

WORKSHOP #1 NOTES

Alex: it's not clear where this document will be sent; who is the audience? The text is too dense. And may not be accessible to all audiences.

Jon Dee: need to be broken down in four or five key points under subheadings to make it more flowing and easier to understand.

Ralph: agrees.

Lucia: Besides the editing, she points out it's not a native English speaker who wrote it. Is there an objection to the document?

Jon Dee: Suggests looking at it developing four or five key subjective headings

Tess from Solutions: points out that democracy in itself wouldn't necessarily solve the problems discussed. Though giving people a voice is important, but the idea that democracy itself may solve things is naive.

Dee: points out the Tea Party and Koch brothers are examples of how hard Democracy doesn't necessarily follow.

Tess: points out that democracy can imply tough choices and not necessarily liberalization.

Alex: democracy without information isn't necessarily a solution...

Dee: Other freedoms like for women to control fertility...

British guy from China Watch: uncomfortable with signing on ... more to the point is not the point...he would only be comfortable in signing something about the importance of open information and a free press. Suggests we present

Christine: Seconds this suggestion. That signing on to an activist statement isn't something that is possible as a U.S. journalist.

Andrea: what happened with our politics, political systems, and public money. We have to work to break the system....We are the first to be responsible for the??

Nuece (Brazil) – we should focus on the role of journalism. I come from Brazil and I see the role is to motivate people to participate...to try to get more population to spend more time on civic issues. In her country,

Mance: I believe this moment is very important for organizing ideas: first, the democratic process needs to be enforced in all the world on several levels: Civil

society, living well off the people. If isn't not possible... We need to abolish rights that reproduce injustice and recreate justice for society. Our choice of political process Not universal values, because people need a minimal human consumption for his dignity. We need to change our consumption, not unsustainable consumption., more ecological products. If we reduce to zero our consumption, the capital enterpriseif we reduce our consumption for half, the capitalists will make their products last only half as long... Our consumption doesn't solve the problem. If we reduce our consumption of, say, a pen, the capitalist's reduce the ink. We need to change the system.

I suggest we talk about where we are each coming from...journalism or activism.

Alex: The right to consume is also a right.

Mance: each people has the right to consume what they want. But if we do it ethically, we can choose to ecological products and ethical priducts that doesn't take advantage of people and planet. The state has an obligation to

Alex: bigger government?

Mance: no. an ethical civil society and social contract. There is no way to open

Edwin: democracy and the state isn't the only concern. We have to think about the big, international companies that push consumption. For example, in Rome people have two or three cars per family. But the big companies push new car purchases.

Haroldo: objects

Edwin: says we get publicity cash. Edwin says his publication is an example. The conflict is inside us.

Yu-Tou from Tiwain: Suggests we share the difficulties we have in reporting.

Croatian guy: Suggests at the end of the workshop we could list the issues we are working on and make some suggestions about what we can do as journalists about these issues. "In the end, I think what we can do is tell the truth."

Mauro: I come from Florence. Mainly, here in this room we are journalist not philosiphers or scientists. This document, someone should synthesis. It shouldn't be handed to us. And it should be something that relates t our work. We choose to tell the truth, ...I don't have to mention the context of my comments are Berlusconi, an atmosphere of contempt and ??? .. When to tell the truth and have pluralism in the media, take advantage of new media that could be positive or negative, and that our work could open the eyes of the people. And finally, to remember that we are not a power like the others. That we have to be distant, that there has to be separation,

because we are the counterweight. All this should be conveyed with a few points that we can propose.

Brazilian reporter: Says we all have the same question: who will support the free press. Advertising...and how can we change the system when we depend on the old system. The solidarity economy could help. Wiki leaks supported by donations but when the system wanted to stop them, credit card companies cut them off.

Dee: Wiki leaks broke the law. And put people's lives at risk.

Brit: says it's a not a model organization.

Dee: Huff Post was a good model of citizens journalism. A model. And, there are examples of magazines that have fiercely defend editorial independence. Mentions his new website project...in which people share information democratically. Do we need new media that doesn't involve old media?

Alex: Nobody has said the word: Internet. What better example...according to a new law pushed by Berlusconi impoverishes the commons but because anything objected to must be removed from the Internet. There's nothing more "commons" than the Internet, why not focus on the Internet. That the Internet must remain free because it's a common good doesn't belong to governments. We don't want to get into the position of China. Proposes we focus on Internet freedom.

