

Friday - Keynote Speaker

The end of the mourning, mewling, and moaning about the future of journalism: Why I'm a cock-eyed optimist about news

Speaker:

Jeff Jarvis, Associate Professor and Director of the Interactive Journalism program at City University of New York Graduate School of Journalism and Blogger at www.BuzzMachine.com

ROSENAL CALMON ALVES: Thank you very much, Lorraine. We emphasize in this symposium the transformation. The transformation of journalism, the transformation of media and these changes are larger and are more profound than we imagined in the beginning. It's not just the re-accommodation of the media environment like we had in the first, in the last century when we had new media arriving. It's something much more in depth than that. And, you know, I use in my classes to talk about the book of Russia fiddler that caused mediamorphosis that talk about the literal changes and adaptations that the, you know, the media had to do when the radio and the television arrived.

And in 1999 in conference here I said that instead of mediamorphosis, we should be thinking about mediocide, the kidding of the media as we have known so far and the killing of journalism as we have known so far. It's not the killing of journalism or the killing of media but that it's something that at that point our thinking was different because we are in a revolution. We are not in a just one evolution from the addition of another medium. It's digital revolution on my, in my opinion is something that has, its only parallel with Guttenberg 500 years ago.

So at that time there is a lot of pessimism. Lot of pessimism about what's going to happen, what's going to happen to journalism? What's going to happen with our jobs, with the media companies, with our careers, et cetera? So we are really privileged to start this symposium with a keynote speaker who is going to start with an optimistic view. And I'm very pleased to introduce you to Jeff Jarvis who is a leading blogger, who is one of the most respected media analysts. At this point, a consultant a several important media companies here and his blog, BuzzMachine.com, has done, he has done something that some of that you know about that I found fascinating is that taking advantage of this one of the changes, one of the radical changes that is going on now is precisely the participation of the audience in the news production, et cetera. He launched a participation of the audience in the keynote speech. So he posted his slides and his ideas on his blog and asked the audience for opinion. I have never seen that before but he's going to tell us if he liked the experience or not. So, Jeff, Jeff Jarvis with you. Thank you very, very much.

[audience clapping]

2007 – International Symposium on Online Journalism

JEFF JARVIS: Hold on a second. Acknowledge me, will be nice when they finish it. Friday presentations. Some were hear this is Jarvis [mumbling] [laughing]. Alright, you know what? I can do it on the web. That one. Oh, sorry. Okay. Tada! Okay. So *Frontline* had a news show called “News War” a few weeks ago and when they were interviewing me, I had the temerity to tell Lowell Bergman that he was getting the story wrong and that he was concentrating not on the possibilities and on the opportunities that we face in journalism now and figuring that out instead he was trying to find a war. He was pitting digital against print and bloggers against mainstream media, a discussion that I’m quite tired of, as are most bloggers. Me against. Nick Lemmon of Columbia. Business against editorial. The past against the future. He wanted war, damn it! And I said that’s old news about news. We’ve got to talk about these new opportunities.

Well it didn’t do me any good. It didn’t get in the show but along the line I gave him this silly quote and so there it is for all to see. But I am a cockeyed optimist. One of my blog people, when I put this up on the web, said, “No, no, no, we’re not the ones who are cockeyed. We’re the straight eyed optimists.” What fun. And I get tired of the bleating that I hear in newsrooms. A few days Phil Bronstein, the editor of the San Francisco Chronicle, was quoted as saying to his staff that, “The newspaper business is quote broken and no one knows how to fix it. And if any other paper said they do know, they’re lying.”

Well that showed a frustrating lack of hope and optimism for news. You know there are a lot of ways to fix news and, in fact, after that quote went up online, tons of bloggers came in. Guys named Doc Sorrells and Dave Wieners and guys like that with tons of ideas and suggestions about how to fix news. And I didn’t agree with all of them. you wouldn’t agree with all of them either but it shows that people care about news and they wanted to join in this and do this.

You know what? It’s not about fixing the news anyway. I get in trouble with The University of New York where I talk about reinventing journalism. It doesn’t need reinventing. Fine! But it is about growing and expanding and exploding. It is about new opportunities in news. So this morning I want to suggest that we declare a whine-free zone.

