

ISOJ 2022: Day 2

Keynote Session: News: What is it, who is it for, and how can we rethink it for the digital era?

Chair: [Neil Chase](#), CEO, CalMatters

- Keynote speaker: [Gina Chua](#), incoming executive editor, Semafor
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Neil Chase It's really great to be here, and it's a lot of fun to be able to start off the morning with this conversation. You know Gina's background. I'm not going to go through a long bio. If I'd written a long bio, I would have had to rewrite it halfway through our conversation when she got a new job. Gina is in the middle of one of the most visible transitions ever, right? Transitioning from Reuters to Semafor. I don't know what you were thinking about. And she has a bunch of ideas that I think are going to make us not only feel a little bit bad about ourselves for not having done everything we could to make journalism amazing yet, but a lot of ideas on how to do that. So we're going to hear Gina's thoughts on that. And then I know I have a lot of questions, and I'm sure you do, too. So we'll do the questions afterward. Gina, all yours.

Gina Chua Thank you. This is a very big bottle of water. So thank you. And I'll start with a bad joke, which is, hey, what's new? But technically, what's news? And that's really kind of what I want to talk about, which is what do we think of as news? How do we produce it? Who do we produce it for, and how do we serve them? But first, along with everybody else, I just want to thank Rosental for the invitation to speak here at the 850th ISOJ. I'm really honored to be here, and I should also get all the other awkwardness out of the way, which is, as mentioned, I am sort of in the middle of some transitions in my life. I'm not quite out of the door at Reuters yet, and I'm not quite in the door at Semafor, although "soup" not a bad name, too. I think we can all agree on that.

Neil Chase You got it.

Gina Chua So I am in a little bit of a netherworld between two worlds, which, you know, honestly mirrors my personal life a little bit. I've straddled the worlds of Asia and the US and the West. I've straddled genders, legacy media, digital age, being part of a world of privilege, and now being part of a marginalized community, not least in this state. I like to think that gives me some new perspectives on things. And in any case, as Rosental knows, I have no shortage of opinions. So I'm going to rattle through a bunch of stuff really quickly. I apologize for giving a talk. But I will speak at a New York rate, so it'll be done in 5 minutes.

Okay. So, look, I wanted to start the talk by telling you I took an Uber from the airport, and he used Waze to get me here. But in fact, I got in a cab. He drove like a madman through empty streets, and I'm pretty sure I got overcharged. But bear with me and just pretend that that's what I did, okay? Because, like, let's not get facts get in the way of a good story here. So let's think about what Uber did and what Uber is. Right? It took this, right, a communication device, turned it into a way of scheduling and assigning. It turned it into a platform and just basically revolutionized the whole urban transport system. They could

have simply iterated on what was the old, if you remember, that cab dispatch system and just made it easier for you to get a cab. But they didn't. They just really threw everything out. Now the cab dispatch system would have been an improvement, and we would have all been happier with it. But in fact, they did something far more radical. Now, I'm not saying this is a great thing necessarily. I'm not saying Uber is a great company, only that it blew up our transport system and that whatever happens, we're not going back to the old one. Or, let's think about Waze. So Waze went even further. Right? Again, they took this communication device, and they figured out that completely by the way, you have location data on it and you have acceleration data on it. So it understood that if you took that, the promise of that data in a network, you could create a service that never existed before, which is to understand traffic patterns, and then turn that into a benefit, which is I can avoid traffic. So why does this matter to us, and why do I bring this up? It's because we're in the information business, too. And when I look at what people like Uber and Waze have done, I ask, why haven't we done the same? Yes. We've had tons of innovations, and we've seen some of them on stage, and there are lots of people in the room who have worked on innovations and there been some really, really big improvements in storytelling, in graphics, in distribution, multimedia and so on. But what could we do if we really started with a completely fresh slate? What if we really thought about the structure of information, the needs of our audiences and our communities? Think about their use case. What could we do? What should we do? And why should we do it?

