

## 13<sup>th</sup> Annual International Symposium on Online Journalism

**Day 1, April 20, 2012: Afternoon Session - 4:15-5:45 p.m.**  
***Cases of News Innovation and Entrepreneurship***

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**Chair: Amy Schmitz Weiss**, Assistant Professor, San Diego State University, and Symposium Research Chair

### **Panelists:**

**Nicola Bruno**, Effecinque, and **Rasmus Kleis Nielsen**, University of Oxford (United Kingdom): *Survival is success: an analysis of online journalism start-ups in France, Germany, and Italy*

**Mark Berkey-Gerard**, Rowan University: *From journalism students to local news entrepreneurs: A case study of Technically Media*

**Soraia Herrador Costa Lima**, Centro Universitário Estácio Radial de São Paulo and Senac (Brazil): *Yes, iTouch: a case study of the first Brazilian news media for tablets*

**Linda Jean Kenix** and **Christine Daviault**, University of Canterbury (New Zealand): *Is this the future of online news? An examination of Samoa Topix*

**Anssi Männistö**, University of Tampere (Finland): *Visuality of tablet newspapers and magazines compared to their print and web editions*

**Donica Mensing**, University of Nevada, **David M. Ryfe**, Hayreddin Ceker, and **Mehmet Hadi Gunes**, University of Nevada: *Mapping emerging news networks: A case study of the San Francisco Bay area*

**Q & A:** Amy Schmitz Weiss and the Panelists

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**Rasmus Kleis Nielsen:** Thank you, Amy. It's a real pleasure to be here to present a report that we are publishing today at the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism on the track record of journalistic online startups across Europe. So in Western Europe, as around much of the rest of the world, of course, there's been a surge of new journalistic startups that are web-based that are partly about journalistic entrepreneurs who want to use the journalistic potential of new technologies, use tools in innovative ways, [and] develop new platforms for their craft. But, of course, also our reaction to a development that's well known from the U.S., certainly, but also from much of the rest of the Western world; namely, the structural decline of legacy

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media. So, some of the companies we are looking at are fueled, as many startups are in this country, by severance packages and the buyout for journalists who are back for another fix trying to practice their profession in a new environment on a new basis.

Of course, the reason we care about this is the same one that probably motivates much of the research in the room—that we are interested in this not simply from a business point of view, but also in terms of the democratic importance that many speakers have alluded to of professional journalism, the idea that someone ought to be keeping an eye on people in positions of power, in government, in business, and in civil society.

Now, it has been clear throughout the day and has been clear through from previous iterations of this conference, we know a lot about the track record of startups in this country. And there is growing literature—academic, professional, journalistic—on how startups are doing, what are the challenges they face, but we know much less about how startups are doing elsewhere. This is, of course, one of the USPs of this conference that really is international and brings together perspective from around the world. And what I'm going to do today is to present on the basis of the report we have written that is available now for free download on the Reuters Institute website from today.

A quick overview over the main findings from this analysis that we have done, which is, as far as I'm aware, the first attempt to do a systematic comparative analysis of how journalistic online startups have been doing in the non-English speaking parts of Europe. On the continent, specifically, we are looking at startups in three of the biggest media markets in the world and certainly in Europe; namely, Germany, France, and Italy. And each of these three countries, Nicola, my co-author, and myself, we have chosen three particularly promising startups that local experts recommended that we took a closer look at some of the most promising examples of journalistic entrepreneurship in these countries.

So, I should underline from the outset that the findings I'm presenting today are not based on a random or even a representative sample of how startups are doing. It is based on a sample that was motivated by the desire to find some of the most successful and promising, if you will, new initiatives in these three countries.

The reason we looked at Germany, France, [and] Italy is that for those interested in the prospects for online journalism in the non-English speaking parts of the Western world, these are, if you will, critical cases for understanding what the potential is here. All three countries are very large, so issues of critical mass that might be pronounced in smaller countries like my home country, Denmark, with 5.5-million inhabitants should be much less of an issue in a country like Germany with 80-million inhabitants. They have high levels of Internet access and use. They have rapidly growing online

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advertising markets. So in a way, they should be, if you will, some of the most hospitable environments you could find in Europe in terms of having a basis in which you could build new niche or even more general interest online endeavors to support professional journalism.

