Engaging Stories that Build Communities: The New Journalism Illumination Project

An Initiative of JOURNALISM THAT MATTERS and Colleagues

SUMMARY

In an era in which the old story of journalism is dying and a story is being born, we wish to make visible compelling images of the emerging news and information ecosystem in order to amplify and extend the good work that is already happening. New technology and new business economics are changing the practice of journalism. No one is systematically identifying innovative journalistic practices so that we ensure the durability and sustainability of communities or participatory democracy.

Human systems thrive when we have an image of a desirable future. Such images inspire us to move towards what we wish to create (Cooperrider, 2000). By making exemplars of new forms of journalism visible, we contribute to clarifying the role and forms of journalism that meet today’s needs and accelerate movement towards a reconceptualization of news and information that serves civil society.

To help uncover and amplify effective journalistic principles and practices, Journalism That Matters proposes developing partnerships to:

- Articulate a coherent and compelling framework for journalism of, by and for the people.
- Make visible and archive exemplars of the emerging ecosystem that demonstrate emerging principles of journalism and act as guide posts for promising practices;
- Inspire additional experiments informed by what is working so that innovation continues; and
- Cultivate a living, growing network of diverse partners who support each other and seed more experiments that build on what we learn together about what is working to serve the news and information needs of communities and democracy so that communities discover more opportunities to address the challenges they face.
PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Context: Why the project is needed

For most of the last century, the foundation of American journalism was the printed story – often embellished for broadcast. The printed story served communities well at a time when access to information was limited. The economics of the news industry, supported by mass-market advertising, underwrote large newsrooms capable of observing, distilling, writing and telling the news from chicken dinners to meetings to major world events.

As advertising has decoupled from the news, story journalism is breaking down. Fewer people are writing the stories, fewer eyes and ears in the community are on news-organization payrolls. At the same time, network technology allows the public to create and comment on the news directly in forms radically different from the story – 140-word “tweets,” Facebook posts, YouTube videos or Pinterest “pins”. Institutions who were formerly sources are now direct newspapers – municipal and corporate websites, public-advocacy groups and individuals.

In places like Seattle, Denver, Ann Arbor, Mich., and (soon) New Orleans, large communities have lost a major daily news voice. But this is not just a big-city phenomenon. Waves of consolidations have left smaller communities without their own weekly news voice, or a daily replaced by a weekly. Community radio stations have gone dark or lost their local news staff. All of these changes create “media deserts” -- geographic areas or topics of civic importance with little or no reliable, accessible, quality news and information - in parts of the United States. A hallmark of professional journalism has been a commitment to independent, fact-based reporting. While technology change is enabling many new voices and channels, its not clear how many of these voices champion trustworthy, fact-based, independent reporting.

Yet there are also encouraging developments:

- Hundreds of local online news sites have sprung up, and some of them are showing signs of business sustainability.
- Cable public-access centers are accepting a role more like news organizations.
- U.S.community foundations are beginning to see -- and fund -- news reporting as an important part of a healthy community.
- A myriad of experiments, many influenced by participation with Journalism That Matters, are in process. They are making headway in proving out a variety of elements of new journalism:
  - New forms of storytelling, such as journalism through hip hop with Jasiri X or American Public Media’s online game, Budget Hero;
  - Innovative funding models, such as community-sourced funding through http://Spot.us or a coop model like the Banyan Project;
  - New relationships between journalists and community, as Well Commons has created;
  - Solutions-oriented investigative reporting, as pioneered by Investigate West; and
  - Media Desert research to understand the the nature and extent of the challenge and identify strategies for creating news oases.
Most of this change in what we began in 2006 to call the “news ecosystem” -- the information exchange among the public, government, and institutions that can inform, inspire, engage, and activate -- has occurred in the last decade, as Internet information technologies matured. The pace of change has been fast. Many cities, towns and interest groups affected have not had the time or inclination for collective reflection about the impact on our communities and our system of self-governance. The time is ripe for that reflection. In doing so, we expect to support the many experiments to begin to coalesce into a coherent system of principles and practices for journalism of, by, and for the people.

Who is served?

The direct beneficiaries of our work are the people who are shaping the evolving news and information ecosystem. JTM refers to these constituencies as the “whole system” of journalism. It includes emerging and traditional journalists, people and their communities, and others who contribute to civic discourse, such as educators, information technologists and librarians.