So let me give you a couple of examples. At our core, our product remains the same as it was 50, 100 years ago. Right. We get some facts. We put them together. We try to aim that to appeal to as many people as possible in our target audience, in our communities. And then we publish it when we're ready. These days it goes out in terms of pixels instead of on dead trees. But fundamentally the idea is the same. And in many cases, that is the perfect product, right? A deep investigation, a real wonderfully told narrative. That's right. That's how it should go. But what else could we be doing? So a couple of examples. One, you think about market reports. It's a pretty simple one. And if you don't like business, think about sports. It's also the same thing. So those reports usually read, you know, "It's 4:00, the market closed today and up 2%." Okay. We could if we have retail data and oftentimes we do to change it to a personalized story that said, "The market closed up two percentage points, and your portfolio closed down three." Right. But why do we wait for the market to close? Why don't we have news on demand? Why can't you press a button? Because, again, this is doable. You press the button at 3:45, and the report says, "It's 3:45, the market's currently up two points and your portfolio is down three." Or, why not go one step further and do perturbation analysis or counterfactuals, and say, "It's 3:45, the market's up two points, your portfolio is down three. If you hadn't sold IBM last week, you idiot, you would have been up four points." How hard is that to do? Technically, it is a little bit hard, but it isn't that hard to do. The technology's there. You have to just put in the effort. What about archives? Why do we write stories like they will be read today and never again? When you Google a story, and you get a story from two years ago, you have to work to say what does next week in that story mean? Why don't we have two versions of every story, one with relative date references "next week," and one with absolute date references "second week of April 2020." We don't do that. Why don't we do that? We should be thinking about the use cases people have. Why don't we do what Waze does and figure out what people are doing when they read their stories on this? Moving at the pace of running. We'll give you a quick audio alert. Moving at a speed of a car. Read out the story in audio. Standing still in a line somewhere. Give you the whole story. Again, not that hard to do. We don't do it. I'm sure somebody does it. But just bear with me. I'm just making generalizations here. Why don't we track what people have read already and give them just the new news without all the background that they already know? The late,

lamented Circa, a wonderful product, did that. Google Living Stories for a while did that. I haven't seen that experiment done a lot with other people. Why do we spend as much effort as we do to try to get machines to write stories the way humans would have written it, often not as well as humans, instead of taking advantage of what machines are really good at, which is trawling through data tirelessly and then finding interesting patterns that they can alert a reporter to? There are some experiments in this area, but I haven't really seen any sort of really industrial strength applications of this. I know we're doing stuff at Reuters. I'm sure our colleagues at Bloomberg are doing much the same thing. And I know some academics have also worked on this as a project, but why don't we do it more? At Reuters, this is what I was trying to do, I guess, until I'm leaving, to build what I call the cybernetic newsroom. Right? Marry the best of both humans and machines.

And even when we do it, we tend to test it in sandboxes. And this is the equivalent of sort of saying, "Hey, Uber is a really interesting idea. Let's do it in this ten-square block radius and see whether it works or not." Instead of trying to build out real industrial-scale solutions to what could be better journalism. In other words, why are we trying to use the tools of the digital age to recreate the products, which we had in the pre-digital age? Why aren't we rethinking our products completely? Again, this is like if Uber decided to improve the cab dispatch system. Our business model has been blown up, but there are paths we can explore here. So look at something like PolitiFact, and I know Bill is in the room. So nice work, Bill, which took an existing form, fact checking, and then redid it as a database so that they could reform the facts that they have established into news stories. Right? Now, this is a little more commonplace these days, but why don't we do it beyond fact checking? It extends the value of the facts we collect every day and turns them into news stories at industrial scale that may in fact be more relevant to readers.

So please read my blog because I could use the traffic, and it it's all there. We chase big audiences that make sense. That's where the business is. But we could chase small audiences if we could do it more cost effectively. So consider another one of my favorite late, lamented projects, Homicide Watch DC, which consisted of one-and-a-half people, Laura and Chris Amico. They decided to cover not the newsworthy deaths in DC. It is about 100 to 150 deaths, murders, in DC every year. They decided to cover all of the murders in DC, and they covered it as a database, which is genius in itself. But as they did that, they found audiences that had not been served before. You know, these are communities of people, the loved ones, around people who had been killed, and they found that there was real interest and real traffic to that information. And they did it again in a cost effective manner.

