

17th Annual International Symposium on Online Journalism

Day 1, April 15, 2016: Morning Session - 9:30-11:00 a.m.

Distributed Content: Can journalism survive and thrive in a media ecosystem where publishers don't control their distribution channels?

Chair & Presenter: Vivian Schiller, Independent Advisor, **formerly with Twitter, NBC, NPR and The New York Times**

- **Summer Anne Burton**, Executive Creative Producer, **BuzzFeed**
- **Borja Echevarria**, Vice President & Editor-in-Chief, **Univision Digital**
- **David Skok**, Managing Editor & Vice President, Digital, **The Boston Globe**
- **Robyn Tomlin**, Vice President & Managing Editor, **The Dallas Morning News**

Summer Anne Burton: Hi. I'm Summer. I am going to mostly actually talk about the editorial side of BuzzFeed. I just recently switched to a creative team to help out the business side, but for the last year-and-a-half, I've been on the Editorial Team focused entirely on distributed content. So I'm going to talk a little bit about how BuzzFeed got there and then some of the things that we learned from making distributed content.

So I want to start by saying, I'm in a room full of people who are journalists and who particularly, mostly come from a journalism background. I come from the internet. I was home schooled in Austin, Texas, and my entire, like, childhood and education and sort of growth and everything that I was interested in was actually whatever was new on the internet. And so for me, this idea that, like, you know, that this is changing, that's been my life since I was, you know, 14. I was active on Live Journal, and then it was Friendster, and then it was, you know, any social network. And when I started at BuzzFeed, [that] was actually when I first became sort of exposed to the world of journalism and started thinking about how these two worlds could intersect.

But for a lot of people, and particularly for digital media organizations, you know, the internet looked like this. This is the BuzzFeed homepage in 2006. It is comprised of a list of links that were comprised of lists of more links to other webpages to highlight what was buzzing on the internet, like the Borat movie. For most people now, the internet is more like this. It's on their phones. It's seen through a series of apps. When we talk about mobile, we see, you know, obviously, a huge amount of our traffic comes from mobile and social, but it's really not even that anymore. As I think most of you guys know, it's not mobile web, it's not traffic to BuzzFeed.com on like a web

17th Annual International Symposium on Online Journalism

browser, it's within apps. So on Instagram, the BuzzFeed app, messaging apps, Tumblr, etc., [and] obviously, Facebook.

So for BuzzFeed, like, we don't think of social media anymore as like brand building or just simply audience development to lead to our website. For us, it is like where our work is published. And we've actually kind of switched to referring to our social media team as publishers and thinking of that as the publishing layer of BuzzFeed. And when we started thinking about this, it was about a year-and-a-half ago. And I was on BuzzFeed's team. I had been really involved in quizzes, which were the big thing two-and-a-half, three years ago, and was always really interested in original content.

And so I started talking to Jonah and Ben about how we would address this change and how we think of distribution. And we decided to sort of create a SWAT Team of creative people to make distributed content and to not think about BuzzFeed.com at all. And we've been doing that for a year-and-a-half. We've actually recently reintegrated that into our entire editorial operation and started really thinking about how it relates to news.

And so the examples I'm going to give, I will just warn you, are mostly focused on the entertainment side. But I included some more somewhat journalistic things. But I think it's really interesting, because to me what BuzzFeed is at its core is like a testing center. We are focused on impact, whether that's entertainment or news. It's always our core. And we are very willing to adapt. We really are that kind of like, we're going to find the audience wherever they are and will figure the rest out later. We're still kind of there in a way.

We want to reach as many people as we can, and we want to reach them in a deep way, and we want them to engage with our content. If it's the great investigative journalism team led by Mark Shoofs, we want to change laws, and we want to inform people. If it's our comics artists, we want to make people laugh and bring them closer to their friends. Whatever it is, it's always impact, and the way that we can do that is by following people where they are. And so, that's what we do.

One thing that we learned.... So the rest of this, I'm just going to focus on a few things we learned that sort of surprised me. One thing we learned early on was that we could do more by actually not being very bespoke about platforms, by really focusing on the core of something that we did and translating it to as many different platforms as we could. And what we found was that the best content performed well on every single platform. The big hits were bit hits on Facebook, they were big hits on Tumblr, they were big hits on Instagram.

So our comics, we started doing BuzzFeed comics. I hired original artists, who are staff illustrators. Which if you know anyone who goes to art school, it's like a very big deal. [laughs] They get to draw all day. And when we had

17th Annual International Symposium on Online Journalism

hits, they would be hits on every single platform. And so this was one that really connected with people, and early on, was big everywhere.

And that, you know, the key to that—and we sort of mentioned earlier talking about how you prepare students and think about the future of journalism—the key to that is knowing how to format for those platforms, having people who are really experts on adapting. So this was an example of a recipe. I'm sure you guys have seen the successful food videos that we do on Facebook. Obviously, it was huge on Facebook, but we also did a cut-down, a 15-second version for Instagram, and did an image-based version for Pinterest that led to a BuzzFeed post where you could read the recipe. [Video plays.] Oh, yeah. I won't play the whole thing, but it's pretty fun, yeah.

So, speaking of sort of the news side, one thing that I really love about BuzzFeed is that we have creative people writing stories. We have creative people making art. We have creative people doing journalism. But we also try to be creative about how we distribute and really apply that same, like, fun testing and learning to thinking about distribution. So Andrew Kaczynski is a BuzzFeed staffer who — I've been then four years, and he was started around the same time as me, so we're old-school in BuzzFeed years. And he has, particularly in this election cycle, sort of carved out this role of doing basically oppo-research within BuzzFeed. So really digging into the archives of things that candidates have said. We've broken some great stories with his team. And this was an example where he went through and listened to the hours and hours of tape of Donald Trump appearing on Howard Stern's show and dug out some of the most interesting quotes.

This post was on BuzzFeed.com. It did very well for us. Almost a million views. We also turned it into a Facebook video, which got over 57-million views. The Facebook video was framed as not just, you know, "These are some gross things Donald Trump said," but our video team looked at it and said, "Let's take some of the things Obama has said about women in raising his daughters and contrast those to some of these quotes from Donald Trump on Howard Stern." And so you can see almost a million shares, which is intense.

We also [laughs] did a comic version that we distributed on Tumblr, Twitter and other visual platforms. If Winnie the Pooh said things that Donald Trump said...[laughter]. And I think this is a really good example. Like, we did this. We wanted to expose that Donald Trump had said these sort of disgusting things about women. And I think we were able to reach a lot more people by thinking about distribution and how we could distribute that information in a really creative, weird way, thanks to some of these weirdos that work at BuzzFeed.