The indirect beneficiaries are those who are seeking the news and information they need to participate in civic life. In particular, we wish to improve conditions for those who live in the growing number of media deserts.

JTM is well known for its success at physical convenings that foster collaboration, innovation, and confidence to address complex challenges. We do this using breakthrough collaboration practices such as Open Space Technology and by consciously bringing together people from across widely varied silos of thought and practice -- such as journalists with teachers, journalists with librarians and journalists with technologists.

These convenings have created a community of civic practitioners, many of whom are innovators in their fields. Their stories illuminate emerging principles and practices of journalism today. JTM’s goals include spreading these stories, inspiring others to build on
the best practices of these innovators and synthesizing replicable patterns from these stories as a path to creating a more coherent map of the emerging news and information ecosystem, making the territory more navigable.

**Specific Activities**

To illuminate a positive future for news and information that serves the needs of communities and strengthens our collective capacity for self-governance, we propose to:

- **Host a series of highly interactive monthly audio innovation labs**, open to the public, curated around stories of “journalism that matters” – journalism that spotlights challenges, fosters collaboration, highlights solutions and reaches multiple constituencies.

  A preliminary list of offerings is based upon what Journalism That Matters has learned through its twelve years of convening the “whole system” of journalism. We propose to share stories and engage participants in conversations around topics such as:
  - Solutions-oriented journalism
  - Journalism as a conversation - high engagement between journalists and audience
  - Beyond the usual suspects: Communities taking responsibility for their own story
  - Unique funding models
  - Serving the public good and being entrepreneurial
  - Collaborations between large and small news and information entities
  - New storytelling forms of journalism – including video games, comedy, and hip hop
  - Creating media oases

- **Do journalism on “journalism that matters”**. In addition to audio innovation labs, our intent is to become the “go to” source for what is emerging in the news and information ecosystem. Beyond just generating stories, we intend to invite examples from others who uncover promising models of news and information that are supporting communities and democracy to thrive.

- **Support the JTM community in telling its own stories**. In addition to reporting on journalism that matters, with support from a “community weaver” -- an online host who reaches out to our constituency, supporting them to tell their stories of innovations in journalism that serves civil society. By helping to connect the dots with other stories, we begin to develop a rich archive of examples of what is working and to seem more clearly the principles and practices of new journalism as they emerge.

- **Convene a two- to four-day gathering annually to continue to illuminate the changing landscape of news and information**. Already scheduled, for April 3-4, 2013 at the University of Denver, we will host: “Journalism is Dead; Long Live Journalism.” Conducted in Journalism That Matters’ signature “unconference” style, the event will acknowledge that journalism as we’ve known it is no longer
sustainable, but that the new ecosystem presents opportunities to renew and extend the values, principles and purposes of journalism.

- **Spotlight examples of emerging media oases.** Building on Dr. Michelle Ferrier’s research on mapping media deserts -- geographic areas or topics of civic importance with little or no reliable, accessible, quality news and information -- JTM is partnering with the Elon University School of Communication project to track demonstration projects that are creating media oases.

- **Train journalists in the “art of engagement”**. As the role of journalists continue to evolve, the skills of hosting both online and face to face conversations among a diverse public to address complex issues is an emerging area of journalistic interest. Given JTM’s expertise in this arena, we have a contribution to make.

**Expected Outcomes**

The system of activities described above -- monthly audio sessions, continuous reporting and community weaving, showcasing media oases, and annual face-to-face convening -- is intended to build a compelling image of the emerging news and information ecosystem. Training in engagement helps to put what we learn into practice where it is most needed. It is all intended to create a positive future for civil society, supporting durable, sustainable communities and participatory democracy.

Specifically, we expect this work to make it possible to:

- Articulate a coherent and compelling framework for journalism of, by and for the people.

- Make visible and archive exemplars of the emerging ecosystem that demonstrate emerging principles of journalism and act as guide posts for promising practices;

- Inspire additional experiments informed by what is working so that innovation continues; and

- Cultivate a living, growing network of diverse partners who support each other and seed more experiments that build on what we learn together about what is working to serve the news and information needs of communities and democracy so that communities discover more opportunities to address the challenges they face.
PROJECT SUSTAINABILITY

Journalism That Matters’ expertise rests in its ability to engage a diverse array of people in working with complex, even conflicted issues and generate innovative ideas. A key insight from a strategy session held by JTM’s board this year was that we need to make more visible what we have learned through our engagements about the emerging principles of journalism of, by, and for the people – and where those principles are working to foster participatory democracy and community. This project is a direct result of that understanding. Out of the Engaging Stories project, we expect to deepen our own story telling capacity, providing a glue to more effectively connect the network of innovators we have built through the years.