Tzu...(Twain) – Brings up the monetary issue. Asks how many have unlimited Internet at home/work. She questions whether people have enough access to make it a reasonable discussion.

Nueces: says it's a side issue...because the commons mentioned ...

Dee: suggest Brit chair things

Brit: Suggest we talk about what ails us as journalism...our challenges

Haroldo: Says we should we need to narrow things down.

Brit: suggestion: What is the role of the journalist in the global commons? He starts: I'm Sam, ... says he's very aware of the need to for public information in governing the commons when anyone can publish what ever they want ... climate change denial. How do you shift through all different, complex information and making judgments. What we do at China Dialog, is try to open up a cross language, cross-cultural dialog. The Chinese enviro journalists are some of the most daring and provocative journalists in China...via their work they are pushing for public info. His group encourages them to use open info. laws and making online databases available. So that's an example of how journo play a role.

Edwin: Compares rich Latino in Switzerland and poor Latino in Spain. Says in Spain, because of the economic problems, end up in jail or lose their homes. He says he increasingly tries to help people in need. "This is my mission now."

Jean Claude: our problem is simply: right of democracy. Journalist need to play three roles: Jornos need to help people know their rights. Secondly: need to play a watchdog role in a democracy; thirdly, when writing, they need to provide criteria. We need to go straight to the point...

In Cameroon, people don't know their rights and their duties. I think journalism needs to help them know. Secondly, watchdog ...when government is doing something that's not what they say publically, journalists need to denounce it. When writing, you don't need to take part, (be part of the story.)

Claude from Sudan: What is democracy? People sometimes see democracy ...the majority of people in Africa don't live in democracy, so we need more information and discussion about democracy before moving on. The role of jornos, he is asked: the problem of censorship, means the public misses many things.

Jean Claude, Cameroon-Italy: Democracy in the world is in crisis. It does not work. If it doesn't work maybe it's because the rights of the population in the democracy is not respected is because the journalists doesn't play their role. If the population does not participate in democracy, use their rights, what is the problem. If the journalist don't do his or her own role, what's the problem. Who is not playing his role? What is the journalism in crisis?

Italian journalist: The role of the journalist is to aim to the responsibly at every level: from the simple citizen to the government policy official. Aiming to our own personal responsibility to live a sustainable lifestyle.

Macedonian journalist: Journalists are in jail, including some journalism. In Macedonia we cannot write about the common goods because they are state goods and you will be seen as an enemy and could end up in jail or lose your job. She finds promoting journalism...it's very difficult. So they try to get around this by publishing "peace journalism" and publishing in online blogs. Maybe the best journalism in the country is online. ...we've been able to close some factories...but in the last few years, it's not possible to this kind of work.

Mance: says blogs were an important form of alternative communication in the last elections in Brazil. The relationship between the mass media and the blogs because the journalist no long have to have a diploma, according to the government. Many of the old journalists who start a blog end up having their blogs taken over by the newspaper or government.

Tess - Solutions: has hesitations about blogs but in terms of politics people can just subscribe to blogs that confirm their own political beliefs ... and never be exposed to facts or other perspectives that might challenge their own views. Perhaps I'm naive because I don't know if journalists have an obligation to ask tough questions and give different points of views.

Dee: I think journalism is changing in Australia...environment is not a priority for mainstream journalism. So the way I've worked, and others, we cannot realize on work and income from environmental writing. So we have to be entrepreneurs. I wrote a book. I have columns, not always paid, but my priority is to get good information out. So I use good media outlets and I've created my own outlets as well. I've also acted as a presenter...of a TV series. Now I'm creating an iPad magazine ...on the theory why can't we create our own media outlets. We can take control and join forces. One thing GreenAccord could tap into is helping us join forces and support each other. ... As an activist, I get my team to do the research; I team with private corporations to fund it...I've found that corps. That are interested in positive change can be good to work with. I write opinion pieces and do TV interviews..etc. If I see something bad, I'll expose it. Final point: we have freedom of information in Australia, just did an expose on the government of how parliament increased its energy use by 20 percent and got government pledge to cut usage by 10 percent.

Jonathan Cobb: I think blogs can end up as an echo chamber. But the whole point that you go to a journalist for, and books too, is to have some kind of guide. When go to blogs, you no longer have that kind of guide. That it is kind of undifferentiated. You've lost that role.