And we, that’s so much for friggin’ punch lines. Okay, I’m moving on here. Hold on a second. There’s a version on the web so I’ll just go to that. [pause] Ah, Mac. How do you spell Mac? What is this Windows thing? I guess you have... [pause] Fingers crossed? Yay!

Alright, so this morning, no moaning, no muling, no mourning about the fate of journalism. And this isn’t to say there aren’t risks in change. Rosental talks about that and lord knows there are lots of them but we know those risks. We know those dangers and there’s really no point in continuing to obsess on them. I hope we turn our attention to our opportunities and this is cheeky of me to say as it was to try to tell Lowell Bergman what to do. To be in this august group because this is the group that is making that change. But I think we all can testify that we hear in newsrooms, we hear people around trying to say they’re fearful of the change. They’re trying to hold it off or if they do see the change finally coming now that they don’t know what to do with it. And they see it as change as being about fear when change is really about opportunity and great opportunity.

2007 – International Symposium on Online Journalism

So my suggestion to you is that this is not about us versus them. It's not about a war narrative of anybody being at war with anything else. It's not about denial. It's not about defeatism. It's about expanding the news. And neither is it about "or". It's about "and". It's about new ways to do more things. Neither is it about "less". In fact, journalism can expand greatly and we'll talk about that briefly. And it's not about the old really, it's about all these new opportunities.

So I do come off like a cockeyed optimist and it's really rather obnoxious but it's important, I think, to say that this is a great time to be in journalism. It's a magnificent time to be in journalism and a magnificent time because it is changing.

So here's what I hope to talk about in brief order is the efficiencies we now see, the methods we can now do, the new relationships, new jobs, not just losing old jobs, new business models, though I don't have any great solutions there. And more journalism.

So let me start with the efficiencies. And it's an inconvenient truth of our business. Journalism is very inefficient because it's built on old market reality, especially the newspaper business. We know that's changing. Newspapers are no longer one-size fits all monopolies in isolated places with few or no competitors and bucket loads of money. That day is over. But efficiency is good and healthy. We need to have efficient businesses. Cutting certain things is necessary in the business. And it becomes an opportunity to refocus ourselves on what journalism can and should be today.

And we, the editors, are the ones who should do this. We should take that scalpel in hand or else someone else will wield it. We're certainly seeing that around. So we're the ones who have to refocus what the business is. And we need journalism. We all need journalism to be a sustainable business. It's in our best interest. When I came through the business in the early days, I was always told, "Don't worry your pretty little head, Mr. Journalist, about this business stuff. No, somebody else does that. The other side of that wall over there. Don't do that." Well it was a huge mistake. When I started at *Entertainment Weekly* magazine I vowed never again would I let a circulation guy ruin my business for me and I had to know enough about the business to protect the business.

So part of this is about sustainability of how we run this business. So we need to refocus our attention on what we can do today, given new realities, given new opportunities. What that really amounts to is we boil ourselves down to our essence. We get rid of all our inefficiencies and we get rid of the things that somebody else now does better. What is it that we do best? We have to decide that and we're still not in that mode yet, I don't think.

I went to a session yesterday morning with the head of McClatchy and Dean [Bracket] now at the *New York Times* and there is still talk there about how we deliver everything to everybody. And I think that's not necessarily what journalism needs to be about. And so what are we really about? What is our greatest value? Obviously. Right. It's obviously reporting and so how do we get back to that? We haven't left it. We haven't left it at all but how do we refocus our resources on reporting? How can we get even more reporting than we have today?

Well, let's start with the cutting [inaudible]. And talk about a few exercises there. I think that newspapers are run, many of them, on the fear of losing one reader, the

2007 – International Symposium on Online Journalism

fear of losing one more reader. “Oh, my God, we can’t get rid of that because people like that.” Well the *Star Ledger* in New Jersey, with whom I used to work, in June of 2001 killed its stock tables. It was early in that trend and they invested in a better business section and in the end of the day they saved a million dollars a year, mainly in paper and ink. I asked Jim Wilsy, the editor and friend of mine, a few weeks ago how many readers they lost net after that. Twenty. So they were investing a million dollars a year and holding on to those twenty readers who were probably frankly near death anyway.