Really quick, like, another thing that we learned is that the best way that we could—and you know, other people spoke about this as well—like, these platforms, it's really just about testing. And you learn a lot about your

17th Annual International Symposium on Online Journalism

audience, and you learn about what works by trying a lot of different things and kind of honing in on what people respond to. So when Drake was blowing up the hotline, a Bling video came out a few months ago. I told my team, like, "Let's just make as much Drake content as possible." [Video plays. "Hello," by Adele.] Oh, these videos are not playing. I'm just going to speed through this. ["Monster Mash" plays.] Oh, there we go. So, we did a bunch of different things and probably made 25-30 pieces of Drake hotline Bling content. And this was the big hit.

And so again, I just want to hone in on that point that we find that the best quality things perform well on each platform. So this idea that, like, distributed changes everything and social changes everything, we've found that people respond whether it's, you know, this video or a great story. They respond to the same things no matter what platform they are on.

And testing and learning pays dividends. We've been doing Facebook live video since they first started it. Really focusing on it. Thinking like, this is a fun, exciting new thing. People seem interested in it. Let's try as many things as possible. We learned a lot in those few months. I think a lot of people saw the watermelon video. I'm not even explaining the watermelon video. I'm assuming everyone, like, watched the watermelon. I think that a lot of people saw the watermelon video as kind of like a random, like, crazy thing. And it was actually the result of a lot of stuff we learned from doing Facebook live video.

We learned that people really like a strong, visual element that they can immediately tune into. We had a pretty successful video of a guy popping bubble wrap for 30 minutes. But the problem with that video was that there was no, like, thing to stick around [for] to the end. And we we're like, "Oh, people need something to stick around for." And we also found that evenings worked well and Fridays worked well. And all of that led to the watermelon [video]. It wasn't just a lucky [guess].

I'm running out of town so I switched through some stuff. But just like what we've learned, like, we think of social as publishing. We find that adaptation is the best way to stretch our resources. There's going to be, I think, in this panel discussion a lot of discussion about how a smaller, scrappier organization can do these things. And to me, the answer is to really hone in and figure out how to adapt across platforms.

Think about distribution creatively, not just as a box you check. Don't just say, like, "How do we put this exact story somewhere else?" But think like, "What's native?" Try a lot of variations on a theme. Testing and learning. Yeah, that's me. That's BuzzFeed.

[Applause.]

17th Annual International Symposium on Online Journalism

Borja Echevarria: So I will start explaining a little bit of a big picture of what is Univision and where TV is sustained, no? I think televisions are quite behind newspapers and detail native companies in terms of the detailed landscape. It has been like that probably because of its success and because the business is not so broken. And though this may sound like a not very optimistic statement, I think on the other side, there are some good news for TV and for companies like Univision.

First of all, we have learned a lot from newspapers and detail native companies. Learned from their mistakes, but also from the good things that have been happening in the last years, no? From the first time I arrived to TV, I come from—my background is in newspapers—I had the feeling I was going back to at least 2004, 2005. That was my first feeling. But what are the good news about all this?

First of all, as I said, all the learning in the last years. Second of all, we have something that everybody is looking for, and that is video. A company like us, our DNA is video, and maybe we can say now that's not the video people want to see on the internet. But the sensibility that we have in our newsrooms and the capacity to move from that kind of video to other kind of video, that's easier than moving from text to video. And the third of all is that we have the resources.

So as I said before, TVs are still making quite a lot of money. And moving, it's not the same to try to do a detailed transformation when you are not making so much revenue, when the environment is not optimistic, when there are layoffs, and that's not happening still on TV, no? So I think it's a moment where we can move pretty fast to a more detailed company and more detailed newsrooms.

I will explain later these graphics. It looks pretty obvious when we see that graphic. That's a video graphic of Univision in the last months. And I'm asking, good news or bad news? I'm going to answer even, as I said, that it looks easy, the answer to this. I will explain later.

I was explaining the advantages that a company like Univision has. And one of those big, big opportunities are people like Jorge Ramos. Jorge, he represents — I think nothing can represent more the legacy world as someone like Jorge, no? He's an anchor. He has been doing the same job for 30 years, at the same time, 30 minute newscast. So he's like legacy. But someone like Jorge, he has understood very well where things are moving. He always talks about himself as a dinosaur, something that I completely disagree with him. And let me say, if this works, the kind of job.... Let me go back. This isn't working. It should be working. Anyway, I mean, you can look at Jorge on Facebook.

Every time that Jorge jumps onto Facebook Live, that's millions of users. Millions every time. It's a guarantee when he starts playing around. And

17th Annual International Symposium on Online Journalism

that's something we are improvising permanently with the news in the newsroom. He sits around there in the middle of the newsroom, and with Jorge, the chapel was just captured in Mexico, and I mean, with an iPhone, you go there. You record Jorge for two minutes. He can talk forever. And that's millions, that's millions of users.

So these kind of people—anchors—they are realizing that their brand and the impact they can have moving to all these platforms, it's huge. Of course, it benefits their personal brand and it benefits also [the] Univision brand. So Jorge is a perfect case of what is happening.

How we cover the democratic debate with The Washington Post a month ago. Now, if we look back four years from now, it will have been pretty traditional, our detail coverage. Maybe livestreaming, a live plug, or the staff. So when it came to this year's democratic debate, we had to be [on] Facebook Live, of course. Facebook was one of the main partners with The Washington Post, so it was the three brands there were Univision, The Washington Post, and Facebook. So we were doing Facebook Live. We were tweeting, of course, on everything that surrounds [the debate]. We were on Instagram.

We partnered with Purple. They will be here tomorrow in one of Rosental's sessions on bots. And Rebecca Harris, she comes from CUNY University. She has created a platform called Purple, so we spoke with them, and we were texting and sending messages to our audience of what was going on on the debate. Hispanics, specifically, love messaging apps. So we experimented with Purple, also with Snapchat and with Second Screen, with a connector.

So for me as an editor, trying to control this new environment, it's totally impossible. And I think we're going to talk later with Vivian on how this distributed affects to our workflows. And how do you organize a newsroom? What kind of people do you need? But this kind of coverage was a huge change.

So Univision video traffic. Here, if we look at this graphic, I'm not explaining where does this traffic come from or where this traffic is, no? There is not a differentiation between O&O [and] Facebook, so we're not talking about monetizing. We are talking only about audience. But the reality is this, no?

And here comes the answer [to] if it's good news or bad news. It's not going to be my answer. It's going to be the business answer. So this is January. If we look at the graphic on top, the amplified, most of that is Facebook. The news... This was part of a conversation with the business side of the company. This is January. So, I mean, we were super happy looking at that graphic on the newsroom. Traffic growing. But when we look down, and that's our ONO, traffic is flat. Traffic is totally flat.