I wanted to bring up another point: Over my lifetime, in the US, the very notion of "democracy" is just disappearing. I think that the role of the journalist and the media is bringing that up. Bring up, like Mance said in his talk, that in certain areas there is no democracy.

Italian guy: For me, the role is to create an awareness. Because in Italy we have two referendums – on water and nuclear energy. But before the vote, there was very little talk about it. And, journalists have to help the people by showing the pros and cons. The problem of public or privatized water is a problem for everyone. I believe that Africa may suffer from privatized water. And, on nuclear, we saw the consequences in Japan. But often journalists are linked to a certain political party. But the best ones have no affiliation.

Francesca -- Italian Catholic wire service: says the problem is the content because we're going from web 2.0; we should go back to what do we write. To me, what we write is more important. I work in a press agency and I have the privilege of working on foreign issues. It is very difficult. We do citizen journalism using missionaries and volunteers, Catholics and non-Catholics. It has big limits but enormous potential as alternatives to AP, Reuters, AFP, etc. Because all the agencies write the same thing and we want to give an alternative. For instance, you can imagine how hard it is to

coverage war. Do we really know what's happening in Iraq, Afghanistan or Libya? While it's every philosophical but the most important and the content and how to get people to share their stories? The problem for me in Italy is that people don't care, don't speak foreign languages. If you don't care what happens outside your home, why would you care about what happens abroad. People only care about foreign events when it comes to the immigrants in their communities. So, its important to provide information, especially info that is different from the official story, to fight the apathy of the public, I have to make my reporting human, easy to understand. I can write three pages on the internal politics of the Congo but who will care. But if I find a link to local right, for instance the common good, I can make it interesting.

Haroldo: In Brazil we have many blogs about Africa but we are completely depended on wire service news. So when I went to Africa, I tried to bypass the typical bad news story and focus on positive stories. Editors I work with in Brazil accepted the idea because it was something new, and not done before. The lesson is that you need to disseminate information that is new and increase the knowledge on a subject that is unknown. And go against prejudiced because the majority of news is prejudiced against Africa. So I believe my role, as a journo is to disseminate information. I don't know that the truth is but it's not being told; to fight against prejudice and ideas foisted on use by the international press.

Tzu Tou I'm from Taiwan, economic problems have created shrinkage of editorial staff. People are forced into early retirement. Thos experienced journalist have started many online media outlets. After a few years, some of those online operations, because of the high quality of the reporting, they've been under pressure from banks, religious groups etc.... If you know how to report, you will find your readers. Twain is a democratic country but the government is a huge PR machine. They talk to big papers first. And, "buy" one of the reporters...but insist the reporter not talk to anyone else. And that it gets good placement in the paper. Says the government controls the coverage by buying editorial space and even specify the page and the length. Some reporters quit in protest. So if you go to big newspapers, you have very young reporters covering very complex issues. Third point: the government always will only talk to local reporters and won't allow foreign outlets go to cover some events or have access to certain events.

Mauro: In a meeting in which we talk about democracy, we can't ignore huge problems that are global and a political class that only thinks as far as the next election. We have something more, because we last longer in our jobs. It's been beautiful that it's come out of this forum that we are proud to be journalists and do our jobs seriously and based on a personal ethic and knowing that this puts us at risk. This environment, it's splendid to be able write a document like this. Those with power

Nueces: says free press should be defined as a common good.

Christine: the complexity of the environmental issues that we cover is another problem.

Dee: Points out that in Australia, the Murdoch press, prints lots of climate denialism and against climate change. How the political agenda of newspapers often make them deliberately mislead.

Mance: Information has to be interpreted in order for it to make sense to people. Interpretation is different from country to country. In Brazil, there is also a lot of misinformation and spin on the information in newspapers. Because often the same story from the International Monetary Fund, it's often the same mantra passed on in the newspaper. There are several ways to interpret this information.

Dee: Ask how many have had editors who have changed the head, subhead and the content of the article.

The Italian anthropologist: I write for an environmental environment. It's not that I am censored, my problem is that I'm talking to people who are already aware of environmental problems, and otherwise they would not buy the magazine. The problem is they is finding information that relates to everyone, because they feel it's boring... Under Berlusconi. So the hardest part is reaching a public that is not aware.