[audience laughing]

Yeah, probably the few have sense, yeah. And so, well, no, they’re *Wall Street Journal* readers. And so, twenty. So is that a good investment? Clearly not but we have this fear because we were one-size fits all, because we were everything to everybody, oh my God, we can’t get rid of that because some people like it. Well there are now new places to go get that.

So what else? Bridge columns. I don’t know how to play bridge. If I did, I’d go find it on the internet. Even Howard Stern is playing chess on the internet now. You don’t need a chess column in the paper. TV listings, and I’m an old TV critic, get rid of them. Yes, even Mrs. Harrissey, cartoons. Yes, you can kill a cartoon and survive. [laughing] You can. Yes, you’re going to lose some people who will be mad at you but life goes on.

So what else is taking up money and paper? What else can be found elsewhere? What else is done better elsewhere? What else do we, are we holding onto because we have this fear of losing that one more reader. What else does not fit our mission? Which is reporting. Ego! We spend an incredible amount of money on ego. Why else do we send 15,000 journalists to the political conventions where nothing happens? And what does happen you can see on C-SPAN, right? So we waste all this money. When I worked at the *Chicago Tribune*, it was the one time in my career where I lived in the same town as my parents and my mother would say to me occasionally, “Oh, did you see this story in the Tribune today?” And I’d say, “Yes, Ma, I know. I wrote it.” My own mother didn’t notice my byline. So the value of the byline, the value of saying we have to have our person there because it’s so valuable in the community, no. It’s ego. We’re spending an incredible amount of money on ego.

So instead of just saying that we’re going to match the story everybody else does, why don’t we come up with our own stories that are better and that’s the best salve for ego. Do we really need critics? Now that’s heresy for me to say. I was a TV critic. I started *Entertainment Weekly*. But the whole world of criticism has changed immensely. You cannot cover all of entertainment with one person anymore. In fact, the audience covers it with you and that’s the key is how do you get involved in a larger discussion? Golf writers, do they really have to go to the golf tournaments? You can watch it on TV.

All these kinds of niceties we used to have because you didn’t have it in the next town, you now have on the internet. Do we really need be edited, the wires? I blogged the other day that if I were Gannett I’d probably set up a national, national desk where you just do it all in one place. Well you already kind of have it at USA Today but we’ll [ask him about that later kids].

2007 – International Symposium on Online Journalism

Commodity news, the main thing is that we're telling people what they already know. So there are opportunities to cut and I'm not saying that I want to cut for the sake of cutting. What I want to do is refocus those resources to what makes us special, to reporting. So consider the *Washington Post* and the Walter Reed story. I knew you'd bring it up. I know you're thinking about it. Well we want more journalism like this. We all do. Somebody the other day said, "Well, bloggers didn't do that. Reporters did." Yeah, exactly, that's the point! We would love them to do, be able to do more. We would love reporters to be able to focus more on great reporting like that. Absolutely agree. Nobody says, nobody says we want less journalism. Nobody says we want less reporting. We all want more.

And so I think it's really important to see that this refocusing comes to that. The question is how do you eliminate the distractions from that reporting? And I think we have a duty to eliminate that waste. It's kind of a holy duty of getting rid of the waste and concentrating on what makes journalism journalism.

Let's go one more step. The *New York Times* was criticized for not following the *Washington Post* story of Walter Reed, for not matching it. Well does that really make sense? So they're going to devote resources to go ahead and do the reporting that the *Washington Post* already did? They're going to replicate the results as if this were a peer-reviewed science experiment.

Well why shouldn't instead the *Times* just send readers to the *Post*, which Jim Brady will gratefully accept. Why not? Right? And then the next time a great story comes up, why shouldn't Jim send his readers to the *Times*? Would you do that? Yeah, because the *Post* is now linking up. That's what should be happening.