Which brings me really to the other question. Now, I'll shift gears a little bit. What are we here for? What are we trying to solve? Everything I've talked about is what we could do, but what should we do? Why are dozens of deaths in DC not newsworthy? What is the definition of newsworthy? Dog bites man is not newsworthy. I'll come back to that in a second. Man bites dog is, right? It's unusual. Plane takes off, not newsworthy. Plane crashes, newsworthy. But what's normal? Who decides what's normal? What's unusual to you is not unusual to me. And historically, the people who have determined what is unusual are people of a certain demographic, and that needs to change. And that's why representation is important, but that's why also sensitivity is important in the news assigning process. You've got to find new perspectives. That's really important. And you've got to decide what is normal, so you can decide what is abnormal, and that makes it newsworthy. And the best gauge of what's normal is what your community thinks is normal, and that's why you have to get closer to your community. What makes me optimistic about this is the proliferation of small, community-focused newsrooms that are

intended to serve those audiences. I'm very, very proud that I'm on the board of the Tiny News Collective, which is a genius idea from Aron Pilhofer to sort of seed small, five-person newsrooms around the country that are really tied to their communities. I think we need to do a lot more of that. You know, it's kind of the obvious thing when you look at why we are all obsessed about one missing white woman when there are so many women of color that have gone missing. And then there is the dog bites man. It's a story, too. As we saw yesterday when Katrice was up on stage to talk about a great story about dogs biting people, which won a Pulitzer Prize with the Marshall Project. There's a really, really nice piece by Gary Younge. Gary is the former Guardian correspondent in the U.S., now an academic in the U.K. And if you Google "Gary Younge" and "man bites dog," you'll see a wonderful piece by him that really talks about how sometimes things are so normal and so natural that we miss them as a story because we swim in that water, and we don't see it. And his point is, you know, Black people are being killed on a regular basis by the police. It's not newsworthy. It's true because it happens too often. But of course, it is newsworthy, and we should think about those things. So I think it's a really important question to say what is unusual, what is newsworthy, and how we decide that as well. And there's nothing digital about that. We just should have done that forever. But it's also important, I think, because in a digital age, we can appeal and understand different audiences. It also gives us the ability, I think, to bring on multiple perspectives on the stories so that we can flag prevailing narratives and counter-narratives to our different audiences.

To be clear, it's not wrong to focus and serve your audience well, but that audience, those audiences, are better served when you tell them about the other perspectives on issues as well. There's a really interesting piece that was in the New York Times a couple of months ago where it talked even about the form of language as we write stories. And I know I'm digressing, but I'll digress anyway, because I have a stage. It says, you know, the form of how you write a story actually affects how people think about it. So there are two ways you can write this sentence, right? "Black people find it hard to get loans and are often denied loans by banks." And if you read that and you say, "Well, how do we help Black people? Because clearly, you know, they're not doing well in this game." Or you could write, "Banks often deny loans to Black people," in which case you asked a different question, which is what's wrong with the banks? How do we fix that? What is the issue that they have? I'm not saying that one formulation is right and one formulation is wrong. What I'm saying is that words matter and that if we think through these things, we understand the power of what we have to shape opinion and to help people understand the world better. And that if we couple that with the tools of the digital age, it allows us to try multiple different things and allow people to see different perspectives and different ideas.

So basically kind of to recap, how can and should we rethink stories, forms, structures, products to bring information to people? Look at the Ukraine war. I don't know about all the rest of you, but I find all the threads on Twitter to be a fantastic way of looking at all of this. If you all remember tire guy, who in a nice little thread explains why Russian tires don't seem to be working very well in Ukraine. I honestly don't know who he is, and I don't know whether this is accurate or not. But the point is, it's incredibly informative, and it really raises questions. How important is narrative? How important are transitions? Not this one. The other one. How important are dependent clauses that we love so much? Right. "In a move likely to" comma something. Like that brings together so many embedded assumptions. Let's think about how we need to rethink our story forms. So, is any of this easy? No, it's not. And we all need resources, especially technology, and we're all strapped. So it's difficult. Should we blame platforms and misinformation for our woes? Well, we can. But I think we should also recognize that the fault also lies within ourselves. Do we want to keep doing what we've always done? Because that's what we want to do

with some innovation? Or do we want to serve the communities that we say we want to serve? Now, I know we do. I know we can. And I'm sure we will. Thank you.