Now as the title suggests, the findings we have are sobering in that respect. I mean, we looked at nine different startups. And perhaps not surprisingly to people who follow the sector closely in the U.S., if you were to think about what the situation might look like in Europe, in Europe as here, we find that all of the startups we have been looking at are struggling to survive financially. They are having a very hard time to break even. When we look at the details of their operations—I'm just going to flash the slide briefly of the nine companies we have looked at—two are breaking even: one of the largest ones, Mediapart from France, on the basis of a paywall system; one, the smallest one, Perlentaucher, from Germany, on the basis of a diversified model to support a very small operation. Of the remaining seven, five are operating at a loss. One has been acquired by a news company, by a legacy news company, after many years of operating losses, and one was closed down after nine years of operation without ever turning a profit.

So, why do these new startups struggle? And again, I should underline here, these are not random samples. These are some of the startups that have been considered most promising in these large European media markets. So, what are the problems that they are struggling with?

In part, this has to do with the specific features of the national media system in each of these countries. So, this is for the Americans in the room. It's worth [it] to think about the differences that context makes here. So, just to give you a quick sense of the countries we are looking at, in Germany, what you have is a very strong and only slowly declining legacy media industry. You have a nationally strong national press that's ideologically differentiated, so we have very different perspectives. You have very strong broadcaster, both public service and commercial. And you have a strong regional press. And though Internet access in news is higher than it is in the U.S., paid newspaper circulation has been declining at a slower pace in Germany than it has in the U.S.

France and Italy are very different situations. The legacy media are much weaker than they are in the U.S.; in particular, newspapers. Very limited circulation, much smaller newsrooms, and they have also been declining at a much faster pace than they have in Germany and at a pace more comparable to the U.S.

So, why is this important? Well, it's important if you take Germany, for instance, which at a first glance you might think was one of the most promising markets in Europe for online journalism, you have very high levels of Internet access and use. You have a very sophisticated, digitally sophisticated population. We can see this in all sorts of indicators of use.

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They have a booming online advertising market. And yet, because the startups have faced a very strong incumbent industry that has moved not quickly but in force into the online space and increasing, of course, into social and mobile, they are having a very hard time carving out their own niche and presenting their own attractive value proposition to the general population.

In France and Italy, you have much weaker legacy media, so ironically though, actually levels of Internet access and use and the online advertising market are less full-fledged, less mature than they are in Germany. There, the startups are actually doing better by many indicators.

What they do share across all three countries are two particularly important challenges. Again, they are challenges that are similar to the ones that many startups face in this country. The first one is that the market for online news when you look at the content side is overwhelmingly dominated by legacy media. They leverage their well-known brands, the resources of their newsrooms, their connections in the community, and of course the cash flow from their offline businesses to invest in online operations and social and mobile operations that in most cases are still lost leaders, but a much stronger and more attractive to the users than what's offered by online startups. So in all three countries, there is no example of a start-up breaking into the top ten ranks of news organizations.

So, that's the first challenge: the dominance of legacy media also online in all three countries. The second challenge is, again, one we also know from the U.S.—the fact that the market for online advertising on the one hand is generously supplied by literally billions of websites, which means that the CPM you can get is very limited and in fact eroding over time, and of course on the other hand, the fact that a number, a limited number of very, very large players are capturing a very large share of the online advertising leaving smaller and midsize operations squeezed when it comes to generating much in terms of revenue online.

So, I'm just going to give you two quotes to suggest how the practitioners we interviewed for this experienced this. This is from Germany, where Dominika Ahlrichs speaks about the challenge of competing with the legacy players and clearly illustrates the challenge of, how do you actually compete with a much larger newsroom that has the money to invest in, say, applications for tablets and mobile and in staffing and in having their own in-house developers when you are operating a much leaner enterprise, like Netzeitung was? And the challenge of the online space from France, Rue89 which was one of the most admired startups that we've looked at. This is the one that was later acquired by Le Nouvel Observateur in France. And you can see the problem that you have to run to stand still in terms of revenue when it comes to online advertising.

In 2008, Pierre Haski, one of the co-founders, thought the two-million visitors would generate three million euros a year in advertising revenues.

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Three years later, they have their two million unique monthly visitors, but it generates less than 800,000 — oh, sorry, just about 800,000 euro in advertising, less than they made off a million unique visitors three years before.

So, the startups we have looked at in all these three countries, given their contextual differences, which are significant and important in terms of understanding why some of them, like Mediapart in France, have been able to find sustainable niches for themselves, are facing two challenges: the dominance of legacy media that are still operating many of their digital operations as loss leaders and hence crowding out entrepreneurs in the space in much of Europe, and of course the dynamics of the online advertising market which makes it very hard to live off online advertising alone. None of the companies we looked at managed to generate even half of their revenue or the revenues they needed to cover costs from advertising alone. Every single one of them we've interviewed were, of course, in theory, well aware that diversification is the buzz word, but to diversify a business model, it turns out to be much harder in practice than it is in theory. So, everyone is aware of the challenge. It is much harder to actually deal with it.