We expect the work of this project to enable us to draw more effectively from three sources of funding:

1. Sponsorships
2. Membership fees
3. Workshops

As we reach people who are desirable to media-related organizations, we become an increasingly attractive place for organizations to invest sponsorship dollars. As our participants gain value from their experiences, they are increasingly likely to see a small fee for membership, about $25, as a good investment. As the notion of engagement becomes increasingly important to journalists, we become more in demand to teach the skills of engaging.

We expect that these sources of funds ultimately move us from a working board to a paid staff, increasing the bandwidth available to do our work.

These elements are all part of a virtuous cycle that in time lead to less reliance on foundation funding and more reliance on self-generated sources of funds.
## EVALUATION & DISSEMINATION PLAN

The evaluation plan is intended to support JTM and our funders in understanding the outputs, outcomes, and impacts of the Engaging Stories project. It will start with understanding the intention of the project, who is involved, and the theory of action behind the project. Through conversations with key players, specific goals, activities, inputs, and ends of the project will be articulated and tracked.

The plan will be built around the following framework:

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<tr>
<th>Program Goals</th>
<th>Evaluation Questions</th>
<th>Unit of Analysis</th>
<th>Data Collection Tools</th>
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| 1. Articulate a compelling framework for journalism of, by, and for the people | How have principles identified in the JTM framework been replicated and adapted by others? | Participants who are: in JTM sessions, on the JTM web site, and engage with JTM social media | • Session documentation  
• Interviews |
| 2. Develop an archive of examples of new journalism | 1. How broad and deep is the archive?  
2. Who is using it and how?  
3. How often is it cited/link ed to by others? | | • Web site  
• Social media  
• Site users |
| 3. Inspire additional experiments | What is the ripple effect of our work? | Participants who are: in JTM sessions, on the JTM web site, and engage with JTM social media | • Testimonials  
• Interviews |
| 4. Cultivate a network of diverse partners | 1. What does the community of like-minded new journalists look like?  
2. Who is involved? | Participants who are: in JTM sessions, on the web site, and engage with JTM social media | • Testimonials  
• Interviews  
• Session documentation  
• Web site and social media artifacts |

Dissemination will be through a combination of our Journalism That Matters web site, social media, and our partner organizations. We expect to be sharing what we learn throughout the project. So dissemination is an integral part of the work itself.
BOARD AND STAFF

*Journalism That Matters has no paid staff. It is operated by a working board.*

**Bill Densmore, director, Journalism that Matters**

Bill Densmore, a consultant and researcher on the future and sustainability of journalism, is an expert on Internet information technologies and business models. He is a consulting fellow to the Donald W. Reynolds Journalism Institute (RJI) at the Missouri School of Journalism. He is author of the white paper, “From Paper to Persona.”

Densmore also serves as director/editor of the Media Giraffe Project at the University of Massachusetts-Amherst, and the New England News Forum. He’s a founding member and director of Journalism That Matters, Inc, and also serves on the boards of the New England Newspaper & Press Association and Shires Media Partnership, Inc.

In a career spanning news writing, journalism, publishing and entrepreneurship, Densmore has founded two technology companies. Amherst, Mass.-based Clickshare Service Corp, provides user registration, authentication, content access control and transaction services to Internet web content sites and publishers. CircLabs Inc. is a development-stage startup incubated as part of Densmore’s Information Valet Project at RJI. It’s testing service concepts for news personalization and customization, including the InfoValet Circulate Discovery Service.

The Media Giraffe Project, launched in March, 2005, is an ongoing effort to find and spotlight individuals making sustainable, innovative use of media (old and new) to foster participatory democracy and community. Densmore holds a B.A. from the University of Massachusetts-Amherst in environmental policy and communications. A career journalist, Densmore has been an editor/writer for The Associated Press in Boston, Chicago and San Francisco and for trade publications in business, law, insurance and information-technology in Boston, Chicago and New York.