So what I thought was news, for the business side of the company, it was not good news at all. And I was talking before how TVs are moving to the

17th Annual International Symposium on Online Journalism

detail landscape, and I believe newsrooms and journalists are moving much faster to think about the audience than, of course, the business side. Our experience is totally different than The New York Times or than other kind of business models, because as I said before, and I think I can say this publically, Univision only, in detail, [is] a company that has come in the last year and last month. It makes more than \$100-million revenue only on detail, no, with a pretty weak strategy in the last year. That's a lot of money.

So this is the reality of our moment. What are we going to do with that reality? Years ago I would have said, "No, let's move where the audience is. Let's build audience. The money will come later." No? I think that was my mentality, like, a decade ago. But I think we have to be much smarter, and I think we have to find the balance between the business objectives and the distributed content. I don't want to go faster than the business, because if we want to build and our main purpose is to do journalism, and if we want to do journalism, we need journalists. And we want to build a team and hire good journalists, we need the money.

So the strategy is going at the same rhythm, maybe a little bit faster than the business, but we have to be quite balanced in that, no? Also, to do that, we need to create a very data-driven culture in the newsroom. So we need to understand minute-by-minute what is happening with our traffic, so that we can shift our strategy. Embrace a startup model, no? That is something that can be obvious for startups that may be here in this room. That's not so easy to do in a legacy company as we are.

Of course, we need to adapt video content to different platforms. As I was saying before, we have tons of video. We have tons of video, but we have to adapt it and diversify the skills of the team. We are bringing people [in] that years ago we didn't even know they exist.

[End of Borja Echevarria recording.]

David Skok: So I know I'm a digital person, but I'm sorry, this presentation is not going to be very digital-oriented, so lower your expectations ahead of time. So I know I'm supposed to come up here and talk about what I'm doing at The Boston Globe, but I actually wanted to take this in a different direction, which is setting the tone with some of the issues that Vivian has raised and that Kinsey raised ahead of here, I just want to want to pose some questions that we, as news organizations, really should be thinking about if we aren't today.

And to do that, I want to start with a story that was recounted to me from Professor Christianson several years back when I was working with him on our paper. And it's a story about how Dell, a company that started right here at UT-Austin in a dorm room and moved up the street, but it's a story about how Dell moved from being a personal computer behemoth up market into

17th Annual International Symposium on Online Journalism

microprocessing and other things. And I think that there are lessons in this story that can apply to news organizations as well.

So this story starts with a company called ASUSTek based out of Taiwan. ASUSTek began their life making simple circuit boards, which they were very good at, and they were Dell's largest customer. So one day ASUSTek went to Dell with a value proposition. And they said, "You know, Dell, we've been making these simple circuit boards for you, but we really know how to fabricate these things. And why don't you let us take care of your motherboards as well? And we'll take care of that and guarantee you a 20% reduction in cost." Dell considered it, thought long and hard with their analysts, said, "Wow! You know what? That's a really good deal!" So they agreed to let ASUSTek take over their motherboards.

A couple of years later, ASUSTek went back to Dell and said, "You know what, Dell? We have an interesting value proposition for you. Why don't we take over your computer assembling? We know how to do the motherboards. We know how to do the simple circuit boards." Dell's analysts looked at it, said, "You know what? This is actually great for us. We won't increase our revenue, but we'll certainly increase our profitability, because we'll be cutting a lot of the costs that go into making these computers." For ASUSTek, it's a good deal, because they grew their profit, and they grew their margins by going up market and expanding their overall market.

A couple of years later, ASUSTek went back to Dell with an interesting value proposition. [laughter] Have you heard this before? So they went to Dell and said, "You know what? We do all this computer assembly. We do all these motherboards. We do all these circuit [boards]. It makes sense for us to take care of the supply chain. It's not really what you do. You're a phenomenal brand. You have great value and prestige in the market. But we can do that stuff for 20% lower margins." So, of course, Dell said, "Yes, thank you." And they took over the supply chain and logistics.

A couple of years later, ASUSTek went back to Dell one last time with an interesting value proposition. They said, "You know? Dell, really? You don't need to be making these things. We guarantee you that if you take all of the stuff off your books, your return on assets will be fantastic." Your return on assets will be fantastic, because you won't have any more assets, but that's beside the point. [laughter] So Dell looked at it, considered it, thought, "Well, what a great deal. 20% reduction." And Dell saw remarkable profits. In fact, the highest profits in the organization's history, because while their revenues hadn't increased, they had wiped all that stuff off their books.

A couple of years later, ASUSTek came back, but this time they didn't go to Dell. They went to Best Buy. And they said to Best Buy, "You know, you have all these computer manufacturers on your shelves. You have Compaq. You have Hewlett-Packard. You have Dell. Well, what if we put your name on those computers and you were able to buy them from us for 20% less." Of

17th Annual International Symposium on Online Journalism

course, Best Buy loved it, and Dell was completely out of the computer manufacturing business—the personal computing business, I should say.

And so what does this tell us? Well, unfortunately for publishers, I think, we're already well down this road. And if you walk through, you can look at this yourself and see that most of the stuff has already happened. We've outsourced a lot of organizations. We've outsourced the copy editing and layouts. They've outsourced the printing. Outsourced for advertising, and tools, and now, obviously, distribution. We outsourced to the Newsfeed, Google News, and Timeline. And so the next natural evolution is this, [it] is outsourcing Instant Articles, Amp, and Moments as a wonderful way of our publishing systems.

I'm not suggesting that we don't play in the space. The Boston Globe is one of those places that is definitely playing in the space, and we're exploring it like everybody else. I'm just merely pointing out, where does this end? And I do think these are questions that we should consider when we are taking on these deals.

So, there's really three things, three questions that I want to pose as we take this on. The first one that I just outlined is the business model and the strategic imperative of these risks. The second one, and this is one that I speak on behalf, I think, of most publishers who don't have technology teams that are massive, but who have legacy systems. The Boston Globe is a tremendously successful news organization at the regional level. I do feel that we have a responsibility at The Globe to speak on behalf of those that don't have as large of a voice as we do when it comes to implementing the technology piece in all of this.

Every time we have a Google Amp feed that we have to build or a Facebook Instant Articles feed, while everybody would tell you, "Yes, it's just a Word Press Open Source plugin, you just drop it in," it's never that simple. There's analytics that have to be dropped in. There's AV testing that has to happen. There's revenue components that you have to work with on your ad servers. All of these things take the opportunity cost away from other things that we need to do in order for our own business, our core business, to be successful. And while we do them, it is important to note that it isn't as simple as everybody thinks it is. And when you don't have a technology team that is large enough to handle that, it's a consideration.