So in conclusion, to summarize what we've found looking at these nine strategically selected cases from three different media markets in Europe, it is not a particularly upbeat conclusion, if you will, but it is the notion that, as the title of my presentation suggests, survival is success or at least a precondition for success, because of course for most of the people involved here this is not primarily about money. They need money to keep their enterprise going, to pay their rent, to fund their operations, but they want much more from this. They want journalistic excellence. They want to develop new tools, engage with readers, with users, with audiences. But they need to pay their bills and most can't.

This is the less than happy note on which I'll end here. Though there is rapid growth in both use and an online advertising market that still draws some investors to bankroll these [startups], so far the track record in Europe has been, shall we say, less than confidence inspiring in terms of their ability to break even. Only in countries like France, where the legacy media are very weak, ambitious, well-funded startups have been able to carve out a distinct niche in which they provide, as was suggested earlier today, content that is both distinct and relevant and have the confidence to charge for it, have larger online operations been able to break even and sustain the kind of journalism that we would hope will continue to be a part of our democracies moving forward.

Thank you.

[Applause.]

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**Mark Berkey-Gerard:** All right. My case study is a small company in Philadelphia called Technically Media. It was started in 2009 by three graduates of Temple University. These were three guys who were the editors of the school newspaper. They had done internships at all the local publications. They had won awards. And a couple months after graduation, they came up against the humbling reality that they could not find a job, or at least a job that they were interested in. So, they scrapped together \$250, bought a couple of domain names, and launched their company, Technically Media. Technically Media does two things. It's a media consultancy for other news organizations, non-profits, and businesses. And they also publish Technically Philly, which is a local technology blog, located in Philadelphia.

So first, I'll talk about Technically Philly, because that was the first product that they launched. It's all local. Philadelphia has a very vibrant technology community, so they're covering startups, web development, digital divide issues, but also the city government and how they use technology to make the city a better place. Those are all the things that they are covering.

They have a small, but loyal readership, 25,000 readers a month, who are employed in technology-related jobs for the most part. They're young. They're actually making money. And they are people who read the site — almost half of the people read the site almost every single day. But as you know, that's not enough to operate a publication sustainable just with advertising revenue. So, they really had to diversify very quickly.

Their company, Technically Media, they are consultants and they provide services to other organizations. Some of them are news organizations, some of them are non-profits. But what they're really trying to do is provide an editorial strategy for that company and try to identify [for] the people who come to that website, how do they convert them into something? Whatever that is. It might be an advertising click. It might be a donor. It might be someone who comes to an event. It might be a subscriber. But they're helping other organizations figure out that scenario.

One of their clients is the National Constitution Center, which is a museum located right next to the Liberty Bell in Philadelphia. They deal with constitutional issues. It's a great museum if you're ever in Philadelphia. And the National Constitution Center, over time, they track press coverage of constitutional issues. And what they had seen was that the press was writing less and less about the issues that they are trying to get the citizens of the United States to engage. So, what they wanted to do was build an online publications, where the historians, their staff, their museum curators could write about these issues for themselves. They wanted to extend their physical museum into a digital space. And the other thing they were very interested in was adopting kind of a newsroom culture. So, part of my study, I sat in on meetings. It was very interesting to watch scholars and historians and curators have a news meeting and pitch story ideas and talk about

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traffic. And so, they hired these three guys to come in and help them establish that kind of culture within the museum.

They also run events. Next week is Technically Philly Week. It is 65 events about news, technology, web, [and] government policy issues. Last year, they had over 4,000 people. This has become a big thing, and it's, again, run by this company.

They do kind of three different things: they are covering technology and technology issues in the city, they are advocating for better use of technology, they're advocating for the city government to release more data about crime or potholes or transportation, but they're also building tools, tools that will help citizens navigate the city and technology in different ways.

This is their advertising revenue — or this is their revenue. You can see advertising is the smallest piece. They're getting most of their revenue from their consulting, from some grants, from their events. Their events is probably the fastest growing part. But this is really a business model that does not rely on advertising.

In the future, this summer, they are launching their next publication, Technically Baltimore. They feel like Baltimore and the technology community there are in the same place that Philadelphia was a couple of years ago. They are exploring a membership model. Their readers, even though it's a small base, have said that they are willing to pay for some of the content and the services that they offer. They're also kind of going through staff transitions as one of the founders is leaving.