This is a new architecture of news in the age of links. We do not need to deliver it all. We should not deliver it all. We can't deliver it all. The public can find out more information, better information with a click and through those clicks I believe unique, quality reporting will rise to the top because it is unique, because it is good. I'll even argue that the *Times* had a duty not to replicate what the *Post* did and a duty to send readers to the *Post*, not only because it was more efficient, because it supports the journalism at the *Post*. It sends them readers, traffic, attention, value, thus revenue. We have to support journalism at its source.

If we're going to try to do things that are unique in our communities, that's the architecture of news. So this leads to, in Bill Maher's worlds, a new rule. I wish I had the theme song he did, "New Rules!" So this I blogged recently that the idea that maybe we should do what we do best and then link to the rest. There is a new architecture of news happening out there.

Now consider the *LA Times*. I knew you were thinking about that, too. Oops, oh, no, now I got to go back? Oh! Please? Yes.

And I saw Dean Backet and Dean Backet is extremely impressive yesterday and I don't mean to take anything away from John Carol and Dean McKay, the now former editors of the *Times* but they were in some measure protecting something that existed and I think that I would argue that they needed to kind of build something new. Consider that when Michael Kinsley arrived to have the editorial pages there, he found fifteen opinion writers doing little more than writing about a thumb sucker a week. And he said it's impossible to argue that there wasn't waste there. There was.

2007 – International Symposium on Online Journalism

Frontline, that story I mentioned earlier, lionized those editors for some good reasons but also demonized the business people who were trying to cut the budget. But this is a paper that believed that it had to write all their own stories. They've said that, "We must write everything ourselves. We must duplicate all this other news." It was addicted to byline heroine. It believed that it had a mission to be a national and international paper but really suffered was local news. They kept closing local news bureaus so they could have more bureaus overseas, which I think personally is wrong.

I had this argument with Ken Auletta of the *New Yorker* recently. And he challenged me and he said, "Well, Jeff, surely the *LA Times* should have a far east correspondent." And I don't argue with that. Sure, if you can afford it that's great to have. But think about it, that one person is over in the far east, covering the vastness of Asia, one person with a story, what, every two weeks? So what if you took that same budget and in L.A. you hired three bright, young, multilingual people to go trolling the world of media and reading and translating in media and blogs in the far east. They could present an incredible value the next, every single day of what's happening in the Far East.

What's a better use of that resource? Now that we have the power of the link why not use it? Do we have to have our own person there all the time? And let's be honest, I know every foreign correspondent and foreign editor I know constantly complains they can't get enough stuff in the paper. And every correspondent I know also does spend time catching up with the reporting that was done by the native reporters. Well now we can link directly to those people.

I was in London a few weeks ago when Alan Russberger, the editor of the *Guardian*, for whom I full disclosure, consult and write, announce to his staff that every journalist there now worked for the web and that the demands of the web would be preeminent. And to say that with an English accent and it sounds even more important. The demands of the web are preeminent.

Now I've always been impressed with Alan's strategy but I came back and I saw that two weeks before, the new editor of the *LA Times*, Jim O'Shea, had made a very similar announcement, saying that the web was preeminent, they're now a local newspaper and so on. Now this is the guy who came from the company, from *Tribune* company. This is the guy who came from Tribune Tower. If I were good at PowerPoint, I would cue the organ music now, the organ music that says, "Eww, Tribune Tower." Alright, Tribune Tower is being demonized right now but in fact I think O'Shea, acting on the findings of a commission that was put together by Dean Backet, said that they had to change radically and he's finding new and good changes.

Yesterday Dean Backet said that the morale at the *Times* is horrendous and we all know why but I think there is an opportunity to be able to do new things there. It should be an exciting time. I just talked with, I was in London and I talked to the editors at the *Guardian* and the *Telegraph* and other places and saw that they, too, are undertaking these kinds of changes.

And even Gannett and I say even without meaning to be pejorative about Gannett but I would not have thought that Gannett would have been a hotbed of innovation in journalism. But what they're doing in their newsrooms I think is spectacular.

2007 – International Symposium on Online Journalism

They've decided to reorganize around the web in making new media preeminent. They've got rid of the edition clock and they live 7 x 24. They tell the world what they know when they know it. And they have seen that they need to cooperate with others in their community to gather and share more news. Well bravo for that.

