U.S. RUSSIA CIVIL SOCIETY PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM

CONFERENCE: "U.S. and Russian Civil Society: Deepening Partnerships"
http://www.usrussiacivilsociety.org/news/cspp-conference-2011-moscow

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(slides at: http://www.newshare.com/cspp-talk.pdf
or http://www.newshare.com/cspp-talk-russ.pdf)

(The all-caps headings below correspond to a related slide)

Good morning. Thank you, Horton, Roberta, Mikhail, Andre and Laurens for inviting me to help set the stage for the next two days by considering how Internet technology and social media may help with civil-society collaboration. I'll take a view from the United States; Alexander Zolotarev will follow up today and tomorrow with the Russian scene.

GO TO MEDIA GIRAFFE SLIDE

My perspective is that of a career journalist, who in recent years has started a tech company seeking to make it easy to buy and sell information on the web; then researching people "sticking their necks out" to foster participatory democracy and community.

GO TO RJI SLIDE

And most recently as a research fellow to the Donald W. Reynolds Journalism Institute at the Missouri School of Journalism.

WHAT WE'LL COVER

We'll speed through the threats and opportunities facing U.S. journalism then tick off some examples of innovation. Next, I'll note some of the U.S. based institutions that are sources of research and help not just for the news media -- but for any organization that's looking for advice on how to engage communities of interest. Then I'll tell you why social media matters for civil society, and offer five ideas for our work today and tomorrow.

SITUATION OVERVIEW

Internet technology is cleaving and splintering traditional print and broadcast mass markets. As a result, advertising as we've known it is devolving into one-to-one marketing. Technology has become the principal driver of change-and-innovation in the information and knowledge spheres. All of this means that publishers have to stop focusing on particular legacy products – like newspapers, broadcasts, magazines – and focus instead on helping the public manage their online relationship with information sources . . . with marketers . . . and with each other.

I call this "persona" management, because we can have multiple personas – one for our health-care provider . . . another for our bank . . . a third for our news provider . . . one for our Facebook friends . . . and perhaps others for other purposes. In this persona-driven media ecosystem, the publisher is no longer a gatekeeper, but is rather more like an "information valet" – not the person who parks cars, but more like the king's valet or the hotel concierge – helping you find the information and knowledge you need to get through the day. In this new environment, the key issues become privacy, trust, identity and how you enable commerce.

MOTT RESEARCH

Briefly, we have moved from connecting people to information, to connecting people with people and – as we'll discuss in a few minutes – connecting people to ideas and communities.

HOURGLASS AND CYLINDER

Why have we moved from an era -- where information was scarce --- to one in which information is abundant . . . and attention is the scarce commodity? I think of it as the difference between the hour glass and the cylinder. In the 20th century, there were technology pinch points that limited information flow. It imposed a hierarchy in which the publisher was on top and the consumer was at the receiving end below. But now the pinch points – such as bandwidth or press capacity or delivery distances – are gone. That means information can flow from any single publishing point to any single reception point.

ON ITS SIDE

And that also means the cylinder is more properly depicted on its side – because a content producer today is a content consumer tomorrow, and vice versa. We are all publishers, all journalists, in a sense, as we all can push our ideas from our Facebook page or personal blog to our family, a niche group, or the general public.

NOBODY'S IN CHARGE

Thus there are now many players – legacy media, new media, libraries, bloggers, videographers, the public – but not one of them is fully in charge.

BIGGEST OVERALL CHANGE

And that's why the biggest overall change in the 21st-century media environment is that we have entered the Attention Age.

END OF MASS MARKETS

So we can see what the "end of mass markets" means. It means a post-publishing, post-broadcast world of sometimes automated one-to-one sharing of content, of sponsorships and of user information. In this world whom do you trust?

REDEFINING RELATIONSHIPS WITH PUBLIC

And what is your attention worth? Privacy becomes a huge issue, one in which the E.U. continues to take a far more public-centric approach than in the U.S., where marketing and vendor forces still dominate.

TODAY'S IDENTITY ECOSYSTEM

This is evident in a chart, put together by Luma Partners last year, showing the dozens and dozens of companies involved in U.S. third-party advertising and marketing services that are between advertisers and publishers. They use things like "cookies" on your computer to track your movements and serve you relevant advertising that is sometimes useful and sometimes creepy.

FACEBOOK KNOWS

Facebook, through Facebook Connect, and Like buttons, is able to track much of our movement across the web, and use that data to sell more effective advertising. Is that wrong if we don't know about it? What if we do?