So, why study this company? Why study such a small case? For me, this is a great entrepreneurial example. They have become profitable without any outside investment. So, they've slowly built up their revenue sources. For me as a teacher, this is a great way to bridge the gap between my classroom and my research. So, I was aware of this company. I was following them. And some of my brightest, most enthusiastic students started to come up to me, like, "Do you know about this company? Do you know what these guys are doing?" They were running in this circle of 20-year-old journalists that I was not aware of, or, I mean, I wasn't really part of. And the level of energy and excitement made me [think], you know, I have to know more about this. I have to figure out what's going on and apply that to my teaching.

My study puts this company in a framework of entrepreneurial learning outcomes. These are all things that people are talking about within journalism. Curriculum. How do we bring business in? How do we encourage innovation and risk taking? So, I was looking at these kinds of things. They are not skill-based, knowledge-based things. They are more opportunities where people can demonstrate risk taking or networking or strategy within this framework.

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So, my first question was just to go to them and do observations and in-depth interviews and look first of all at, what are the knowledge and the skills that they are demonstrating here? And as you can imagine, it's far beyond what most journalism courses would offer. They're blogging. They're running newsrooms. But they are doing everything you'd have to do to publish your own site. They're doing consulting. They're writing grants. They're doing grant reporting. They're planning events. Just a range, a wide, wide range of knowledge and skills that they've picked up just in a couple of years.

The second question I was really interested in as an educator is, how did they acquire these skills? How do you go in a couple of years with very little experience to running this kind of company? A couple of things of what they said was, first of all, that all they've done is implement ideas that already exist. One of the quotes one of them gave me was, you know, "You go to a journalism conference, and they're talking about the same five ideas every time. The hard part is execution. The hard part is actually making it work." So, this is not an idea-based company. This is an execution-based company.

The second thing that they said was that their experience with student publications, internships, and they all worked part-time jobs for the first couple of years to pay the bills, that those were the experiences that were most valuable in developing their entrepreneurial skills.

The third thing is they would ask questions about, you know, "How'd you learn about business? How'd you learn about marketing? How do you learn about your audience?" And they approached it as a journalist. They said, "We took all the skills we learned in journalism school and we applied it. We first of all said, "Who are the experts? Who do we need to talk to? What do we need to know?" So, they really used those skills.

The fourth thing they did was, if they could not find the knowledge, they created a forum to get it. So, a couple. Just shortly after launching, they launched an event called BarCamp News Innovation, an open-source, one-day conference, where they got people to come and have a conversation that they couldn't find anywhere else.

The third question I was kind of looking at is just, how those kind of entrepreneurial capacities, how they were most evident in this business. The initial launch, they got the idea from an event called Ignite Philly. Someone talked about Ignite earlier in the day. It's basically a bunch of young people in a bar drinking and giving five-minute pitches about ideas that would make the city a better place. They were at these events and they were looking around saying, "There might be an audience, a news audience, a web audience for this as well." And they started up very quickly and just launched it.

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They moved initially beyond advertising. They recognized even as young journalists that there was a value in their training and in their ability to help create content and to help others create content. That's what they would sell in their consulting. They'd take that experience and do it. The publication is almost now entirely funded by events, and they're looking into other markets.

The fourth question I had was really about, what are the implications of this company for journalism educators? The first thing they said was that much of the training they'd got in their education was for jobs that no longer exist. The second thing is that the most valuable experiences, again, were the opportunities to build publications and tools as students and then test those. Not just build a publication and launch it and say goodbye, but actually test the revenue sources around it.

And the final thing is, often we talk about entrepreneurial as kind of one group of people and people who want to get a steady job as another kind of people. They really see this as a requirement to getting.... If this company fails, they have now just leapfrogged everybody else that they graduated with in generating this.

So finally, this is a case of entrepreneurial by necessity. This was not just an idea they had. They didn't do it because they thought it'd be fun. They did it because this was the way they could create a job. Much of journalism curriculum, much of the courses that I teach are skill based, and there are limits to that. That was one thing that really came out.

The opportunity to build on existing strengths of journalism programs. So, every journalism program has publications [and] has courses, the entrepreneurial courses. There are ways to build on those strengths. This is not a model. For them, local media, they have never had outside investment want to come and invest. For local media, their experience is that it has to be built from the ground up. More like an accelerator kind of model where people are working together, building products, and testing them.