So I find much to be optimistic about, even in small papers in America, even in the LA Times. I see things starting to happen. We have the potential for a lot of new methods for journalism. And that's something important I think to talk about. When I was in London I met by chance with the *Guardian*, the *Telegraph*, the *Times*, and the *Economist* and what I saw was a race for innovation. They were all trying to be first at doing the next new wonderful thing.

Now being first alone is not a proper goal. I'll fully agree. But being first in the service of journalism is a great thing. The *Guardian's* mission by the way is guardian in perpetuity. You want long term thinking. It doesn't get longer. And it's a good thing by the way for the next guy over because as soon as somebody does something great, the next guy will copy. As soon as Neil does something wonderful with the *Times*, Jim's watching at the *Post* and vice versa and if it's good they'll do it.

So innovation is good for all of us. So we need to look at some of the best practices and start sharing those. We need to invent and innovate. We'll die not trying. We'll die not trying. We've got to try things.

So here's a quick list of some of the things that I see but I'd love to hear your list. I used to call it citizen's journalism but then I stopped doing that. I recanted that because I believe that it's wrong to define journalism by who does it, for a lot of reasons. One is kind of certification, two is it's us versus them. I like to call it now network journalism, which is to say working together, pro-am, figuring out new ways that we can manage to work together.

NewAssignment.net, Jay Rosen's project at New York University, is a sterling example of trying to experiment with that where Jay is trying to figure out whether or not publicly support journalism will work. He doesn't pretend for a second to say that this is going to save journalism, this is going to replace journalism, this is going to replace rather big media companies.

But can we augment it with publicly supported journalism? Publicly supported in a few ways. The first is people will come in and say, "We need to do this story." Well why? "Well because! And because. And because." And that's reporting. That's saying there's something going on in the community we've got to track. So they'll contribute their ideas and their reporting. They'll contribute money, he hopes, and they will in the end contribute actual reporting and Jay's master stroke here is realizing how to take an assignment and cut it into its finite pieces of reporting. And then assign them with innovation wranglers to the right people. He's just started his first project. Whether it works or not we have no idea but it's the kind of experimentation we've got to have.

I've been bible thumping for hyper local journalism like crazy and you know what? I've made a lot of mistakes in that turf. I've failed in a lot of things because I've tried a lot of things. I saw the need to develop hyper local journalism because I thought it would serve both the journalistic and the business mission and needs of newspapers. Local. And how do we get more local now that we have the opportunity to do some? And we can serve readers at a more local level and we can

2007 – International Symposium on Online Journalism

serve new advertisers. New advertisers who never could afford big newspapers before at a very hyper local level. And that in turn supports the journalism.

So I thought this would happen. First step I did, I tried local forums and people were contributing scores and all kinds of stuff. And yeah, there's something there but in the end forums are too disorganized and anonymous and, yes, unruly. So local forums are not the salvation of hyper local journalism.

Next I thought I'd get people to create town blogs and I held meetups with people and they came to the meetup and said, "Yeah, it's a cool idea." You know what? Let's do a whole blog in your town for somebody else's service kind of didn't work. Though some took on the [inaudible]. There was a woman named Debbie Gallant who was a journalist for the *New York Times*. She was the Sunday New Jersey columnist, a probably dubious distinction say I as a Jerseyite. And she said, "This is such a good idea," when she came to the meetup, "This is such a good idea. I'm going to do this, Jeff. But I'm not going to do this for you. I'm going to start my own thing." And she started baristanet.com, which is a wonderful site where she and her fellow, her neighbors, report the news in the town. They sell ads, they've made it into a business. So there's journalism happening there that is complimentary to the *Star Ledger* that is incredible. And it can work. But you know we can only have so many of those.

I did an experiment with Northwestern University in Medill that yielded something called GoSkokie.com, which was an effort to say well rather than doing an individual blog, what if we create the means by which people can contribute to something bigger? And the students did a great job with it and it worked. It was part of the puzzle but it wasn't the puzzle entirely. A company called Back Fence was kind of modeled after that to some extent and Back Fence is now teetering a bit and I think it's only part of the puzzle.