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**Mike Fancher, Board secretary, Journalism That Matters**

In 2008 Mike Fancher retired from The Seattle Times after 20 years as executive editor. During his tenure The Times won four Pulitzer Prizes and was a Pulitzer finalist 13 other times. A Seattle official is quoted as saying, "Under Mike, the paper was fearless about tackling subjects it thought were important to the community. There were a lot of people in the community who didn’t like that. But, at the same time, the paper was gutsy, and fearless in admitting when it made a mistake."
Fancher devoted his 2008/2009 Donald W. Reynolds Journalism Institute Fellowship year to the question, "What is the Journalist’s Creed for the 21st Century?" His research explored how shifting elements, such as the relationship between journalists and the public, affect the values and principles of journalists today and in the future. Currently Fancher serves as an adviser to the Knight Commission and is a frequent speaker at industry, civic and academic gatherings. He is working on a book on the Journalist’s Creed in the 21st Century.

Fancher is the Reynolds Visiting Chair in the Ethics of Entrepreneurial and Innovative Journalism at the Donald W. Reynolds School of Journalism at the University of Nevada, Reno.

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Dr. Michelle Barrett Ferrier, Board Vice President, Journalism That Matters

Associate professor at Elon University in the School of Communications. Her students developed the virtual International Civil Rights Museum on Second Life. She created and runs LocallyGrownNews.com, an online community about local food, sustainability, local economies and related issues. She also is the principal of Creative Technologists, LLC, a firm focused on digital content architecture and development.

For more than twenty years, Dr. Ferrier has been experimenting with and developing content for a variety of digital platforms. She has been a beta tester and early adopter of such technologies as listservs, page layout software, direct-to-plate printing, early CD-ROM development, early website development, online communities, online education and other digital communication technologies.

She completed a Ph.D. degree in Texts and Technology at the University of Central Florida and a master’s degree in journalism from the University of Memphis. As a research associate, she helped architect a new digital media curriculum for 2- and 4-year colleges and universities in central Florida.

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Peggy Holman, Board treasurer and co-founder, Journalism that Matters
Seattle based author and consultant, Peggy Holman, has helped explore a nascent field of social technologies that engage "whole systems" of people from organizations and communities in creating their own future. She consults on strategies for enabling diverse groups to face complex issues by turning presentation into conversation and passivity into participation. In the second edition of The Change Handbook, she joins with her co-authors to profile sixty-one change processes. Her award-winning book, Engaging Emergence: Turning Upheaval into Opportunity, dives beneath these change methods to make visible deeper patterns, principles, and practices for change that can guide us through turbulent times.

Bringing her expertise in organization and community engagement, Holman joined three career journalists in founding Journalism That Matters to support the pioneers who are shaping the emerging news and information ecology.

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Chris Peck, Board president and co-founder, Journalism that Matters
Editor, The Commercial Appeal, Memphis, Tenn. Chris Peck is a former president of both the Associated Press Managing Editors and the American Society of Newspaper Editors and is now editor of The Commercial Appeal in Memphis. He oversees all news and opinion operations and directs a staff of approximately 180 reporters, editors and photographers. Peck came to Memphis in 2003 after serving for one year as the first Belo Distinguished Chair of Journalism at Southern Methodist University in Dallas. Before that, he was editor of The Spokesman-Review, in Spokane, Wash. Under his direction, The Spokesman-Review was cited by Columbia Journalism Review as one of the 25 best papers in the United States.

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Jorge Reina Schement, Director, Journalism that Matters
Dean, School of Communication & Information, at Rutgers University. Jorge Reina is also Professor II in the Bloustein School of Public Policy, and in the Department of Latino-Hispanic Caribbean Studies.

A Ph.D. from the Institute for Communication Research at Stanford University, and M.S. from the School of Commerce at the University of Illinois, he is author of over 200 papers and articles, with book credits including, Global Networks (1999/2002), Tendencies and Tensions of the Information Age (1997), Toward an Information Bill of Rights and Responsibilities (1995), Between Communication and Information (1993), Competing Visions, Complex Realities: Social Aspects of the Information Society (1988), The International Flow of Television Programs (1984), Telecommunications Policy Handbook (1982), and Spanish-Language Radio in the Southwestern United States (1979). A Latino from South Texas, his research focuses on the social and policy consequences of the production and consumption of information, especially as they relate to ethnic minorities. His research has been supported by the Ford Foundation, Markle Foundation, Rainbow Coalition, Port Authority of NY/NJ, Federal Aviation Administration, Federal Communications Commission, National Science Foundation, Corporation for Public Broadcasting, Verizon, Lockheed-Martin. He has received awards for his policy scholarship from the International Communication Association, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Pace University, the University of Kentucky, UCLA, and Penn State. Schement has served on the editorial boards of twelve academic journals, and has edited the Annual Review of Technology for the Aspen Institute. He is editor-in-chief of the Encyclopedia of Communication and Information.