But that I can actually live with, because that is essentially why you would outsource it. It's really the third one that I think we should talk about a lot. And I know Emily Bell has championed these issues a lot recently, and I completely rally behind Emily on these, where, you know, technology, these platforms are driven and focused on scale, they are focused on reach, and they are focused on engagement; whereas, journalism is focused—if it's doing it right—on impact. And I don't... I would argue that I don't think those things are always compatible together. They can be at times, but not always.

17th Annual International Symposium on Online Journalism

So, just a couple of considerations on this. I think Josh Benton wrote a Nieman Lab article a couple of weeks ago, where he talked about the East Coast, West Coast bias of these platforms. And I think that that's absolutely true. One way to just look at that is whenever there's a new platform—a Snapchat Discover or a Twitter Moments or a Facebook Instant Articles—look at who the initial partners are who get to sign up for these things first. Is The Dallas Morning News one of them? Is The Boston Globe one of them? Probably not.

Billy Penn was successful in being a small publication that was able to get on Instant Articles, but for the most part, what we're talking about are The New York Times, BuzzFeed, Vox, Vice—all of the ones that you would imagine on the East and West Coast. And I think there's something there that we need to think about as to why that bias exists. They also pay these publications, which is something that we'll talk about.

So the question is, you know, a free press is no longer a free press if it's controlled by the few. And it's important to understand there's also a national versus a local bias on this. And I'm just riffing off some points here on this issue, which are that these platforms are essentially at war with each other, and we're kind of caught in the crossfire. While I think Mark Zuckerberg is a terrifically kind human being, Mark Zuckerberg is accountable to his shareholders. He's not accountable to us.

And so, as news organizations, again, I just wanted to pose some questions as we go down this path about the potential risks, and then we can talk about the solutions in the other panel. Thank you.

[Applause.]

Robyn Tomlin: Good morning. You know, like David, at The Dallas Morning News, we're wrestling with a lot of these same questions. And you know, the first... OK, here we go. The big question that Rosental threw at us, when I read it, I was kind of like, uhh, goodness gracious, can we survive and thrive? That's like a—you know, that's a mouthful. And honestly, my answer was, "I have no idea." But I tried to boil it down a little bit and think a little bit more clearly about, what's the question that I'm wrestling with right now? And that is really about local. How do we use distributed platforms to help us to enhance our chances of survival in this media ecosystem, where there are so many different ways that we can get information to people, and [there is] so much information that is flowing around?

And you know, like David, I actually have mixed feelings about this. I think there are a lot of opportunities. I think distributed content gives us paths to audiences that we've never had before, but I also think it presents some real challenges and some real questions that we have to wrestle with and grapple with as we go forward.

17th Annual International Symposium on Online Journalism

You know, it's not a surprise to anyone that the economics of digital media really do reward scale. I think you've heard that now about five times. The Dallas Morning News is not The New York Times and we are not BuzzFeed. And so, you know, we really do wrestle with this question of, how do we get enough people to look at any given article to pay for the cost of producing that article?

And you know, my feeling is that there are — distributed content is one of those things that can help us, you know, move more people into our stream. Social sharing gives us the opportunity to reach people that we've never really been able to reach before, to get in front of audiences who maybe don't even know The Dallas Morning News as an organization that cares about the things that are important to them in their lives.

So in Dallas, what are we doing? We are really taking an approach of testing and learning. You know, let's try things. Let's spend time looking at the results of those trials. And let's try to learn and adapt as we go. So right now, we are on a number of distributive platforms. And we are, you know, not like The Washington Post—all in. We are sort of taking a step-by-step approach.

Apple News we got on last year. We put in a full-text feed. We've really seen very low usage. We're actually going to be moving back to a partial text feed, so we'll only have pieces of our stories and hopefully that will drive some referral traffic. But we're really not seeing enough audience to Apple News right now to see the long-term value, so it's not thus far been, I would say, a big success.

Facebook videos, though, native videos is something that we are starting to see some really interesting stuff. And I'm going to talk in a minute about that. But we are right now producing or publishing about one native Facebook video a day. Not nearly all the videos that we're publishing, but at least one that we're putting out there to that very specific audience. And then also, [we are] testing and learning with Facebook Live.

Snapchat, you know, we have an entertainment site that is really actively engaging a Snapchat audience. It's not a big audience, but we're telling stories that those folks wouldn't necessarily know are being told. And we actually are seeing a lot of success with taking those snaps and then reverse publishing them in story form for audiences on our site. So it's sort of a back and forth that's using both the platform to help us improve our storytelling.

Instagram, like everybody, you know, we have wonderful photos and videos that we are distributing, you know, for multiple brands that we have.

And we're in the process of testing feeds right now for Facebook Instant Article. So we, you know, we're not one of the big platforms that was invited

17th Annual International Symposium on Online Journalism

in, in the initial, and no one is paying us anything to do this right now. But we do believe that there's a value in testing and learning on Instant Articles and seeing what we find. So we're going to start with just ten articles a day, you know, not the full feed. We publish more than 200 stories a day. We're going to start with ten, and we're really going to look at, what's the value on a mobile page for those articles?

And then Amp, we're also going to be moving into probably later this summer.

You know, to me, distributed content, really one of the biggest values is that it helps to widen the pipeline of audience value. So we want to attract the biggest, broadest audience that we can, engage them—a smaller group, a smaller subset of that group—more frequently, and convert an even smaller subset of that group into paying consumers.

We are launching a metered model in the next few weeks, and so we'll start getting subscriber value, much like The New York Times and The Boston Globe. And then, you know, at the very bottom of that, an even smaller number, we really want to try to make sure we are collecting data from and engaging in events and finding ways to create premium experiences for those folks. The bigger the pipeline, the more people you can get down into those higher premium levels.

So I'm just going to tell a quick story about something that happened last week. Last week was Texas Rangers opening day. We had a team of reporters and editors and producers who were out at opening day. And we took a little video, and I'm just going to see if we can show it. Really quick video I'll show you.

[Video plays of 105-year-old Elizabeth Sullivan throwing the first pitch at the Rangers game.]

That's Elizabeth Sullivan. She's 105-years-old, and she obviously got to throw out the first pitch at the Rangers game. You know, we took that video very quickly. We posted it on our site, onto our YouTube channel. We put it into an article page, had it on our site, and we were off. Right? A great, little, easy story.