Neil Chase Gina, thank you so much. So much to talk about. Like I said, we all have some questions. If you want to share your questions, if you tweet them with the hashtag ISOJ 2022, they will magically show up on my phone, thanks to the magical wizardry going down behind the scenes here. Or maybe AI. I don't know. Let's talk for a minute about your current job, the one you're leaving in two weeks. You are executive editor responsible for sort of operations of 2,500 journalists. There's a war going on. It's not the first one. I'm imagining Afghanistan was a preoccupation for a little while for you and for a lot of people in your role. And obviously we all feel very strongly for the journalists who are over there doing that. What about tire guy? Is it your responsibility as Reuters to figure out if he's a valid source? Is it Twitter's responsibility to source it out separately? Does it not matter to you because you're only worried about getting stories out of professional journalists?

Gina Chua No. Well, I think there's multiple ways you can think about this. One is if you're a news organization and you think tire guy has got something to say and it's really useful, I mean, it's not unlike UGC. Can we verify it? Can we check it? So let's say tire guy is bona fide, wonderful, a real good source, and everything checks out, and that it's really important information. Well, there's a couple of ways you can do it, right? One is you can, I guess, sort of UGC-it. You'd say, "We'll vouch for this. This is okay." It would be exactly the same way that we say we've checked out this video. It is what it is. Go for it. That's one way. You could take that information and incorporate in a story, as some people have done. And then I think the really interesting experiment, but it involves a huge amount of cultural change, is can you actually simply mimic that, and take it, and do much the same thing? I mean, obviously giving credit to tire guy. But I mean my question really is if you assume the facts are all correct, is the form valuable? And if the form is valuable, why don't we use that form? Does it need to be a narrative story? I learned, and again, I don't know if he's right or wrong, but I learned a tremendous amount looking at tire guy. It took me, I don't know, a minute to absorb that information. That's a really useful, efficient way of getting information to people. If that's our job, getting information to people in a world where they are overburdened by information, shouldn't we be looking at forms that get them information more efficiently?

Neil Chase When you're actually using that form yourself to get the information?

Gina Chua Yes.

Neil Chase And what about that information in any kind of real-time news environment? Right? Especially in a war situation, you're probably not going to try to send a photographer and reporter to go find tire guy, as much as that might be a tempting story to chase. So are the standards different? Do we vet these things a different way? Do we take those little bits of information and get them out there as quickly as we can?

Gina Chua I don't think so. Look, again, I think it's situational. I don't think there's a perfect answer. If the alert you have is a tsunami coming and your city's about to be washed out, I think you've got some real questions about do we cause a panic even though we haven't been able to verify it, or do we try and save lives and get the news out to people? I don't want to be in that situation, but I think there are some situations like that. But I think most of the time we're not in those situations. And I do think and I do worry that the rush to publish information really quickly can lead to a lot of, not necessarily mistakes, because I don't think news organizations are that irresponsible. I think we try our best to verify

information. But context is really important. Look, and I say this, and I'm one of the organizations along with the AP, Bloomberg, and so on, which tries to get information out at sort of a nanosecond rate. And again, we're a B2B business, so we are trying to tell news organizations that. And we're also a B2C in the financial space where people really do trade on nanosecond information. But I think we also have to think about what is the value of split-second information to the vast majority of the public. Does it really matter to a lot of people if you know that the Supreme Court just ruled X, as opposed to waiting a minute to find that out? Does it really matter that you know the exact second that Will Smith slapped Chris Rock on stage? I think you have to think about what is the true long-term value that you are providing to your audience and figure out whether they actually care about that coming two minutes earlier or whether it's better to give them something more fleshed out a little bit later.

Neil Chase Whether they care about it, or whether society is better off if they find out an hour later what happened, what the meaning of it is, and whether or not they want the news. Right? Like at some point, are you just catering to what people want, or are you giving them what they need, and what will actually make the world a better place?

Gina Chua And again, I sort of understand the business value of this. Right. It's a triangulation, right, between community needs, your needs, business needs and so on. And they're all valid. So I'm not going to say some of them are less valuable than others. And I understand that the notional idea that if I tell you this thing first, you're more likely to come back to my site, you're more likely to subscribe, you're more likely to do various things. I don't know if any of that is true. I don't know that people remember necessarily where they got a great story from, especially these days when you can get stories from everywhere. And I don't know how many people actually go to the home page of a news organization, even one that they subscribe to.