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Stephen Silha, director and co-founder, Journalism That Matters
Past president, Washington News Council, Seattle, Wash. Stephen Silha is a freelance writer, communications consultant, facilitator, futurist, and filmmaker. A co-founder of Journalism That Matters, Stephen was a reporter for the Christian Science Monitor and The Minneapolis Star before becoming communications director for the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation. He co-convened the first symposium on The Media and Philanthropy at the Chicago Tribune, and worked on the research project on community communications called Good News/Good Deeds: Citizen Effectiveness in the Age of Electronic Democracy.

Silha has worked with youth to get their voices in the media, and to facilitate youth-adult dialogues on Vashon Island, near Seattle, where he lives. He is currently making his first film, Big Joy, a documentary about the power of art and poetry to change lives, using the life and work of filmmaker/poet James Broughton as a lens.
ABOUT JOURNALISM THAT MATTERS

Mission

Journalism That Matters helps to shape an evolving news ecology that cultivates thriving communities. We believe journalism matters most when it is of, by, and for the people.

Who we serve

JTM is a 501(c)(3) that serves those who are shaping the evolving news and information ecosystem including emerging and traditional journalists, people and their communities, and others who contribute to civic discourse, such as educators, information technologists and librarians.

As the forms through which people receive news and information change, underlying values of newsworthy communication evolve, drawing from a tradition of accuracy, independence, fairness, transparency, professional responsibility,1 while adapting to a media world of many-to-many interactions, databases, linking, and increasingly rapid publishing.

How We Serve

We serve by:

- Bringing together a wide array of people so that journalism engages communities and communities engage in journalism.
- Using breakthrough engagement that fosters collaboration, innovation, and confidence to address complex challenges.
- Making visible the emerging principles of journalism by, for and of the people by sharing stories of the evolving news and information ecosystem.

JTM history and recent accomplishments

JTM has a proven track record of engagement that creates breakthrough ideas, innovation, collaboration and action. It works at the intersection of journalism and communities, helping journalism sustain communities and communities sustain journalism. Our more than 1,400 participants affirm that JTM has inspired new ideas, projects, roles, partnerships, ventures, and fresh soil for nurturing participatory democracy.

Who are we?

Since 2001, Journalism That Matters has existed to foster and sustain the values, principles and purposes of journalism by convening, connecting, inspiring, educating and supporting diverse, engaged people who are shaping a news and information ecosystem for healthy communities and self-governance.

JTM is known for hosting action-focused conversations among mainstream media practitioners, participatory media practitioners, entrepreneurial innovators, citizens, technologists, and others.

After almost ten years as an informal network, Journalism That Matters incorporated in 2011. Founded by Chris Peck, editor of The Commercial Appeal in Memphis, the late Cole Campbell, former editor of the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, news futurist Stephen Silha and change practitioner and author Peggy Holman, JTM convened its first session at the Associated Press Managing Editors conference in 2001 in Milwaukee – shortly after “9-11.” The enthusiastic response from participants led to a second session at the New England AP News Editors gathering in 2002, and at the Fetzer Institute in Michigan in 2005. Convenings followed in St. Louis and at the Media Giraffe Project summit at UMass Amherst, both in 2006; in Memphis and Washington, D.C. in 2007. Gatherings took place in 2008 at Yahoo! headquarters in Sunnyvale, Cal., followed by Minneapolis, Minn., and Philadelphia, Penn. In 2009 the Poynter Institute co-hosted in St. Petersburg, Fla. 2010 took JTM to the University of Washington in Seattle and Wayne State University in Detroit which hosted the first Create or Die conference focused on journalism, entrepreneurship, and meeting the needs of underserved communities. The MIT Center for Future Civic Media played host for the first conference of 2011, bringing together journalists and
librarians. The University of North Carolina Greensboro hosted the second Create or Die conference later in the year.

In 2011, JTM also supported a Seattle-based experiment in creating a “Journalism Commons” to cultivate a robust, collaborative regional network of people in the news and information community by sharing resources, learning from one another, and documenting area activities – doing journalism on journalism

What’s special?