The latest is there's a company called Outside In from Steve Johnson. It's doing zip code based blogging and that is may not write my whole blog about my town but in the middle of my blog I may review a restaurant in that blog. How does that review get tied in with others and seen? And if I tag that Mexican restaurant, New Jersey, of which there are too few, then it kind of joins in more data elsewhere. And the question is will it then be discovered? And don't forget when I do that, when I say this is what this is about and it should join in with other reviews that are about restaurants in New Jersey, that's a social act. Right? I've now said that I want my content to be with somebody else's contact and join in to make something bigger. It's an active organization. It's an act of creating data and to connect terms.

Which leads by the way to the other leg of Gannett [inaudible]. The 4th leg of Gannett [inaudible] is that in the newsroom of the future data is news. So it's about seeing, though, new opportunities as they come, right? So I tried forums. I tried individual blogs. I tried group blogs. I tried this. I think pieces of them all will come together to make hyper local work. But we've got to try them all.

We've also seen that there's more media. Audio and video and wikis and stuff. Why not dispatch all of our readers in a town, in a metro area, to say, "Go record your school board meetings. I can't go to the school board meetings because I've got kids, ironically. Go record 'em. We'll put them up as pod casts." That would yield all kinds of new sunlight on the world of local government. It wouldn't cost us

2007 – International Symposium on Online Journalism

anything. It would be incredibly easy. It's thinking beyond blogs, beyond one media, into omni media.

In the comments to my blog when I put up this talk, one reader said he found a lot of optimism in the fact that the *Guardian* just put up a job posting last week for a head of video and four producers. It's a newspaper that's now making video. So these are just a few of the examples of new methods. We need a lot more. So the ones I'm thinking about but I want to hear more of yours, if I shut up a second.

Next we have new relationships in the world. When I was at Davos, the publisher of an unnamed newspaper questioned Mark Zuckerberg, the founder of Facebook. And he was supplicant. It was an amazing moment to watch. He was supplicant, he said, "How do I get a community? How do I build a community like you have? I want to have my community." And Zuckerberg, who is the best panelist I've ever seen because he is blunt and just says what he thinks, he just said, "You can't." The publisher was crestfallen. But what Zuckerberg was really saying was that the community already exists. You're not building it. They're already doing what they want to do. Your job is to improve that. Your job is to help them do what they want to do. Your job, and I love this phrase, is to bring elegant organization. That's what we're about. That's what we're reporting and editing really is. It brings elegant organization to the world.

So how do we do that with these communities? It's a new job description for us, right? We become an enabler. We mediate. We organize elegantly. These are new roles in our exploding, expanding journalism. This is a world where everyone can help do journalism. So how do we help them help us do journalism? We are enablers, we help them. We are educators. Now I get in trouble if I say that the wrong way 'cause bloggers will say, "I don't need your stinking education." But if I say to bloggers, "Would you like to learn how to file a [foyer]?" They say yes. Working with Jan, would you like to know how to stay out of court? We'll try to help that. Yes, there is education to be done that Jan's doing. That's one of the roles we have.

Why shouldn't, in a sense, the newsroom become a classroom? Why shouldn't it be a place where the outside comes in and learns and teaches us and we learn from them, they learn from us, kukukachoo. Let's hug. But it's important here to see that education is one of our roles. We are part of pro-am efforts. We don't do this alone. We needn't go to the expense. We needn't be limited by our own scarce resources that are ever scarcer.

So we become members of networks. Not owners of them but members of them. I've created a site called Pres Bid, a news site covering the election through the eyes of YouTube. And a few organizations, big organizations have talked to me about doing something with this. And what's exciting about this is they didn't say, "Oh, we want to own you or we want to kill you." They said, "Well, what can we do together?" That's new and that's great and that's what we've got to think.