GOOGLE-PLUS IS DOING THE SAME THING.

Google-plus is doing the same thing.

NSTIC SLIDE

The U.S. government is now asking the private sector to come up with a competitive system for managing user identities on the web. There are big companies, many listed on this slide, who are working at it. That effort is just getting started.

RECAPPING FOUR TRENDS

So the four big trends are the end of mass markets . . . disrupting advertising and taking away journalisms main support . . . a new Attention Age . . . the early success of social networks like Facebook and Twitter . . . which all brings privacy and data ownership to the fore as critical social issues.

REIMAGING JOURNALISM

Give all this change, how might we imagine the future of journalism? Retired Seattle Times Executive Editor Mike Fancher has helped with a Knight Foundation paper out earlier this year which you can find at the URL shown.

ELEMENTS OF JOURNALISM 2007

The key elements of traditional journalism were elegantly laid out in the Bill Kovach/Tom Rosenstiel book "The Elements of Journalism," which is a must read in U.S. journalism schools.

ELEMENTS OF JOURNALISM 2011

But we need to add some new elements today. The first is that professional journalists must admit to equal partnership with the digital public -- as a matter of fact. The second is that quality journalism's funding is growing deeply uncertain. The third is that products are breaking down into constituent, "atomized" pieces. We all go anywhere on the web or mobile devices, assembling our news and information diet . . . from dozens of discrete sources. This means the professional-amateur relationship is in flux, it's harder to know what information we can trust and this calls for two initiatives – a new focus on "news literacy" in secondary and university education for we citizens – and what Mike Fancher calls "a new ethic of public engagement" for journalists.

WHERE IS THE NEW PUBLIC SQUARE?

So where does this public engagement occur? There are now ongoing experiments – failed in the Czech Republic but actively underway in several U.S. venues and surely elsewhere – to think of coffee shops, libraries, museums and other public venues – "third places", as Svetlana noted earlier -- as places where journalists and citizen can more deliberately – and deliberatively -- convene. The unit of discussion need not be any longer the traditional story. It might be a blog post or a series of tweets, or an organized community discussion group. And it might be starting or continuing on Facebook.

This new sort of engagement has at its core a consideration of what engenders trust.

WHAT IS CITIZEN JOURNALISM

There no universally accepted definition of "citizen journalism," although the George Soros-funded Open Society Foundations, in a series of reports "Mapping Digital Media"

worldwide, is tracking the phenomenon. Elements include reaching out, crowdsourcing and curation.

REACHING OUT EXAMPLE

An example of reaching out . . . is the daily newspaper in the small Connecticut city of Torrington, which moved into a new building last year and has created a café to serve up coffee and discussion right next to the newsroom, where coverage planning meetings are open to the public.

CROWDSOURCE

American Public Media, the second-largest producer of non-profit public radio programming in the United States, has pioneered crowdsourcing with its Public Insight Network – a database of more than 250,000 listeners who have given their names, addresses, phone numbers and email -- and have agreed to be expert sources and contributors on subjects for which they have special expertise.

TWITTER CURATION

In California, a two-person company called Sociative has spent several years developing a way to process millions of "tweets," identify the tweeters who are most expert on a given topic, and create a page on the topic that links to up-to-the-minute topical stories recommended by those experts. The result is something they are calling "social curation."

LONCS (FOUR SIDES)

These four slides, quickly, are examples of different versions of human curation of local news showing the great variety of experimentation in ownership and format underway in the United States.

SOROS TINY URL

The Soros Citizen Journalism Report cites advantages of the genre, but also warns that nonprofessional reporting isn't always trustworthy and can suffer from uncertain ethics.

LIBRARIANS AND JOURNALISTS

A promising avenue for collaboration is emerging in the United States between librarians and journalists. In April, we helped organize an 80-person gathering on the topic at MIT. We learned that librarians are as passionate about information access, civic engagement and free speech as are journalists -- and are ready to collaborate.

PIN AND LIBARIES

The Public Insight Network is now working with U.S. libraries, with a web survey widget that is surveying library usage and inviting participants to become PIN sources.

INFOVALET EXAMPLE – FACEBOOK

Before we leave the topic of citizen journalism and move to resources that might help in civil society media outreach, we need to make one perhaps counter-intuitive observation. If Facebook can work as an information valet, delivering instant personalization, helping you manage your persona, and allow your friends to share news with you – is Facebook a platform for citizen journalism?