JTM facilitates fresh, inclusive thinking and unexpected ideas in an atmosphere of professional intimacy and respect. We use interactive conversation practices (including Open Space Technology, World Café, Appreciative Inquiry, Dialogue and others) that challenge individuals and groups to take responsibility for what matters to them. An overall convening starts with several hundred people, then quickly self-organizes into a series of smaller interest groups which report out ideas and action steps to the whole.

News organizations, groups and foundations have supported the convenings because of their dynamic, “open” circle-round format and cross-disciplinary participation, which has led to breakthrough thinking and ongoing collaboration. Journalism That Matters participants report that their approach to work and the future of news is transformed, and they form relationships of lasting professional significance.

Journalism That Matters has provided an arena for mainstream and independent journalists to interact creatively with the public, bloggers, and new media pioneers in order to imagine and create new forms and platforms of community storytelling.

Among other things, JTM’s collaborators have:

- Helped establish and lead a multi-media reporting seminar for mid-career journalists.
• Developed a consensus statement on the importance of news literacy (http://www.mediagiraffe.org/wiki/index.php/Reboot-statement)
• Started a blog on the future of journalism (http://bcs.blogs.com/rejournalism/)
• Assisted an international/local news service focusing on “positive, inclusive and humane reporting of stories ignored by mainstream media” (http://www.commonlanguageproject.net/).
• Developed a template for a New Newsroom serving today’s “new news ecology”.
• Started new university and middle-school curricula on journalism, including working with citizen journalists.
• Co-conceived a satellite community newsroom in a library in Oakland, Calif., run by a legacy newspaper. (http://www.oaklandvoices.us/2010/06/16/giving-a-voice-to-west-oakland-residents-tribune-2-9-2010/)
• Offered new insights and projects initiated by industry leaders & shared with readers in columns and blogs
• Spurred and fostered management shifts including re-examination of beat systems and reporting styles
• Held training seminars for citizen journalists

Sponsors

Sponsors of Journalism That Matters include:

• American Library Association
• American Public Media
• Asian American Journalism Association
• Associated Press Managing Editors
• Blandin Foundation
• Center for Ethical Leadership
• Elon University
• Fetzer Institute
• Fowler Chair in Communication at Kennesaw State University
• George Washington University School of Media & Public Affairs
• Google
• Greensboro Partnership
• Institute of Museum & Library Services
• J-Lab at the University of Maryland
• W.K. Kellogg Foundation
• John S. and James L. Knight Foundation
• Kongsgaard-Goldman Foundation
• The Maynard Institute
• Media Giraffe Project at the University of Massachusetts Amherst
• Microsoft Corporation
• MIT Center for Civic Media
• The C.S. Mott Foundation
• Park Foundation
• Patterson Foundation
Testimonials

What our constituency says of our work:

There is a critical need for a group like JTM to be looking forward, especially since many of us are caught in the quagmire of the day to day and often do not have capacity to do this that kind of reflective work. This may sound corny, but it provides hope for those of us in the business to know a group like JTM exists. **It provides a sense of security to know there is a robust and talented group fixated on finding ways to secure the future of journalism.**
- Martin Reynolds, editor, Oakland Tribune

**JTM was a turning point for me** and in the best of all possible worlds that’s what JTM is. That convocation in 2005 was mindblowing. The opportunity to get completely away from everything else and think freely about what the possibilities were and also feel like there was a lot of hope. That is desperately needed and in contrast to the whining in journalism. **JTM helps people get over the ‘woe is us we can’t do that.’**
- Jane Ellen Stevens, director of online strategies at The World Company, Lawrence, KS

I am so impressed by JTM’s ability to sustain their movement over a period of years. Plus the methodology they bring to the conversation about the future of journalism is totally unique. **Their conferences connect people across divides, class and interests like no other.**

I am new to the effort, but I plan to stay engaged and am happy to recommend any support or funding that they seek. It is the enquiry and commitment and innovation like this effort that will guarantee and sustain the strong role that journalism has played in this democracy.
- Peter Block, author, Community: The Structure of Belonging
As a student journalist in 2005 I found myself randomly invited to a Journalism That Matters conference. I knew nothing about the group, but was intrigued by their ideas of journalism as a conversation and their acknowledgment of journalists as crucial storytellers in our culture.

Those three days with JTM were deeply influential. I was introduced to a network of media makers and people interested in journalism that I am still in touch with today. What’s more, the conversations generated at that conference became a foundation on which I developed the new media project that currently employs me today (www.clpmag.org [http://www.clpmag.org]).

