He called Gregorian “a subversive who’s leading a movement here. We are all buying into it, because we believe in it too.” There are research components to the initiative, primarily involving the enhancement of graduate-level curriculum, Kunkel said. It is uncertain how long Carnegie and Knight will keep funding the initiative, “but they are hoping at some point this movement will be launched and it will be the schools themselves doing the heavy lifting.”

Kunkel then asked other campus representatives to describe what was going on in their classrooms and newsrooms and “give us a sense of what you’re doing that’s working or not working.”

Patricia Dean, associate director of the School of Journalism at USC’s Annenberg School for Communication, said the specialized, subject-matter-oriented seminar that the News21 fellows take before they tackle their summer project reinforced the notion that journalists should have “a body of knowledge and at least know some of the questions to ask before they plunge into reporting about a field.”

The fellows, with degrees in hand and no other classes to worry about, can devote their full attention and energy to News21, she said. “In a way you’re running one of the best newsrooms around.” Dean said the constant conflict was between funders’ desire to

\* Kunkel has been appointed President of St. Norbert College in De Pere, Wisconsin, effective July 1, 2008.



see the fellows' work published and broadcast, and the emphasis on innovation. Even after the big successes that the first News21 fellows had in getting stories into the national media, "we said, 'Ok, we know we weren't innovative enough,'" and they tried to be more innovative the second year.

"Innovation doesn't have to mean technology," Dean said. It can be finding ways to engage young audiences. The USC professor said the original schools in the initiative "tend to stand alone" rather than working together. "That's a challenge. That's another thing we want to work at: getting our students engaged with each other," she said.

Adam Glenn, an adjunct faculty member at Columbia University who served as managing editor for its News21 team, said the fellows got an opportunity to travel and "really go all out" in pursuit of their investigative stories on the homeland security money trail and the faith of immigrants. "That was extraordinary for them" and an unusual opportunity for anyone just breaking into journalism, he said. The model newsroom also showed "how collaboration worked and how critical it is, especially in new media, to work with teams of people who bring different sets of knowledge together" and know how to present material in different ways.

Berkeley acting journalism dean Neil Henry said he found the curriculum enrichment charge that came from Vartan Gregorian both "extremely exciting and frustrating." The intent was "to help build the intellectual capacity of young journalists, by branching out to other parts of the university, engaging the humanities, the sciences, provide opportunities for professors in various different fields to come to our program" to teach the students the right questions to ask.

Henry partnered with a professor in African studies to teach an international reporting class on Ghana, which was marking its 50th year of independence and the 250th anniversary of the British slave trade. The other professor used the Carnegie Corporation-funded honorarium to bring in a host of expert lecturers. "It was great," said Henry, a former foreign correspondent and Africa bureau chief for the Washington Post. But there wasn't enough time in one semester for the students to do all the work they needed to do. "Part of the problem was that you're trying to engage two radically different ways of learning," he said, namely the academic approach and the approach of journalism, "which is focused so much on practical reporting and getting work done."

Henry said that Carnegie-Knight curriculum enhancement funds helped colleague Lydia Chavez teach a year-long class that looked at forgotten 1980s battlefields of Central America. Berkeley students got to travel to Nicaragua, Guatemala and elsewhere, and the project turned into a soon-to-be-published book. "The Carnegie Corporation money has just provided this incredible avenue of possibilities," said Henry.

Chavez, who also attended this breakout session, said the funds allowed her to bring

in four experts, including a cultural geographer from UC Berkeley and a military expert from the University of California at Irvine who worked in Central America for the Central Intelligence Agency during the Reagan era. She also collaborated on a one-semester course on Latin American art and culture with someone from Berkeley's Center for Latin American Studies. "We had video pieces on the *Washington Post* web site and also print pieces," Chavez said.

Kunkel asked Deborah Nelson, director of the Carnegie Seminar at the University of Maryland's Philip Merrill College of Journalism, to speak about what Maryland has done on the curriculum front. Kunkel suggested that they were still searching for "the right formula." Nelson said the first five-week, three-credit seminar focused on global threats one semester and the next will deal with issues of war and peace. For the global threats seminar, it found Maryland faculty with expertise on nuclear proliferation and climate change. "That's evolved really well," said Nelson. They come up with seminar assignments for the journalism graduate students that connect to what they are learning in other courses. The expert on nuclear proliferation had the students write a 1,000-word story that Nelson likened to an assignment to do "a Sunday weekend" feature. "We're teaching them good habits," said Nelson. "She has them writing papers, but papers where they have to think as journalists." Maryland also asked the students to turn in a 1,500-word story as a one-credit "practicum" exercise, but found it was hard to do simultaneously with other work. It has shifted this practicum to the semester after the seminar.