If we have these new larger networks here and what can we do together? Well we can share content. We can share promotion. We can share ideas. We can share branding and that is to say trust and respectability and we can share ad revenue, too, because this is about supporting this new world. But in the end the big organization can grow bigger by not having to hire people. The little guy can grow bigger and own something by having the help of the big organization. And the

2007 – International Symposium on Online Journalism

community gets more journalism. What's wrong with that? And importantly here it is a meritocracy. It's not saying that everyone is equal. It's not saying that everybody's blog is the same as the next one, that you have to have the same relationship with them all. No! Not at all. It's about merit. It's what rises has merit and has trust and you, like every reader, can judge what that is. So it's a two way, a many way relationship. And it means that we serve the public in news ways, no longer one size fits all, no longer mass.

So this also yields new job descriptions. I originally said in this slide "new jobs". That would probably be misleading because yes, we are going to lose some jobs but we're going to have new kinds of jobs. We have new talents. We have for example the programmer journalist, of whom right now there is one, Adrian Hollowbody, who is now working for the *Washington Post*. But I think we're seeing a growth of more than that. That as we see this ability to take these wonderful tools of online and do all kinds of new things, we need the people who can get their hands on those tools and make them work magic for us.

At City University of New York, I'm teaching the students to, well first I go to my son, my fifteen year old son and he teaches me the tools and then I teach them the tools. But they're learning how to make video and audio and work with data and make flash and do all this stuff. But it's not tools for tools sake. It's the fact that we can pull together, find the people who know how to do this and make things we couldn't make before. Before we had to choose our medium. We came into journalism school. Did we say, "I'm going to choose the black box where they do TV or the place with windows where they do newspapers?" Right? The two, your [inaudible] right? But I've got to choose one or the other. Even at CUNY we still have a little bit of that [track stock].

But at any given newspaper, if you're working for Jim at the *Washington Post*, people come in and they have to say, "What am I going to do this in today? Is this good for video? Is this good for video?" Kinsey done this at *USA Today* where they can have all these tools in their toolbox. I talked to Ed Rousell, who is the head of digital at the *Telegraph* and they just reorganized their newsroom in a big way and moved it and changed people and changed all kinds of things but they sent, I think most important of all, they sent all of their journalists to a week's training in this stuff. Yes, it was the tools, it was how to make this stuff. It was mainly judgment. Which tool is best to tell the story? And I think that's critically important.

When I asked, I'm setting up the continuing education program, the professional development program at CUNY and I asked Ed, "What did you want your journalists to get out of this course?" And he said, "I want them to leave with the entire toolbox at their hands. They need to have the entire toolbox so they can decide what's best and how to use that." And I think that's what journalism education is starting to do and needs to do. That's also what newsrooms need to do with their current staffs. It's what we need to do with the outsiders we're helping out.

So education is so incredibly important here. Consider two, WKRN in Nashville, which is one of the leading lights in this world often not seen. They brought, invited the bloggers in to say, "Let's get together. Let's see what's what." And bloggers left and blogged about it and said, "You know, they're not as dumb as we thought. They know that local TV news sucks." But it created a new relationship. They created a local blog and they shared content and promotion and thus respect with the bloggers.

2007 – International Symposium on Online Journalism

They invited the bloggers back in and had them shoot video and taught them how to shoot better video. At first, calming the nerves of the videographers that they weren't replacing their jobs but in the long run what really happens was they shared their knowledge and they got better video from the community as a result and they're now paying for the video that goes on the air.

So we are in enablers. It requires a new relationship. In the *Telegraph* and in the biggest paper in Turkey, they're inviting bloggers in, just like WKRN, just to get this kind of relationship. So we nurture talent. That's what editors really do is nurturing talent. Now we do it inside and outside of newsrooms. We encourage innovation and invention and creativity and that's going to make these jobs a lot more fun. Once you get past the scary part.

I've been discussing with editors this reorganization of their newsrooms, the kind of rearranging of the deck chairs. And I wonder whether we even need newsrooms and I'm pushing it too far here but every sales manager I know says, "I want to make the desks as uncomfortable as possible to get my sales guys out there in the community selling stuff." Well in a sense, don't we want the same thing from the journalists? The more they're out in the community, the better. Or the more the community is in, the better.