Neil Chase Roughly zero.

Gina Chua To be fair, 15%. But the point is, you know, I dare most of you. Well, actually wrong crowd, because you're all journalists here. Right? And so you know everybody's byline. But I dare ask your average person to like name me a byline of somebody that they read or, you know, did you hear the news of X yesterday? And they say, yes. And you say, where did you hear it from?

Neil Chase Facebook?

Gina Chua Well, the answer is, I don't know. Right. So then you think, well, okay, you've done a community service. You've given them information that they need. But then you have to think like, what is the business value if they don't realize you're the one responsible for it? And I think they're better in different ways to build out engagement, and we've heard tons of those stories here as well. I just don't know that speed is necessarily the thing. And again I'm be really careful, right? Because I'm in a business where speed does matter, but our customers actually do value speed. But I don't know that that's necessarily true for everybody.

Neil Chase Right, those people who are waiting for the one-line headline about our corporate earnings and are going to trade \$1,000,000 worth of stock on it are probably not our main customer. At least for most of us, not our main customers.

Gina Chua Not today.

Neil Chase So you've done a lot of work in data journalism, and you mentioned AI several times. A lot of people have AI tools doing large numbers of stories now, right? The earnings reports can be automated, the sports scores, the Olympics stuff. Is this good? Is it bad? It's fast. It's short-story forms. It's what you're talking about like, this athlete did this in the Olympics in this time.

Gina Chua I mean, look, I think that what you can automate, you should automate. Again, we're in an arms race on some of these things. Right? The corporate earnings, for example. It literally matters to the nanosecond, or at least millisecond, not nanosecond. And, you know, there's no way humans compete with that, so that should be done. I think there's a whole bunch of other things that you could do through technology, whether it's AI or not. I mean we built a COVID tracker that basically has a database that's partly filled by machine, partly filled by humans, but it auto generates stories. And it generates stories not simply on, you know, "It's 3:00 and X number of people have COVID," but more. It looks for milestones, and that's what we should be doing much more with technology. It would be this is the highest number since X. This is the third time in a row this company has missed earnings. And that's what I mean. I think we should be trawling our data more usefully. I mean, one of the things that I've tried to do with greater and less success, and I'm sure Bloomberg has done this as well, is you look at things like inside of filings, right? And so insiders, corporate insiders, who sell stock. And it's one of these things that's a pain to follow. But if you had, you know, a sort of trigger that said, "10% of the insiders at this company have sold 5% of their stock in the last two week." Well, that's a signal, and maybe you want to look at that. You don't necessarily want to auto publish it because it may not be significant, but you want to alert a reporter to it. And this is what I mean by cybernetic newsroom. We should be using these tools to build an industrial scale to sort of understanding of the world that we just don't have. Not just the staff. We could quadruple the number of journalists in newsrooms.

Neil Chase That would be good.

Gina Chua It would be good. But we still don't have the stuff. I mean, it's a different use case. And this is my point. The answer isn't simply more people. The answer is more intelligent use of technologies that already exist.

Neil Chase So in two weeks, you're switching jobs.

Gina Chua Oh, yeah.

Neil Chase Change your name to Smith and joining Semafor.

Gina Chua It's a requirement.

Neil Chase It's a requirement.

Gina Chua I'm sorry.

Neil Chase I can think of a lot of reasons to do that. And, you know, without putting words in your mouth, some of the stuff you just described is one of the reasons to do that, because you can do some of the things that you just talked about that we need to do in the news business. Is this going to be your lab for doing these things?

Gina Chua I hope so.

Neil Chase Do they now that yet?

Gina Chua I mean just to be clear, I haven't started yet. And I don't know what Ben is actually thinking about this. You know, I'm at a certain age in my life. This is a great opportunity to try a new adventure, and I think the fact that we're starting from scratch is great. Right. I mean, I work now at 170-year-old organization. It's wonderful. It's huge. It has great footprint. It's a really nice place to work. And, you know, in a different universe, I would be there forever. This is just this fantastic opportunity to make my own mistakes as opposed to make my own mistakes and fix all mistakes. It's a chance to just try out some ideas. No, look, a lot of what I talk about is probably not going to happen as a practical matter, because you do have to choose a path, and you have to think about what audience you want, and all that kind of stuff. But it's a real chance to try something and try out some of these ideas, I hope. I mean, Ben, I hope you're listening.