And finally, I mean, early in the day, someone asked the students what jobs you want, and the educators, what are you doing to help those students? The reality of this company was that the knowledge [and] the skills they needed did not come from their education alone. They had to create their own forums to educate themselves. It's something that they have done as students and continued to do after that.

Thank you.

[Applause.]

**Soraia Herrador Costa Lima:** I'm going to talk about the first Vico-4 tablets in Brazil, Brasil 247. [Rosental asks her to move over on the stage.]

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Okay, no problem. So, Brasil 247 was released on March 13<sup>th</sup>. It was one month later than after the release of the daily. It has two daily editions. It talks about news and articles about everything that you can imagine—culture, politics, economy, and everything. It has its own website. It also has social media accounts on Facebook and Twitter. And during this, its first year, it developed some segmented vehicles like Bahia 247, Brasilia 247, Rio 247, and Pernambuco 247, that are important places in Brazil. It is for iPads, Android platform, and mobile. In its first year, it had 40,000 downloads for iPads.

I'm going to skip some slides, so we can talk about it later. Its content analysis. It has two daily editions, as I already said, at 6:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. It has plenty [of] editorships, like Power, Brazil, World, Economy. All these editorships has its own cover page and the vehicle has a cover page that's the main one, and it also has in each page an icon called 'help,' which helps the user to interact with the vehicle.

The content analysis. Well, as you can see at the bottom part, you have some icons, like New Edition, Library, Last News, and Content, where you can improve your interaction. The Last News [is], for example, an icon that leads you to a landing page which is the website's page, Brasil 247 website. At the top part, you have some contributions like Audio Volume Control, Index, Back and Forward, and icons for Share the Content.

Well, we had an average the first year, like each edition has 23.9 news not signed, and they're not signed news, news that are not signed by journalists or provided by news agents. We have 5.3 news with credit to journalists and two articles, but the articles only appeared in the first [two] months of the vehicle. And we have an average of five advertising things at each edition.

So, some people still have problems with left and right, as you can see. So, the texts are always available on the right side, not on the left side. The images and the videos are always on the left side. The language is clear. It is almost like everything that you find in journalism. They use some humor or incisive comments mostly on the news about politics. In the two daily editions, the news aren't the same and the issues are rarely repeated. But when they are repeated, they have different approaches. And they still have some problems, like grammar reviews or even with subtitles that are missing in some editions.

Well, one of the pages that attracts the most was the 'help' page. The help page helps the user [with] how to use the vehicle in the most interactive way. It has icons that tells you that you can improve your usability with 3G or Wi-Fi connection. It explains that it's available on the iOS or Android. You have icons for newsfeed, Facebook, Twitter, and contact by email.

So, I saw during this year when I analyzed each edition in the morning and the night, its has improved during its first year, but it still has problems. The

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publishers and journalists are still trying to figure it out how to do journalism well, and also the users are trying to understand how to use this new tool. The journalist content is similar to online journalism. Many images and videos to illustrate the news. The news always have [these]. And advertising is very interactive, but it's almost 70% of the advertising that we have at this vehicle are provided by governments in Brazil, so it's a little bit odd. The vehicle still has problems with revision, and it's hard to access the first editions. And since February, you can only access the latest issues. No more than three weeks later. So, it's hard to do our research over the first issues that I could download.

Thank you for everyone.

[Applause.]

**Linda Jean Kenix:** OK. Thank you, Rosental. Thank you, Amy, for having us.

**Rosental Calmon Alves:** Thank you.

**Linda Jean Kenix:** Oh, he thanks me. Anyway, OK. I hope my accent doesn't disappoint anyone. I am not a kiwi. [laughter] I am from here. I actually graduated from the University of Texas — Hook 'em Horns — in 2001, but I moved to New Zealand about six years ago. And if anybody wants to talk about how amazing New Zealand is, I'll talk your ear off. So, but I moved there about six years ago. And a lot of students come to New Zealand from the Pacific islands, come from Australia, and from within New Zealand.

And six years ago, I had a student come to me from Samoa and say, "Oh, my god! There's this great new thing called Samoa Topix coming up. I've heard about it." And I said, "OK, let me look at it," and then I forgot about it. I have a sabbatical coming up, and I'm going to Samoa for a little while. And so I started thinking about this student again, because this student and I kept in touch and we talked about Samoa Topix, and so I started to look at this website. So, that's the personal background. But I find it very interesting; particularly, in the context of, how is it that we're talking about journalism? And what is journalism today? And particularly for an organization such as this that portends to—well, I'll talk specifically about it in a few minutes—but portends to be an aggregator of, you know, the future of journalism.