But pretty soon after that, we decided, okay, let's take this video and let's put it on our Facebook Native Live channel. And I'll read the post that we put: "Doctors told Elizabeth Sullivan years ago to slow down on drinking three Dr. Peppers a day. 'They died first,' she said. Today, the lifelong Texas Rangers fan got to throw out the ceremonial first pitch at age 105."

You know, you'll notice that we tagged the Texas Rangers, we tagged Dr. Pepper, and we had a link back to the story that we did on that. And really quickly, something kind of magical happened. We started seeing massive

17th Annual International Symposium on Online Journalism

reactions to this story. 44,000 people reacted to it. We had close to 2,000 comments, 21,000 shares. It reached 4.7-million people, 1.7-million video views. You can see 123,000 people liked it, 11,000 loved it, and 12 angry people, which I don't quite understand [laughter] the 12 angry people.

So, what does all this mean? OK, we got all this great engagement, right? On our site, by the way, the same story, the same video did okay. You know, it did all right. It was interesting. You know, I will tell you that that link back, which we initially did not put in there, and then somebody suddenly said, "Wait a minute. Why don't we have a link in that thing?" And we edited it to stick it in there. The link back drove back a fair amount of referral traffic.

But something else happened that I thought was kind of remarkable. We had a massive spike in our Facebook organic page likes. So people who, you know, like Dr. Pepper or like the Texas Rangers suddenly said, "Hey, Dallas Morning News does video? Really? That's interesting. They're a newspaper. I may like them and see what they've got going on. And so there was a real residual value to us for being out there on this platform, because now we'll be able to be in the streams of, you know, 2,000-3,000 more people, and they now know that video is part of what we do.

you know, by the same token, that same day, we were out at the Rangers game at the Ranger Stadium. Now, they will not let you at the Rangers [game] go in and do Facebook Live inside the stadium, so we went out to where people were having parties out in the parking lot. And we did a six-minute live video just walking around talking to people. Took six minutes of our time. We got about 17,000 people who were sitting at work going, "Why am I not there?" And they wanted to engage and ask questions and reacting. Again, six minutes of our time with no script, nothing going on, we were able to really get an audience.

So I use this as an illustration just to say that I think that there are a lot of challenges—and David outlined them pretty well—that come along with distributed content. I mean, I do really believe that the algorithms favor that scale on getting Dallas Morning News content, even when we are breaking national news, into the streams of people. [It] is a challenge. It's a challenge.

We are constantly being asked by our reporters and editors, you know, "Get me an audience. Get me an audience." And our audience development editor, who is here somewhere, has a quote that I use all the time. She says, "I'm not a wizard!" And we're not. And I think that that's a real challenge.

You know, the technical implementation, things are very real. Each one of these things can come with its own challenges. And we don't always know what those tradeoffs are. What are the things we're not getting to do in exchange for that?

17th Annual International Symposium on Online Journalism

The opportunities, though, I think, are also pretty real. You know, we are expanding that pipeline. We're able to target audiences that we might not normally reach. And ultimately, our brand is the best marketing — I mean, our *content* is the best marketing for our brand. And I think that's the thing that makes these tests, these experiments worthwhile.

The biggest reason for me in the newsroom for wanting to continue to experiment with these platforms is that it's helping our staff improve their skills, improve their storytelling skills, [and] improve their mobile skills. Knowing that that video about that little woman engaged that many people tells us something about how we should be telling stories. And I think that that's a really important lesson for all of us.

So thank you very much.

[Applause.]

Q&A Session:

Vivian Schiller: So thank you, everybody. That was great. I loved the diversity of perspective. But because this is a journalism conference, I have to start, Summer, with the first question to you, [chuckles], which is—and I love BuzzFeed—I've got to say for the record, I love BuzzFeed—but you said that you still do kind of subscribe to the “let's just get as much growth as possible and that will be the key to our success,” which has worked for you. On the other hand, if the FT story is correct that the bloom is off the rose of this sort of exponential growth, I mean, you still make a lot of money, but traffic to your owned and operated sites [is] flat and revenue perhaps not quite as [rosy].

Summer Anne Burton: Yeah. So one thing I will say is that as reported in Recode today, the details of that story actually are [that] we did not slash our revenue goals in half for this year. As far as, you know, the business model and.... Kenny Lerer, he's on the board. He went on the record in Recode. You guys can read all about it. So as far as the revenue in general, I think that the thing.... I mean, our core value is impact, and that's what we talk about across the business team, across the news team, [and] across the entertainment team. It's what Jonah emphasizes and we kind of think about company-wide.

The reality of that is that the model is shifting so quickly. You know, as you said, it's different today than it was a year ago. I think that we are in one of the best positions in the world to take advantage of the new—what's going to be new—but I think we're in a real transition phase in terms of just being able to catch up. You know, even just the timelines of how people are used to doing advertising and branded content, by the time that you sell a deal on Periscope, Facebook Live is now the big deal.

17th Annual International Symposium on Online Journalism

And so because this is changing so quickly, I think we have to figure out how to make our business more nimble and agile, and we have to figure out how we can convince brands to come along with us on that. But I think we're in a really great position to do so. And we are profitable, which is more than some startups and tech companies can say. We're actually very profitable. And so I'm really excited. And I think we have great potential. And I think it's really just about managing expectations for how fast we can keep up with the shifting landscape.

Vivian Schiller: One of the things in my intro with ticking through all those events of the last year that I didn't mention that also came out of F8 and others—well, particularly with Facebook—is they're opening up the — sort of embracing branded content and allowing publishers to publish more branded content to Facebook. Again, great for the modernization model, but just more and more one step further from everything sort of happening on those platforms. So very interesting what's going on.

I want to shift gears and talk about how we publish to these different platforms. Again, Summer, not picking on you, but you talked about how what you find is what works well across various platforms. I'd be curious on the rest of the panelists' view on that, specifically, because it feels like—and you can dispute this—that the platforms are sort of falling into three broad categories. One is sort of the broadcast platforms, like Snapchat and Instagram. They really are sort of a broadcast model. Then sort of the social—which almost feels like a quaint term—platforms, which Facebook—well, Facebook fits into all these models—but Facebook and Twitter. And then really sort of the personal platforms, which are the messaging apps, so Messenger, WhatsApp, LINE, and the rest of it.

So I'm curious—those are all very different use cases—how you think about publishing to those different platforms given their very, very different sort of dynamics. It will be good to have somebody else speak.

David Skok: Sure. So, I mean, before we get to that point, there's a layer behind that, which is putting in place, first of all, the taxonomy, the metadata, the tagging, the structure to allow us to be able to play in those spaces; particularly, around Messenger and Chat, which as you pointed out was so brilliant about what Zack did at Quartz, which is building the baseline for that type of experience moving forward.