Neil Chase I'm sure he's listening. And he'll be tweeting about it soon, and we'll get his questions here on Twitter. So I want to welcome you to Texas. When you read your bio on the Reuters site, which I'm guessing since you run operations at Reuters, you probably have some influence over what it says. It describes your current role, and then it says, like every other bio that has ever been written previously, but you've got a plural phrase with an em dash in there "when she was Reg," and then you go through the rest of what you've done. When you look at any other reference to you outside of ones that you control, your blog and Reuters, it starts with something like "the most visible openly transgender journalist on the planet" or something like that. So again, welcome to Texas. We're going to keep you safe while you're here. You're ten blocks away from the building where state legislators would like to at least make you illegal and maybe ship you out of town. And that's not what I want to ask you about. Well, I can't get you on the evening news here in Texas, I don't think. But you talked a lot earlier about representation and the need for representation in editorial leadership. You talked about people who have been making these decisions for years. I think you looked at me when you said that, which is fine. In your new role, right? Do you get to bring those thoughts to the table? Is Semafor going to look and feel different? And again, you don't work there yet, but is it going to look and feel different because you are in charge of it?

Gina Chua Well, one, I'm not in charge of it. That's Ben.

Neil Chase Oh, white guy. Great.

Gina Chua I've certainly talked to Ben about this, and I know in our Slack chats that we have that, you know, representation and diversity is really important to the company. You know, we're not going to be a huge organization. You know, there is a limit to how much representation you can have. So let me split this into two different ideas. Right? And less about Semafor and more about the industry at large. Representation really, really does matter. And I do think we have not done enough as an industry to both get more diverse people into newsrooms, but more importantly, to get them in positions of influence. Right? However you want to define that, whether that means they have senior jobs or whether they have a seat at the table. Honestly, what really matters is that they have a voice. But representation isn't enough. You can't have. Or not "you can't have." You could try. But it's really hard to have one of everything in a newsroom. And it's too much burden on one person. Reuters can't come to me and sort of say, "You know, hey, we're writing a story about trans issues. What do you think?" It's not my job to represent the entire community. I

mean, yes, I may have more sensitivity to it than other people, but that's not fair. That's not fair to me. That's not fair to the organization. It's not fair to the trans community either. What we have to do as an industry is build better sensitivity so that you understand that there are questions that need to be asked. You don't make assumptions. That you reach out and you try to understand the resources you can go to about that issue. Otherwise, we're not any better as an industry than if we go to the, "Hey, what do you think about this issue? What do you think about that issue?" And you essentially make people proxies for entire communities, and I don't think that works. I mean, yes, it's better you have some proxies, but it's better that we train everyone to be more understanding that their point of view isn't the only point of view. And I don't mean that in a bad way. I just mean that in a reflexive "this is what I think" is in that. Right. And I think some of that has to do with rethinking what news judgment really is.

Neil Chase And you've got a different view anyway than a lot of folks who are in this room. Some folks are in this room who have been journalists only within the United States of America their entire careers. Because you've done this in different places around the world, how do you think about journalism for people who, for instance, can't afford a subscription? Right. A lot of us are in situations where one way or another, we're trying to get money from readers. Are we leaving people out? Are there ways to not only represent in the content we cover, but in the people that we're covering, and how we get the news to them? Is that our responsibility as well?

Gina Chua Yeah, absolutely. Well, look, is it my responsibility? Is it yours?

Neil Chase Your responsibility. Just you.