So, Topix talks in some pretty sweeping terms about what journalism can look like and does look like on its sites. But before I get there, these are some of the kind of historical ways we've thought about journalism—a foundation of institutionalized practices, objectivity, you know, all of the things that we tell our students in classes that will never die and will forever continue to mean journalism into the future. What journalism is increasingly

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looking like is.... Well, it's somewhat of a mess, really. [laughter] Well, I shouldn't say to all these journalists in the room. But it's evolving. I'll say that.

Some of the studies that have looked at journalism online have talked about things like the importance of transparency and not necessarily objectivity. Some more critical studies of journalism have said, wow, there's a lot of stuff out there, but gosh, it all looks the same when we're talking about diversity. So, journalism is in a state of flux.

Now, Topix steps in and portends to kind of fill that gap. Actually, before I talk about Topix in particular, it's particularly important to a place like Samoa, because Samoa is not exactly a bastion of press freedoms. They've had a long struggle in terms of freedom of the press, and that continues on. And it's also one of the largest diasporic communities in the world. More Samoans live outside of Samoa than inside. And so there's a big community of people outside of Samoa that are aching to get news that they can trust, because a lot of the news from within Samoa has a history of being somewhat complicated by government intervention. So, something like Samoa Topix is really important.

And Samoa Topix says that it fills this gap in all sorts of really interesting ways. That it is—this quote right here, “combines the best technology with the strongest local participation to create the best destination for news and discussion. By giving everyone access to the tools to talk, and an audience to listen to, Topix redefines what it means to create, edit, share, and make the news.” “It's a leading news community...continually updated...thousands of sources.”

If you look at their 'about' page, it's not just thousands, it's 67,000 sources that they draw from. In 2011, they were noted as a top ten online newspaper destination—Topix itself. There is in the United States a Topix site for almost every town — well, I wouldn't say town, but certainly city in this country, and it's growing in international importance; hence, its presence in Samoa. So, that's a lot. It says to do a lot.

So, you know, I was interested in how it was performing, right? And because, again, of its importance to a place like Samoa. So, these research questions were what, you know, guided us. Looking at the comments, you know, does this do what Topix says it does? Does it lead to this pluralistic debate that can somehow help democracy, in the larger sense of the word, but, you know, some sense of discussion amongst people talking about the news? Does the discussion relate to the news? Because that's what Topix says is its goal, right, as an organization, [is] to get people talking about the news, exchanging ideas about the news, editing the news, you know, contributing to the news. How does it do that? Well, first off, does it, and how?

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Are the news stories that Samoa Topix aggregates dependent upon traditional approaches to journalism that we, I think, in journalism schools would point to? Perhaps, thinking about what Jim Moroney from the Dallas Morning News talking about the PICA, you know, the Perspective, Interpretation, Context, and Analysis. And he said, "The goal of journalism [is] an informed public that can make wise decisions to govern itself." So, thinking in those kind of terms, is what we see on Topix living up to that expectation?

And then fourth, how does it connect really, as much as we can say, to what's happening on the ground in Samoa? And the paper of record in Samoa is the Samoa Observer, so is there any correlation?

So, looked at about 103 forums and looked at Samoa Topix stories and Samoa Observer stories. Now looking at the forums, the idea.... And we know this from, you know, you have a feeling when you go to the New Yorker, right? You have a feeling when you go to the Dallas Morning News. And you get that feeling from this umbrella, from little narrative fragments from within, right? And so, this idea that we can look at these narrative fragments and that they create some broader, ideological understanding, right? And that understanding in this case would be, what is Samoa Topix, right? What is it to be the New Yorker? That's one of those things that as a researcher, it's hard to get at. You do your best, but this is an effort in that.

So, first research question, you know, it wasn't pretty: The level of debate. And we see this over and over again, [laughter], don't we? You know, I mean, in terms of, it's the horrible anonymity of the web with these created usernames. And we found that here. And the more discussion, the more nasty the discussion became. But there were lots of possibilities. You know, tweet this and, you know, link to Facebook. So, you know, there's Web 2.0 everywhere, everything that we would think, but how it was used in practice on Topix was largely social/interpersonal. A quarter of it, roughly a quarter of it, about news. So, three-quarter of it had nothing to do with news within the forums. This quote here from the paper, "The stories served principally as a catalyst for commentators to express previously held viewpoints on loosely related topics using charged language in an uncensored forum with no accountability." That was like the nicest way that I could write it. [laughter] You know, if you spend some time looking at Topix forums, you'll see for yourself.