Vivian Schiller: I hope you're here, Zack. Are you here? [no audible response]

David Skok: And then there's also the workflow piece of it in a newsroom like The Globe. What I've been fond of saying is, you know, it's not print first. And everybody in this room would understand this. It's, what is the best way? As editors, we need to constantly be asking, what is the best way for us to tell that story on Snapchat? What is the best way for us to tell that story

17th Annual International Symposium on Online Journalism

on WhatsApp? On YouTube? On Instagram? On Vine? On Facebook? On BostonGlobe.com? And oh, by the way, in print? And that shift is one that I can't lie. We're a long way from getting to that point where we have, quite obviously, the luxury of being able to have our teams think of things that way.

And the other piece of it that is really all before you even get to that point is the analytical rigor. You know, one of the things that I've found—I was saying to someone last night—the hardest thing to recruit for right now are social media editors who come with a strong data background, who are able to test their way into all these platforms. Because, as Summer pointed out, you don't have a watermelon video success without testing 75 or 100 different versions until you get to that one.

Vivian Schiller: That's true. Yeah, yeah.

David Skok: And so all of those cultural challenges are things that we're trying to get at the root of first before we start thinking about the platforms.

Vivian Schiller: Borja, you want to address this?

Borja Echevarria: Yeah. I would say there is one reality that is Facebook and then there are the rest of the realities. And the rest, I mean, we are testing. We are innovating. We are trying messaging apps. We are trying Snapchat. But in a data-driven newsroom and with all the pressures you have, you are very trapped right now. And you were speaking in the beginning about referrals. I mean, I think referrals, the problem is they still matter a lot. I mean, each of us have different numbers, but half of the audience that comes to our O&O comes from Facebook. So that's huge. That's huge, no? So it's, I think, we have to separate Facebook from the rest.

Vivian Schiller: Robyn, I was just going to guess, Robyn, is that the case for you, too? Do you think about publishing to these platforms or is it all about Facebook?

Robyn Tomlin: No, actually, it is different strategies for different platforms. I mean, one of the things, just like what we publish and how we publish for print audiences is different than it is actually for desktop and than it is for mobile, I think each of those social platforms has a different audience [and] has different behaviors. And what we have to do is learn to be native to those platforms, so that we understand those behaviors and those audiences and can speak that language.

Our Snapchat is a great example. Our entertainment site uses Snapchat really extensively, but our main Dallas News really doesn't, because we don't feel like we have the right voice and we have the right approach, you know, with Snapchat yet. Now that's not to say we won't, but at the moment that's not necessarily what we think is the best platform for us. But we use, you

17th Annual International Symposium on Online Journalism

know, Instagram really extensively, because we have wonderful photojournalists and videographers, who can tell great visual stories, and Instagram is a great platform for that.

So, I mean, the challenge is getting enough people who have enough knowledge and who are constantly learning to be able to, you know, really continuously calibrate for each of those different channels.

Vivian Schiller: Summer, did you want to add something?

Summer Ann Burton: I just wanted to say that I think that we have the thing, too, that's like it's Facebook and everything else. You know, there is a difference sort of in scale when you're talking about Facebook and you're talking about these other platforms. But I also think that the thing that I am — one of the things that I'm most focused on is just—and this goes to the data—trying to understand the difference between what a view is on these different platforms and what it means. On something like Snapchat, where I can say from personal experience, I sort of watch out of the corner of my eye as I page through 30 pages of someone's Snapchat story versus someone listening to an hour-long BuzzFeed podcast, those two things have very different values. And so figuring out the metrics for how we look at these different platforms in comparison to each other, I think, is going to be a big challenge and interesting thing in this year.

Borja Echevarria: One more thing I would like to add. I think at this moment it's very important to make choices, because sometimes we speak about newsrooms with 800 people, 700 people, 1,000 people, and you can be all over the place, no? But that's not the reality of many newsrooms. And you have Snapchat, and you have Messaging, and you have everything, no? So you have to be very careful where you put your efforts.

Vivian Schiller: No question. And on where you put your efforts, that gives me an introduction to my next question [that] I want to talk about. And this was inspired by a conversation I had last night with Trei Brundrett, who is somewhere here with Vox, who runs product, and also from a post that Corey Bergman of NBC Universal's Breaking News, a post that he put on media last night. I'm just going to read it, because it really is the question. He says, Corey says, "The sooner we as an industry admit that Facebook and Google and Apple and Snapchat are running the tables on media innovation, mobile and video innovation, the sooner we'll do something about it, the sooner we'll take exponentially bigger patient bets to solve real problems, the sooner we'll embrace failure instead of saying we do, only to layoff the very teams who fail trying to invent the future, the sooner we'll invest to recruit the best developers, designers, and product leads, empowering them to break the rules and accomplish things we never imagined."

In other words, are we outsourcing product innovation to the platforms where they have much bigger teams than any newsroom ever will and where

17th Annual International Symposium on Online Journalism

it's very hard to breakthrough and collaborate with them on product innovation? And do we not as an industry have a responsibility to tackle product innovation ourselves as a guard against having a little more control over our own destiny? So, sorry, that's a bit of a high concept, but I do want to talk about how each of your newsrooms, understanding these different sized approaches, [are] being able to create the technology to reinvent the future. Borja, I'll start with you.

Borja Echevarria: Well, I don't give up. I mean, I think we have a responsibility and many things to say in that environment around innovation. I mean, we have built at Univision an innovation team, small innovation team. But the most important thing that this team that has been in place for two months has done is mixing. It's not about creating new software, but mixing themselves with the rest of the newsroom and starting to change the mentality of each of the journalists. So it's not only about product. It's about workflows. It's about how journalists think. If we were thinking in live blogging, for example, how we make those journalists start having a conversation about how we should show our live blogging on mobile, for example. And the priorities of some of the platforms—Facebook or whoever—they are not always going to match with our priorities. And I put the example about live blogging on mobile platforms, because I've been thinking for the last three years [that] it's very difficult to find someone that really shows a good experience of live blogging, where you can see the whole big picture in your screen. So I think we need [that] and we have now the responsibility to think about all these issues. Not everything is about building the new platform. Because that's, I think, a mistake that some of the media have gone through, [saying], "I'm gonna build a new platform." No? Innovation is much more than that.

Vivian Schiller: By the way, David, before you speak, we're going to audience questions, so if you want to come down to the mics while we continue.