Gina Chua Oh, okay, okay. Is it any individual's responsibility? No. Is it our responsibility as a industry? Yes, it is. Right? If we're serious about what we say we do, which is to help get communities information, if we're serious, that we are part of the democratic fabric of whatever country we work in and that that's a critical part of building informed citizenry, then, yes, it is. And again, I'm not making moral distinctions about whether one kind of journalism is better than another kind. Everybody has audiences they need to serve. Some audiences are not, I guess the right word is "financially viable" to serve, but there are other ways to reach out to them. And there's cross subsidies and so on. But yes, we have to be thinking about all those audiences. Again, this is why the Tiny News Collective, I think, is a fantastic idea, which addresses both the issue from a sustainability point of view, both from a sort of a revenue point of view, as well as from a cost point of view, so that more communities can be served. But it is one of the really big questions, I think, that the industry faces, which is who do we serve? How can we broadly serve them better? And how can we keep doing it without going bankrupt? And that's a really hard circle to square. But there are tons of people at least thinking about it, which I think is great.

Neil Chase Yeah, including a lot of people in this room. A number of questions have come in and related to Latin America. This is the best journalism conference on earth, as Rosental will tell you, because it brings not only academics and journalists together, but people from different parts of the Americas. So with your global journalist hat on, and again, better perspective than most of us, when you think about the quality of news, the disinformation, the speed of, you know, the lies halfway out the door before the truth gets its shoes on, is that different in Latin America and Asia, for instance, than it is in the U.S. or North America? Are there regional differences there, especially with a lot of Latin American journalists in the room, or is that not the right even framing for it?

Gina Chua Well, first of all, you're asking the wrong question, because I've never worked in Latin America, and I do not speak Spanish or Portuguese. I think based at least on the research I've looked at that this is a global issue. Right? Misinformation, disinformation, all the various strains in between, are huge issues everywhere. Some of it is really difficult to solve, right? Simply because if you look at the way information disseminates on platforms, I'm not sure how that gets fixed. I know a lot of people here are thinking about it. I know Emily's been on top of this as a subject for a long time, and they're far wiser minds thinking about how the spread of information on platforms needs to be reformed and rethought. What I do think from our industry's point of view is that, we do have a trust issue, and we do need to build trust. And I think, I forget, I think Alberto raised it. You know, trust starts with local, I think, or something like that. And I think that there's a ton of work that needs to be done, or can be done, and I know is being done about rebuilding trust at that really local level. Again, I think it was Alberto, it could have been somebody else who said, "You know, it's not a surprise that trust in journalism has ebbed as the number of local journalists have ebbed." And I think that sort of finding ways to rebuild that really local community connection with audiences and readers anywhere in the world, I think, is really a critical step that we have to take.

Neil Chase Alberto's comment was a little bit disconcerting. If I heard it right, it was local builds trust because I can verify the local stuff myself.

Gina Chua Well, this was a line that stuck with me, I think it was Brian Stelter at some conference or another. And it was in the context of like Fox News or something else, and he said like, "You know, when you look at the weather report, you don't really say..." And what a terrible example because the weather report is almost always wrong.

Neil Chase But that's a great example. We watch the meteorologist every night. We know they're going to be wrong, and we grade them the next day.

Gina Chua But the point is, you don't care that much, right? I mean, you don't care where that information comes from because you know it's a fairly standard thing. If there's a sports report, and they say your team won, and your team actually lost, okay, you know there's a problem there. And you can see some of the embedded bias in a story. And again, it's not bias with a capital B, just like, you know, "Hey, you like this player that I don't like, but I can see it in your writing." I think the local issues really do help people connect at least more viscerally. Even if you disagree with it, and especially if you know the journalists, and you can walk up to them the next day, and yell at them, or at least talk to them in person.

Neil Chase It your job as the editor.

Gina Chua It helps. But, you know, when you write about national issues, it's just much more complex, right? Something's happening in Washington. Well, I don't know. Is it right? Is it wrong? I don't know. I think it's a really slow process. But I do think that that connectivity at a pretty local level is really important to sort of helping people build that sense of engagement with the news organizations that serve them.

Neil Chase Yeah, and trust should involve me trusting you because I trust you, not because I can verify that the freeway is being worked on down the street from me, I think. We're out of time. We're getting the hook here. I'd like to cancel the next session and just talk for another hour. But I'm pretty sure that we'll be having this conversation again in a year.

Gina Chua Regrettably.

When you're 50 weeks into Semafor. I think we're all looking at what happens because you've got these ideas. And not to put any pressure on you much, but some of the ideas that you have being worked into what you're about to build is going to be fascinating to watch. So good luck and we'll be watching closely. Thank you, Gina.