OK. So, for the news and the forum, yeah. This was the second research question loosely connected to the first. And so here, more data to back that up. I didn't post the statistics on this, but it was highly correlated. The more posts, the kind of deeper into the abyss the comments delve. So, now, journalistic norms, it quickly became evident that's really hard to examine, because there are no [journalistic norms]. This is an aggregator. So, to say, you know, what are the norms of the aggregators was a difficult mission. And then thinking about it further, you know, you look at it and go, where are

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they aggregating from? One of the things, if you know anything about Samoa, there used to be Western Samoa and American Samoa, and now there's just Samoa and American Samoa, which American Samoa, you know, Samoa's not too happy about and there's all sorts of problems about this. But 20% of the content for this website, which is for Samoa, has nothing to do with American Samoa, but 20% was drawn from an American Samoa website. Why? Because it had Samoa in the title. And that, as we see, I think it's on the next slide.... No, sorry. Excuse me.

Also, stories that had absolutely nothing to do with Samoa were the majority of content in one big sample that we looked at. It was the majority of content. So, how this organization aggregates and the resulting content, certainly, there's an ethical implication to that. And that's one of the questions I want to leave us with is, you know, is there a way to improve this? I think Ben Ifeld was talking about metrics and scaling. Clearly, that's an issue here for Samoa Observer. You create this aggregating machine and you say, you know, "We're going to provide you with the tools." And they do that to a certain degree, but then what, is the big question.

So, and then finally, the connection with Samoa Observer was miniscule. There was almost no overlap in content. And the most sourced group of people were non-Samoan entertainers, largely from America, right? So, not only did the content, you know, the story source not have anything to do with Samoa, the content had nothing to do with Samoa, but the people were Samoan ... in large part. Whereas, Observer, obviously something very different.

So, lots of things to think about here; particularly, given the reach of Topix as a company. You know, simply to create the tools, I think, as journalism educators, as readers, you know, again, here using the case study of Samoa in a place that it's so important to try and find a place to get good, reliable news about your, in this case, your homeland, you know, to simply provide the tools, is that enough? And we're seeing, you know, the questions about diversity online and this push to create more and more content. As the aggregation of the Internet becomes more important because there's simply so many more URLs, and aggregators are more important for us as users, how is it that we're going about aggregating this content?

And I think that's a really important question for web developers, journalists, academics, all of us in this room. So, thank you.

[Applause.]

**Anssi Männistö:** Thank you, Amy, and good afternoon, everybody. My name is Anssi Männistö, and I work as Senior Editor of Visual Journalism at the University of Tampere, Finland. In this presentation, I will discuss about some results of a study which compared the visuality of tablet newspapers and their print and web editions. I'm basically comparing these three formats

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as we see here. (Is there a pointer? Yes, there is pointer here, yes.) These three formats. Visuality of tablet journalism has not yet been a topic of too many academic papers and studies. Various experts have given their insight to this theme and several research companies have been active in making lists of best publications, publication apps, etc.

Barb Palser studied the best practices among 20 iPad apps of traditional daily news organizations. In terms of layout and navigation, Palser found that newspaper apps tend to look like newspapers. On the other hand, all of the broadcast apps put more emphasis on multimedia in varying degrees. And because there is no concept of page in broadcasting's native formats, that is TV and radio, those apps tend to experiment more with layout. CNN is a perfect example of this. It was interesting to hear about the concept of the CNN app as Mr. Gump told us in the first session today.

One of the leading newspaper designers, Mario Garcia, states that the most common mistakes that newspapers make when transferring or bringing the product onto a tablet is the transferring itself. I quote, "Forget transferring! Pretend there is no printed product and that you are here to create a tablet-only newspaper," Garcia suggests. (Yes, here we should go.) In the same manner, Joe Zeff, one of America's top app designers says that publishers are competing against themselves by not differentiating their print and iPad versions. "They have to reinvent, not just redesign," Zeff says.

Now to our study. We have had a research project which tries to analyze the characteristics of tablet journalism. The project is called *Tablet Journalism Now*, and it started September last year, and we are currently writing the final report of it. The project is funded by Helsingin Sanomat Foundation of Finland, and the project leader is Professor Ari Heinonen at our university. I will here concentrate only to the findings of my part in the study and which these parts are described here.

In the first part of the study, typologisation was created for analyzing design principles of table publications. The most important findings were made in defining design structures of the front pages and the metaphors for navigating between sections. Altogether, nine categories were defined in both of these structures. Those structures are described in the paper I have written for the conference. I think you can find it from the web. This typologisation was used to compare 36 international high quality tablet publications. And it revealed a wide dispersion in the way these media outlets took advantage of the features and possibly these tablet formats here.