I involved with starting a local cable station in New Jersey that didn't work but my idea was to put the newsroom in the mall because the mall was our new downtown. And I thought it was a great idea. They didn't think it was a great idea but be that as it may. Don't forget in all of this, one of the key pieces is independence, that the journalist going forward is going to be independent in new ways.

After I finish scaring my students at CUNY about this world, and I did a bit too well with a few students, I brought them down off the bridge's edge and said, "No, no, don't worry. Journalism is not dying just because newspapers are having problems." And they saw that they are more likely to be independent, not just as freelancers but also as people who may start and own their own enterprises and make them support them. And I'm going to teach a course next Fall in entrepreneurial journalism as a result. And you know what? The students have gotten excited about that. They see this is an opportunity to be more independent and they can have a lot of fun with that.

So again we become a part of this new loose network of journalism. And so this yields new business opportunities. First entrepreneurial as I've already said. People can create new things, not just on their own but also within the organizations we have. We need more thinking like that. Martin [inaudible] of the *Times* complains that all the best programming and new media business talent is going to places with a lot of stock, like Yahoo. Well, in this day or Google, and how does he hold onto them? How does he get them there? How does he get them to invent for him? We have to see that we can now exert more control over journalism. Back to my time at *Entertainment Weekly*, I can recount more of this over drinks but they wasted a lot of money on things. I knew better but I wasn't the business guy so I couldn't talk about this. I couldn't protect the sustainability of that business.

The business side is not the enemy as is being presented. In fact, at these kind of gatherings, we need more business people here. At the Guardian, once again, I watch Alan Russberger, the editor, and Carol McCall, the business head, work

2007 – International Symposium on Online Journalism

together as happens at a lot of our organizations and we have to do a better job of bringing them into this talk of innovation because we're still talking on other sides of a wall.

I have a grant from the MacArthur Foundation for CUNY which I haven't logged yet, I haven't announced yet. I have to start a haughtily named News Innovation Project and it will be two parts. The first is to bring people together and figure out how we can work together better and collaborative, pro-am network journalism. The second part is to investigate new business models for news. We need these new business models. We don't know what they are. We've got to figure them out. Our jobs are going to change. They have already changed. They're likely to become smaller but more efficient. Still profitable, still sustainable. In this we come out with a new architecture of news.

Jim Kennedy at the Associated Press is the guy who really pushed me on this with a company I'm working on called Day Life that if we can link around to the best of journalism, the best of journalism will rise. The best of journalism will get business support through advertising and that's an oversimplified view of this but I think there is an opportunity to see that.

At the Online Publishers Association in London last month, Martin [inaudible] of the Times and I got into a theatrical tiff over this and to anyone there, they can be forgiven for thinking it's the old blogger versus MSM argument. But as Martin says, "Nobody got it. That's what we weren't talking about, Jeff." What we were talking about was this architecture of news. And the idea that there was a consultant there who talked about outside in and he put the media inside and the rest of us outside and I said, obnoxious blogger that I am, "You've got it reversed. You've got to turn that inside out. The people are the center and we're at the edge trying to help them do what they want to do." And if you think that way it's different.

And so I said that Yahoo is the last old media company because it is built on the model of controlling content and then paying money to get people to come in and they'll see that content there and give them advertising. Google, on the other hand, is the first new company, the distributed company. It says, "We're going to go wherever we are." So the ad that is on my page from Google makes my page a Google page. They enable the world. They help pay for what I do. They give me functionality, they give me all kinds of things. so I argued in London that we should ask WWGD, what would Google do? Google in this case being the new God. We've got to open ourselves up.

So, finally, I think we have the opportunity to do more journalism. And we have more people doing journalism. We have more coverage of more communities if we do this right. We have better journalism if we help spread our standards and our knowledge of how to do things. We have more sunshine and light on government and business and power. We have more enterprises involved in journalism trying to do these things to figure it out. We have better sustainability in the long run because we're not trying to manage as big old honkin' monopolies. And we potentially have then, the most important thing is more reporting. And that's the goal in the end. So.

[audience clapping]

2007 – International Symposium on Online Journalism

ROSENAL CALMON ALVES: We have microphones in both sides if you want to come in and ask a question. We have just five or ten minutes for questions so..