Patricia Dean said the demands of News21 can be humbling for students who may have come to graduation thinking they had learned all they needed to know. "If News21 is successful, I hope they come out with more questions and even more humbled by how awesome and how difficult it is to do the job of journalism," said Dean, a former broadcast journalist in Chicago. "Almost all our fellows are frustrated that they don't have enough time. The ten weeks goes too quickly. I love that they are frustrated. That's the mindset you want them to enter the profession with."

Dean also mentioned that USC is using Carnegie-Knight money to attract new faculty. She introduced K.C. Cole, science writer and columnist for the *Los Angeles Times*, who joined the Annenberg faculty in 2006. "The dialogue between the sciences and journalism never happened at USC until K.C. joined us," Dean said. Cole noted that, "Half of my science writing class is now from neuroscience. Go figure."

Ester Thorson, acting dean of the University of the Missouri School of Journalism, said Missouri is 18 months into an effort to enrich its arts program. "It's working very well. We hired a specialist in arts reporting" and they are working with faculty from the university's arts, drama and music departments "exploring ways to talk about the arts that break out of just the critique and move into that digital environment where you can both talk about the

arts, exemplify the arts, and actually take people with you as you talk through an exhibit or concert or drama or play.” All the courses “have filled right up,” she said.

Amy Falkner, associate dean for academic affairs of the S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications at Syracuse University, said they have focused on enhancing Newhouse programs on legal reporting and on religion and media. “We’re trying to develop minors in these two areas outside of our school,” she said. Trying to figure out how to offer gateway courses in the journalism school “but then partner with our sister schools on campus has been a little bit tricky.” One experimental class involved faculty from both the law school and the Maxwell School of public affairs. But they had difficulty attracting as many students as they had hoped.



Thomas Kunkel

Lorraine Branham, director of the School of Journalism in the College of Communication at the University of Texas at Austin, said, “We took a more traditional approach to our curriculum enhancement.” They added new courses on covering the Latino community and on covering technology and innovation. The hardest part, she said, has been “trying to get other professors who are busy doing their own stuff” to prepare a couple of lectures for these journalism classes, even with monetary incentives to offer. “Some people have been very gracious and generous with their time. Other people have said, ‘Nice idea...’” said Branham.

Kunkel said the picture is much different at his school. “We took the idea of building bridges as a focal point,” said Kunkel, a former deputy managing editor of the *San Jose Mercury News*. “We have Shibley Telhami, the Anwar Sadat Chair for Peace and Development from the Department of Government and Politics coming in and teaching our kids.” He also sends a senior member of the journalism faculty to teach a course in another division each semester. Gene Roberts, the former *Philadelphia Inquirer* executive editor, teaches an honors course for politics majors on the civil rights movement. “Our school is highly respected” within the university, Kunkel said. “We really are building important intellectual and interdisciplinary bridges. You also get a reputation around campus for being a good citizen. That’s an important part of what Gregorian was starting.”

Berkeley’s Neil Henry interjected, “I wouldn’t underestimate the degree to which a lot of people in these other specialties are really interested in having what they do be translated” to a wider audiences, and in that regard, “journalists perform a very important function.” Henry said the Carnegie Corporation support allows the journalism school to give the visiting professors \$10,000 in research and development funds, and the professor can call him or herself a Carnegie Visiting Fellow. “That’s basically how it begins,” he said.

“It’s like anything else,” said Kunkel. “There’s a way that you can figure out how everybody profits from this. It’s all good.”

Dean Jean Folkerts of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill School of Journalism and Mass Communication asked if any of the other schools have dealt with the issue of how the initiative can be sustained when the Carnegie-Knight money runs out.

Kunkel said he does not know what components will be sustained, but “I think the hope is that after six years or maybe a little longer, this nucleus of schools—between News21 and the research components and the high-impact sorts of positions that the schools are taking, and just the sheer dint of their respect in the field—will have created a model of 21st century journalism education. And it’s the idea of that we need to sustain.”

Carnegie Corporation’s Susan King, who attended the session, said the answer Vartan Gregorian would give to the question of sustainability was that by the end of the initiative, the efforts involved would be judged by all to be so important that the university would build continued support into its budget. On another level, she added, Gregorian is hoping that the journalism schools will be allowed to fund raise from the alumni of the entire university, not just the journalism graduates. None would be off-limits to the journalism school’s pitches, she said. A rich alumnus who made a fortune in neuroscience might be asked to endow a chair in journalism instead of biology. Most journalism graduates, “unless they are Katie Couric, don’t make enough money to give you any,” she said.

Lydia Chavez said, “We’re always being told at Berkeley that we’re not innovative enough.” What is the Carnegie-Knight initiative looking for?