SIX RESOURCES

Now let me just flash to the screen and list six U.S.-based organizations that can help you understand the opportunities in this attention-driven, persona-driven, social-media world.

First, The Investigative News Network is the most unique. It's a nonprofit collaborative of organizations that do exclusively fact-based, accountability reporting on the kind of civic issues that have brought us all together.

Second, NewsU at the Poynter Institute has enrolled more than two million users in worldwide, web-based training for digital skills, news literacy, social and mobile media. And Howard Finberg, its director, is with us here in the room. So talk to him.

Third, Journalism That Matters organizes cross-silo convenings of technologists, librarians, educators, scholars and researchers in open format to promote fresh thinking and collaboration.

Fourth, The Center for Civic Media at MIT in Cambridge is the premier connector of journalism and civic media with technology and technologists.

Fifth, The Aspen Institute, in partnership with the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, is the premier funder and convenor of discussions about information needs of communities.

Finally, The Reynolds Journalism Institute works with the oldest and second-largest journalism school in the United states to foster ideas, research and experiments that lead to solutions that sustain the values, principles and purposes of journalism.

SOCIAL MEDIA / CIVIL SOCIETY

Let's finish by suggesting why the rise of social media is vital to advancing civil societies.

American legacy media have tended to think of social media in simplistic terms – readers or viewers commenting on stories that have been written by professional reporters. But this represents only vertical sharing – top down. Spurred by the success of Facebook, new technologies are focusing on what I call lateral community building – citizens commenting among and between each other across platforms rather then up and down with news organizations. In this environment, the news organization is no longer the gatekeeper, or the instigator, but perhaps just the convenor or collaborator in a new public square. And the convenor need not necessarily be a news organization – it could be a civic NGO.

New services such as hypothes.is, Sociative, Front Porch Forum, Storify and Google+ are joining Twitter in working to enable such lateral social sharing. And there are many more such services in the wings, because the technology to discover, process and make sense of billions of tweets and other social-graph events is improving so fast.

So here's why this matters to the people in this room today.

In July, *The New York Times* disclosed results of a marketing survey it had commissioned called "The Psychology of Sharing."[1] The main reason people share news links is to maintain relationships . . . *The Times* research found – for reasons including altruism, self-definition, empathy, connectedness and evangelism.

The trading of news links, stories, recommendations, discussions, experience and relationships leads to broader civic engagement, Prof. Joy Mayer of the Reynolds Journalism Institute, also found in a year of surveying U.S. newsroom practices. And a third researcher, Jan Schaffer of J-Lab, the Institute for Interactive Journalism at American University, concluded in another study that users of local online news services are less interested in stories about <u>conflict</u> . . . and more interested in stories that help them <u>engage their communities</u>. Indeed, most of us know from <u>our own</u> experience, that engagement is the first step in fostering community and participatory democracy.

So that means there's a powerful reason for NGOs concerned with civil-society issues to add social media to our toolbox – it's simply a powerful new way to expand and draw new voices to our causes.

OUR TASK IN MOSCOW

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[1] -- STUDY AT: http://nytmarketing.whsites.net/mediakit/pos/

http://www.poynter.org/latest-news/media-lab/social-media/139716/5-reasons-people-share-news-how-you-can-get-them-to-share-yours/
http://www.ana.net/conference/show/id/DSM-JUL11

Which leads to these five thoughtsfor today and tomorrow, the first relevant to all our working groups, and the rest more specifically to media.

1. We should cross topics and cross silos. Not all of our work should be with colleagues in our designated fields. That's the point of the networking and open time.

2. Ethical standards need to emerge to inform the way we share information.

3. We need to frame how we value private, personal and civic information as commercial and public goods.

4. Then we need to assert that value, through common rules

5. And develop a sharing/commerce infrastruture for exchanging that value.

FROM PAPER TO PERSONA

The Reynolds Journalism Institute has called for formation of a non-profit Information Trust Association to help address issues of trust, identity, privacy and info commerce on a U.S. and perhaps global scale.

We published in August, "From Paper to Persona," on this topic.

YOU'LL FIND THE ENGLISH AND RUSSIAN VERSION OF THIS TALK AT THE URLS SHOWN:

SIDES:
http://www.newshare.com/cspp-talk.pdf
http://www.newshare.com/cspp-talk-russ.pdf

TEXT:
http://www.newshare.com/cspp-text.pdf
http://www.newshare.com/cspp-text-rus.pdf

Thank you.

---END TALK ---