David Skok: This, to me, is the most important question. I think not just news organizations, but most industries today are wrestling with three key issues. One is a mindset gap. The second one is a skills gap. And the third one is a technology gap. And on the mindset front, to Borja's point, I recently heard a study from Oxford that said that in the next 20 years, 40% of the jobs that exist in the United States today will be obsolete. You think about driverless cars and the impact that could have on the auto industry, and the whole ecosystem around that, is one example. So from a mindset standpoint, it's the very nature of continually adapting and having process that is fundamental to not just our organization, but all organizations, that has to come into play.

So [it is] the idea of change being inevitable and constant, and which leads to the second point of the skills gap: hiring people who can be adaptive, hiring people who understand and embrace change as it comes, not afraid of

17th Annual International Symposium on Online Journalism

it. And the third one being the technology gap, which a lot of us are really trying to overcome or leapfrog through the technology deficit that we have from legacy content management systems and other things. All of that is the framing around, how do we innovate? And I think we have to address all three of those issues.

Summer Anne Burton: I mean, we, you know, BuzzFeed prides itself on being a sort of full stack, vertically integrated company. We are a tech company is what we say. And so product is incredibly important to what we do. And when I started four years ago, I was so impressed with the custom-built CMS. You know, it was like you can drag gifs from one tab right into our CMS, and it's so easy. And that, I think, in this new world of distributed is increasingly, you know, shouldn't be the priority of our product team [and] won't be. And what we're focused on, though, I think, is continuing to use the fact that we're a tech [company], a data-driven tech company, to our advantage in thinking about distribution. So our product team is building tools for how we categorize and upload distributed content, how we look at video, [and] how we measure data. We have database tools that help those creators look at and upload those things. It is a challenge. It's not easy, because these platforms are every shifting, but I think we just have to sort of shift those creative tech resources towards the new landscape.

Robyn Tomlin: Yeah. I think the product gap is a real one, especially in smaller news organizations. I mean, we are lucky in Dallas to have a lot of support across the board. One of the reasons—I've been in Dallas now for about seven months, and one of the reasons I went was because there was a real commitment to, you know, crossing that product gap. We are working with a boutique firm that has built a custom CMS for us that actually really does prioritize the uses, the use cases of our journalists, and how we want to product content. You know, we have reorganized our staff in the last year. And in fact, half the staff basically has new jobs. And we've brought in a whole lot of people with technical skills—data news apps developers, interactive developers, audience developers—and just hired an audience analyst. These are jobs that didn't exist in regional news organizations, you know, [and] newspaper organizations in the past. And you know, I think all of those things are helping us to fill that gap, but it's a big one, and it's one we're going to have to continue to keep really focusing on.

Vivian Schiller: Thank you. All right. We're going to move to questions. First one is over here. If you could, introduce yourself before your question. Thank you.

Miguel: Hi. I am Miguel from Argentina. I'm sorry if my English is not that good. My question is actually for Borja. I wanted to understand. You mentioned before that TV is not as in danger as a business as the newspapers. And I wanted to understand through your thoughts our your understanding and knowledge, why is that?

17th Annual International Symposium on Online Journalism

Borja Echevarria: Probably my English is very bad, [laughter], and I didn't explain well myself. I think TV is at exactly the same point where newspapers were a decade ago. You just have to look at the audience. What I was saying is that the business model, it is still a little bit healthy, and that is what is allowing us to move quickly to the digital landscape. But, I mean, I think things are going to move very quickly in the same direction as it happened to other industries, not only newspapers, but to other industries. So, yeah.

Vivian Schiller: I think in some ways the fact that television still makes so much money, in some ways, is something that can hold back innovation as much as it allows you to....

Borja Echevarria: Yeah. And so that doesn't happen. You need strong leaderships in these companies, no, if you have a leader that really and truly believes that what we have seen before is going to happen. And some of it comes from newspapers. I think it's an amazing experience moving from a newspaper to TV. And [I'm] listening [to] exactly the same conversations [that] I listened [to] ten years ago. With the same type of people, no? You can divide the people in the same. They say the same thing. So it's nothing special.

Vivian Schiller: We have a question on this side.

Laura Lorek: Hi. My name is Laura Lorek, and I run a site called Silicon Hills News here in Austin and San Antonio that covers tech. My question for you is—David, in particular—you mentioned the East and the West Coast bias. And I know recently Condé Nast just opened up a digital innovation center in Austin. And we also have the largest campus here outside of Silicon Valley for Apple [and] Facebook. GM has an innovation center here. AT&T has an innovation center. I'm just wondering why more media companies, which I come from that background, don't have innovation centers in the tech hubs like Austin. And are we going to see more of that coming?

David Skok: I thought you were going to take that question in a different direction, so I'm not sure how to answer in terms of media companies. I can only speak for us. I can't speak for others and would never pretend to. To just say that, you know, we're focused on where we can have the most impact and generate the most revenue. I suspect for the larger chains, you know, I think they are also looking at the scale and the audience reach.

Where I thought you were going to take that question was more of, why aren't they going to these areas? And I don't know the answer to that. I think it's a cultural one, would be my guess, but I don't really have a good answer for you.

Vivian Schiller: This side.

17th Annual International Symposium on Online Journalism

Diego: Hi. I'm Diego from LivePost. Borja, you said that you wanted to see who was reinventing live blogging on mobile. We're doing that, so I'd love to talk to you. And my question is, for small online publishers, how much of a budget would you recommend them to assign to social media and these kinds of platforms? So, how much of a budget? It's open to anybody.

Borja Echevarria: I mean, I don't know if I specifically would assign a budget for that, no? I think that's part of the core. I think you can't separate that from.... What you need is people that can think in everything—in reporting, in social. But making a division between the social media people and the rest of the people, maybe you need some specialists—people that really know and are very data-driven, as David was saying before. But I would try to make it as organic as possible.

Vivian Schiller: Robyn?

Robyn Tomlin: Newspapers have traditionally spent a lot of money trying to get their news into people's driveways. We had circulation people. We had people throwing those papers. And so a commitment to distribution, I think, has to be a part of what we do. And part of that is, you know, developing audience teams and social media experts, and being comfortable with SEN and all of the different tools that you can use to get your stuff in front of people. But part of it is also just about hiring the right people. We talk about T-shaped people—people who have broad, wide skills but can go deep in certain areas. And making sure that you have people, you know, who themselves are able to use all of the tools at their disposal to get their content in front of the audiences that are most interested in that.

Vivian Schiller: You know, it's interesting the categories of executives in news organizations has remained pretty static for a very long time until recently, and now almost all successful news organizations have at the highest level someone that goes by different names but is around audience engagement. I guess that would have been the circulation person prior. Question over here.