King replied, “I don’t use the word innovation.” What the work really needs to be is “integrated enough” or “intellectual enough,” King said. Some proposals for curriculum enrichment that Carnegie Corporation have received read “like little things added on” to the regular curriculum.

Kunkel asked the handful of students at the session to critique the journalism education they were getting.

Melissa Moser, a student from UNC Chapel Hill, said, “I have a background in economics.” She took an economics reporting class to learn how to write and explain the economics she already knew. She went on, “I was with a bunch of people who knew how to write, but didn’t know anything about economics. At the end of the course, I feel like I got the writing skills, but I actually wouldn’t trust almost anybody in my class to report on economics.” Deepening what journalism students are taught about the subjects they will cover “makes a lot of sense to me,” she said.

Brendan Lowe, a Maryland senior who aspires to be a foreign correspondent, said, “I like the sound of where this is all heading as far as getting more integrated.” He felt compelled to have a double major (journalism and government and politics) lest he

know how to write but not “know what to write about.” He also suggested journalism schools bring in more experts from the real world to teach. “A lot of journalism students struggle with the theoretical nature of a lot of academics,” he said.



## TAKING THE INITIATIVE

**Moderator: David Rubin, Dean of the S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications at Syracuse University and Nicholas Lemann, Dean of the Graduate School of Journalism at Columbia University**

David Rubin called on two Syracuse associate professors, Gustav Niebuhr, director of the Carnegie Religion and Media Program, and Mark Obbie, director for the Carnegie Legal Reporting Program, to explain how the Carnegie-Knight Initiative has impacted their courses and curricula.

Niebuhr said, “I’ve created a religion and media minor, meant to introduce students, whether in some form of journalism or who think they may be headed in that direction, to an interdisciplinary range of Syracuse courses that have to do with religion. The guiding premise behind this, which comes out of my own experience in newspapers, is that regardless of what you think you’re going to do in the news, at some point or another you’re going to encounter religion, in either its organized or its disorganized form—and probably a lot more often than you think,” said the former religion correspondent for *The New York Times*.



David Rubin, Nicholas Lemann

The minor consists of six courses, which is standard for minors at Syracuse. Said Niebuhr, “The first gateway course I’ve designed, called religious issues in American life, is very flexible and topical; it highlights themes in the news involving religion. The capstone course focuses on how religion is treated in the major media. Students spend a semester analyzing national media, both broadcast and print, and reading about aspects of religious life in the U.S. Both courses have drawn well, but I keep talking them up, hoping I’ll draw more. We’re just beginning,” Niebuhr pointed out.

When Rubin asked if Niebuhr felt that he was “welcomed” at the university, Niebuhr replied, “Absolutely. It has been a positive experience. At Syracuse, practitioners of journalism are well regarded.”



**Group Discussion**

Asked if the minor was in the School of Journalism, Niebuhr said no, it actually was lodged in the College of Arts and Sciences, but comes through the journalism school.

Mark Obbie said, “I’m doing something similar with legal reporting. We took Carnegie Corporation’s direc-

tion in a different way. We’re tapping into the college of law, creating a new undergraduate minor for those students who could be drawn to covering public affairs and law by taking courses that already exist around the university. So I spent time creating a gateway and capstone course—playing evangelist, trying to interest our journalism students in a specialty that may not have interested them yet. The college of law has been eager to partner with us because of their students’ interest. This will be only the third semester though, so we’re still experimenting.”

When asked how all this applied to graduate students, Obbie said, “It is now an elective for them. We toyed with a graduate-level specialty in legal reporting, but didn’t know if there was a market for that, and ended up going with undergraduates.”

Getting down to specifics, Obbie said, “In talking about the law, we have writing assignments, but students are not out there doing reporting. I’m not standing in front of the class talking about how you find files in the courthouse. But some of the Carnegie Corporation money is supporting my time, allowing me to go into general reporting classes and teach one-day seminars.”

Niebuhr said, “Me, too. But in my case, there’s also an optional seventh course, a specialty reporting class called reporting on religion, spirituality and moral issues that you can take through the Newhouse school. It focuses on advanced skills and is more academically centered.”

“Universities are old institutions,” Nicholas Lemann pointed out. “It’s sort of amazing how they’ve stayed in business since 1100, 1200 AD, on the same basic business model, and they’re really thriving. Professional education is a new idea, relatively speaking, in the long history of universities.” Long ago, he said, arguments raged in the fields of law, business, and medicine about whether you needed professional training—those used to be taught mainly through apprenticeships. “Journalism has moved to the university model relatively later than others,” said Lemann, adding that journalism schools are comparable

not to law or medical schools, but to business schools and public policy schools.