Since then JTM has continued to be a force in my life and career. I think JTM offers a wonderful space to generate challenging and inspiring conversations, ideas and collaborations for the new media landscape. What is more I have found JTM and those involved to be a great source of support and encouragement at a time of great change and upheaval in the media industry and culture.

- Sarah Stuteville, Executive Editor, Lead Journalist, Common Language Project

My participation in the JTM Poynter Institute conference on Journalism and the New Media Ecology really was instrumental in bringing about a change in my thinking that I would describe as a paradigm shift. The shift can’t be summarized in a short phrase, but part of it is a shift from thinking of journalism as a lecture to journalism as a conversation. I had a lot of the pieces of the puzzle before the conference, but JTM helped to bring them together into a more coherent picture. Since attending the JTM Poynter conference, I have made a real push to introduce the staff of the Twin Cities Daily Planet to this different way of thinking about journalism, and we have begun to implement changes to how we do journalism based on those insights - for example, a new Reporters Notebook feature, and a new training workshop for citizen journalists, both of which emphasize engaging the public as active participants in creating the stories that we publish. The Reporters Notebook feature earned our editor, Mary Turck, a place at the recent McCormick/Poynter conference on Big Ideas / Best Practices, where she shared it with journalists from around the country - just one example of how seeds planted at JTM can germinate.

- Jeremy Iggers, Executive Director, Twin Cities Media Alliance

I was a bit of a skeptic when I went to my first Journalism That Matters meeting in Washington, D.C. It seemed too loosey-goosey, too touchy-feely, to accomplish much. But over the course of a couple of days, I saw the process work: People spontaneously coalesced into small groups to address topics or problems of mutual interest, and to seek solutions. Lots more creative interaction and exchange of ideas went on than at most conferences and seminars I’d ever attended.

I also attended the JTM gathering at the Poynter Institute in Florida, and saw the same thing happening to an even greater degree. The rich mix of people from a wide range of backgrounds has a catalytic effect. New ideas pop up and everyone gets a chance to weigh
in, from many different perspectives. There were lots of “Aha!” moments of looking at things in a new way, which can be very enlightening and energizing.

- John Hamer, Executive Director, Washington News Council

With each JTM gathering, including the one in which I was a partner in hosting in Washington, D.C., I made important connections and learned new things. Plus a couple of my own ideas got circulated thanks to the JTM network. All of which means that JTM is doing important work in building social capital among people interested in high quality journalism and in helping preserve the parts of journalism that are necessary for a healthy democracy. Thanks for the good work you are going.

- Leonard Witt, Robert D. Fowler Distinguished Chair in Communication at Kennesaw State University

I agreed to be a steward for Journalism that Matters after attending a conference earlier this year. Not only did the conference profoundly affect and inform me about what has been missing from all of the conversations held around the world on the future of journalism, but together with the other attendees we identified what was most important about it, and what it needs to continue in order to maintain an informed citizenry and democratic society. It also brought me together with professionals from all over the world, some who were in startups in the tech sector, some who had started up their own news operations, some were journalism educators, some who were editors whose chains were bankrupt, and some who had lost their jobs. Our commonality was that we were wholly dedicated to caring about, and improving, journalism in its next form.

I decided to take back what I learned to our news organization, and I agreed to continue this stewardship in hopes of organizing future events like this one. It is heartening to see so much startup activity - the most in decades - in our profession. The news business, as we hear every day, is struggling as convergence is happening so quickly, coupled with the economic climate. While our news operation took a bold step in becoming the first national newspaper to move to a web-first model – it is struggling too. Everyone in this industry is trying to pull together a patchwork of multiple funding sources and invigorate revenue streams to survive, all the while as we go into our communities, institutions, seats of government, classrooms, and war zones, to inform readers, bloggers, and future contributors. I am most grateful to contribute my time and ideas to Journalism That Matters, because collective knowledge is but one component, but an essential one, to saving the news business.

- Leigh Montgomery, Librarian, The Christian Science Monitor

By enabling participants to construct the agenda, the Open Space process creates high levels of participation and engagement, energizing the conference experience for all. The Open Space process can open up sensitive and challenging topics that sometimes are not addressed in more traditional conference formats.

- Renee Hobs, Professor, Department of Broadcasting, Telecommunications and Mass Media, Temple University