Jonathan Groves: Hi. I'm Jonathan Groves with Drury University in Springfield, Missouri, in one of those little small, center places. And one of the things that I've always been really concerned about [is] I'm concerned about local journalism and doing meaningful local journalism that people will connect to. I think a lot of us have been really excited about what's happened with the Panama Papers and how that's resonated and connected. I'm wondering how you apply the lessons of things like what you've learned from the exploding watermelon to some of these more investigative or deeper journalism projects. What are you learning in the fun spaces? And how are you applying them to what we would consider more journalistic or more impactful?

17th Annual International Symposium on Online Journalism

Robyn Tomlin: I can go first. So, you know, in Dallas, you know, we have a big premium. We've always done big J-journalism and care a lot about doing the kind of things that are important to our community, but even beyond that. I mean, we still have an investigative team that does stuff that is really broad reaching and powerful. You know, what has changed, though, I think, is our approach and the way we think about how we get that journalism to people. Rather than just simply saying, "OK, we're going to work for six months on this wonderful project, and we're going to put it out there and push the button and say, 'OK,'" you know, we're spending a lot more time talking about the approach to distribution. You know, building campaigns, in essence, to make sure that we get this thing that we've invested a lot into, into the hands of as many people as possible.

Sometimes that means, you know, just social cards, but a lot of it is AB testing headlines. We had a project not long ago where we put it up and it wasn't doing what we thought it needed to do, so we kept testing headlines. We tested 11 headlines until we found one that finally was starting to find an audience and it was able to get us some lift.

And I think it's being dogged about really considering, you know, who cares about this thing that you think is important as a journalist? And what are all the different tools that we have in our tool books to try to get this thing into those people's hands?

And what happens is when you do that, I mean, you know, especially with investigative journalism, especially with enterprise journalism, you know, we're seeing that the wonderful thing about mobile is that people are reading longer. You know, there's a lot of assumptions about mobile that, you know, people only want quick-hit stuff. And yes, they want things that are quick and are fun, and they want exploding watermelons, but they also want Panama Papers. And they also want a big, investigative piece that we put out yesterday about, you know, the U.S. government's role in increasing the drug wars as a result of, you know, a deal they made with a cartel leader.

You know, that's an important story that we told that we took six months to tell. And it's getting, you know, I think it's got, yesterday, I was looking at it at one point, like, eight minutes of engaged time on an individual article. You don't get that very often. So, you know, you do good work and then you spend a lot of time figuring out how to get it into people's hands.

David Skok: Just on the local front as well, I think the key is, for us, get everybody in a room as early as possible in the process. Don't leave the audience engagement folks out or the video people out until the end when you've got a completed—I'm not going to say *story*—when you have a completed article. Because there is a distinction between the article and the story. And I know that's obvious, you would think, but actually for 146 years when your entire workflow and culture has been devoted to the print article, it's really tough to shake that up and make people think about, what is the

17th Annual International Symposium on Online Journalism

true story? And so we have a great team of multimedia editors led by Laura Amico, who go in at the very beginning with the editors of our spotlight team, which are investigative. I guess I don't need to explain who the spotlight team is anymore.

Vivian Schiller: Not anymore. [laughter]

David Skok: I used to. She goes in very early and starts conceiving of, what is the true story here? And then it's, OK, now, how do we best tell that story in video format, in social, and everything else? I mean, the most recent example, it wasn't an investigation, but it was an editorial done by the opinion team this past weekend about Donald Trump that there was a whole outreach program around that, that I would consider a success as well. The irony of that one is, we were actually focused on the platform of print for that particular social campaign. But really it's breaking down that barrier of thinking about platform, and more thinking about story, and then taking it out from there.

Summer Anne Burton: Yeah. And I just think, you know, what you said about mobile is so true and speaking to how you take the learning from these fun things and apply them. I think it's really just about paying a lot of attention to your audience. And as you said in your presentation, that's an advantage of this new ecosystem. We have a much closer relationship to our audience, you know; whereas, four years ago, we were hoping that people would create accounts on BuzzFeed.com and sign in, so that we could understand who they were. Now, we read thousands of comments. We see what people say when they share.

And I think that applies for the people doing fun entertainment content, but it's also true for our journalists. They can understand, did people engage with this? What did they think of it? What did they think of the tone? You know, we track how long people—where people drop off in a story. And the mobile thing was one of the — when we started doing long-form features, it was one of the most sort of interesting nuggets of information that our data science came [up with] was [that] long-form actually over indexes for mobile. We found that people were reading long-form on mobile even more than they were reading our lists and quizzes and things like that. And so that was a really interesting thing. And we started taking this mobile-first approach to the product of our long-form format and how we make that.

Borja Echevarria: Yeah. And you mentioned Panama Papers, no? And I can speak a little bit about this, because Univision with Fusion and McClatchy were the only media in the U.S. that had Panama Papers from the beginning. I mean, the obsession with distribution is getting bigger and bigger in the conversations, no? And everybody is part of that conversation. It's not always what David was telling—put everybody in the same room from the beginning and that's the perfect situation. But when you have investigations and investigative reporters, many times they want to keep it at least for as

17th Annual International Symposium on Online Journalism

much time as possible to keep it tight to a certain group. But once it opens, all the conversation, how we distribute it, and in this case with Panama Papers, we had a lot of stories from Venezuela, from Costa Rica, from all the countries from Latin America that that was our main focus. And in the team, we had reporters from Venezuela, from Costa Rica. So the way you distribute is not only, "Hey, let's post on Twitter. Let's post on Facebook." No. The journalist from Venezuela, she will go and speak to important people that she knows in Venezuela that is going to help us to distribute the content. So you start thinking, going little by little, each piece, how we're going to move each piece, no? So there is a very important work there.

Vivian Schiller: We have time for hopefully one short question—or short answer, I should say.

Pei: I assure you, the question will be very short. So my name is Pei. I'm a graduate student from Squawk Journalism at UT-Austin. So my question concerns about the quality of content in the age of the distributed online ecosystem. So it seems like everyone mentions about the quality of content still matters, but it seems to me like the quality is defined in the way, like, how much traffic it would attract from the audience size. So my question is, it makes a lot of sense like if the content attracts millions of likes or it were shared by thousands of times, but will it increase the problems of like the sphere of silence? It seems like the minority voices will get to be even more minority. And the less popular content would be even less popular. Thank you.

Vivian Schiller: Wow. That's a big subject--[laughs]--that I'm not sure we really have time to tackle. I'm actually going to leave it as a....

Rosental Calmon Alves: The question is in the air.

Vivian Schiller: The question, yes. The answer is in the question. So thank you. That's a good note to end on. And thank you, everybody and Rosental.