Lemann went on to say that many students no longer feel the apprenticeship option is open to them. Still, leaving that aside, “because we’re in the rarefied atmosphere of universities,” he said, “we should push ourselves to think: if you’ve got somebody as a full-time student, probably for the last time, what can you do that will be useful to them in newsrooms, especially over the long term, but that they can’t get in the newsroom itself? I don’t think, fundamentally, that we should be in the business of replicating conditions in an entry-level newsroom. The question I keep asking myself as a dean is, what can we do for students that won’t end up being irrelevant?” A variant of this kind of soul-searching goes on at every professional school in the university, he noted—how theoretical to be versus how practice-oriented.

Lemann continued, “We’ve spent Carnegie Corporation money on our new master of arts program, which has graduated two classes, in 2006 and 2007. It’s a going concern. We have 40 students and plan to grow slowly to about 50 and, I think, stop there. This is thought of as a second-year program, which it really isn’t, but it’s not a two-year either. When we started the program, we thought the students would be people who stayed for a second year, but that’s only a quarter of them; the rest are people from the outside world who we judge have a skill level commensurate with our MS degree. They major in one of four areas: science, arts and culture, business and economics, or politics.” Further, he noted that, “Two of the 2007 graduates work at *The New York Times* now. They’re news clerks for editorial page columnists Nicholas Kristof and Gail Collins.”

“I’m of two minds about specialization,” said Lemann. “I take the point that we use specialization as a construct because it’s a forcing mechanism to do things like tie into the rest of the university and to have more intellectual content and reading in journalism courses. Even if you don’t stick with your major, there’s a sort of ‘learning how to learn’ factor that goes along with majoring in something. It’s a transferable skill: you’ll be a better political reporter, for example, because you were a science major.” He added that an important part of what they teach is learning how to understand expert conversation.

Lemann noted that there are two required courses at the Columbia School of Journalism: “A History of Journalism for Journalists” and “Evidence and Inference,” which focuses on hypothesis testing. For these courses, said Lemann, they bring in social scientists, direct students to Karl Popper’s work on falsification, etc., with the intent of trying to “map the academic material very powerfully onto journalism.” Lemann also noted that although students take some courses outside, the main construct they teach is the substance inside the journalism school—not sending students outside to get it. “This,” he said, is because of the “mapping to practice” we’re trying to do—have students make web sites, make the faculty associated with this program think through who they might



need to bring in to help teach this course, what's the body of essential knowledge, etc. Said Lemann, "I want that kind of rich thought and knowledge to exist inside our school." He also noted that Carnegie Corporation money is used, in this context, to compensate outside professors to come to the Journalism School to teach.

When asked for more detail about the "mapping to practice" aspect he spoke about, Lemann said, "Journalism education tends to be very clinical: it's focused on doing stories. We have many courses with no reading list, or those that are all works of journalism, so we tell the instructors that the reading list must include canonical, nonjournalistic work. Therefore, we're teaching people how to do things like review literature on a subject, evaluate methodology in a tech paper, etc., but students, confronted with this, often ask, why am I reading this? So we've started partnering these readings with journalism readings about the same subject." He went on to say that the instructors are strongly urged to "cover" the rest of the university to find out who might be useful to them in teaching their courses and urge others to participate in the planning and teaching of the course. Paying them wakes them up, noted Lemann; it makes them prepare more. The professors themselves have to think about things like, what are the big ideas that should be the contextual map for students covering City Hall next year?

Asked if there was remuneration for people from outside the journalism school who participate in teaching, Lemann said, "Yes. I was advised never to go to a department chair and ask to have somebody's teaching load reduced. So what I do instead is go to the individual faculty member and offer them extra money to teach. Almost nobody ever says no."

Jim Willse of the *Newark Star-Ledger* asked, "In the business part of the arts program, is the thought to prepare journalists just to be more knowledgeable? Is there a component where they might actually go into the news business and worry about that?"

Lemann responded, "In that major, I can almost guarantee you every student will have a job at graduation. The workplace wants business stories, Arabic speakers, and web skills. But that major gets the least applicants; most applicants are to arts and culture—and those graduates, by the way, are almost guaranteed *not* to have a job, especially," he joked, "since most of them refuse to live west of the Hudson, unless it's in the San Francisco Bay area."

Rubin said things are different at the Newhouse School "because our programs involve undergrads who are with us for four years and have many different interests."

Cynthia Gorney of the University of California, Berkeley Journalism School asked, has it been hard to get professors to distill or rearrange their subject matter for teaching reporters?

Lemann responded: "We've been lucky with that. We have university law professors who teach media law, so they get it and participate in our courses. Also, I think there's a kind of hope that some sort of 'celebrity journalist' factor will accrue from this, by virtue of their proximity to all these reporters."



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