The second part of the study started [in] December. The basic question was to find and compare the characteristics of front page visuality in three formats of newspapers; namely, print, web, and tablet editions. A sample of ten high quality newspapers was chosen for the study. The names we can see here. Oops. There is no battery, but you will see it here. [laughter] I

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hope Steve Jobs has designed this project. Not. [laughter] The material was collected on Friday, February 3, this year.

The first comparison was made on the amount of various type of material in the front page, or the first three [pages], in the cases of the web and tablet editions. In his doctoral dissertation, Hannu Pulkkinen defined three categories of material in front page; namely, stories, teasers, and images. Findings in my study is compared to those made by Pulkkinen, who analyzed Finnish newspapers. The average number of front-page stories in Pulkkinen's study was 5.5, yes, 5.5, and 3.3 in tablet. In this study, the average amount is clearly smaller. I regret that there is the Finnish word Verkko there. It should read Web. My mistake. Sorry.

In this slide, we see a more detailed view on each of these newspapers and their formats. Oh, this is a very small font, but here are Pulkkinen's material, and here are the print in my study, web material, and tablet material here. And this square here is the amount of visuals in each of these newspapers.

Then, the second comparison was made on the surface areas of various front page elements. Front page is well divided in the following sections that you see here. In addition to this, the combined surface areas of visual elements; namely, photos and graphics of journalistic material was calculated. Here we see the results, yes. This is the line which indicates the amount of visuals in these newspapers.

It turned out, yes, here we see, in this slide, we see a more detailed look in which the numbers of each media are shown. It turned out that the print and tablet editions resembled each other significantly. The combined average surface areas of stories, teasers, and advertisements cover up approximately 80% of these formats. Whereas, in web editions, the same amount was only approximately 40%. Here, this is 80% in print and tablet, but only 40%, little more than 40% in the web editions.

Also, it was interesting to look at the amount of passive areas; namely, page, margins, or browsers. The combined average surface area of these elements is almost 40% of the first three of the web editions. This is the amount of margins and this is the amount of browser, what it takes. In tablet newspapers, those elements cover only 5% of total surface area. As a result of this, it appears that although the total surface area of a web page on a 15-inch screen is double to the amount of an iPad screen, the sizes of the active areas are almost equal in both of these media.

So, the similarities of tablet and print media come up also when the amount of visibility is compared. In print newspaper, the average amount of visibility is 30% of the front page, and in tablet, the same number is 38%. In web, that amount is considerably lower, only 13%. It appears that even the browser covers more surface area on web pages than visual elements we see here. (Oops.) The browser area is bigger than the visual elements in the first

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screen of the web pages. And it's almost a straight line here in every [one] of these media outlets. The variation in print and in tablet is stronger.

For conclusion, the comparison of ten high-quality newspapers did show there occur major differences in visual strategies of front pages. In some publications [with] the layout of three format screen, web and tablet differ significantly.

My concluding remark would be, all these trends [are] also to be seen in the ideals of photo journalism. For example, would there be a tendency to put different kind of photos to these different formats? As there is growing need for thumbnail photos to be used in various navigating forums, in tablet, does this mean that medium shots or close-ups would be more preferably seen on tablet than on print media? These are questions to be asked in the next phase of our study.

Thank you for your time.

[Applause.]

**Donica Mensing:** I am so impressed that you're all still here. [laughter] If I could give you an A, I would. [laughter] And the fact that you're here for no grade at all means you really care about this topic, so that makes me happy. And I'm also so pleased to be able to end today, because the work that we've done matches the way Rosental started this morning—talking about ecosystems. So, we really wanted to look at the ecosystem of news in the San Francisco Bay area. So, if I had a picture of the cactus and the swamp, it would be perfect right now. So, think about that.

So, we wanted to look in San Francisco for several reasons. One, aside from Austin, it's one of the most tech-savvy places in the country. It had a very, very rich news environment for a long time. In the last decade, they've lost half the reporters than they had ten years ago. So, we have a very tech-savvy community, high broadband penetration, the number of reporters has declined in half, and there's a lot of experimentation going on. So, we thought it would be an ideal place to look at what's happening to the environment, to the ecology of news in this environment.

The second thing I want to say is this is very preliminary. So, we are at the beginning of this study, and I'm very interested and happy to be able to ask all these smart people what ideas you have for where we should go next, or if anybody has network ideas or interest in a collaboration, please come see me.

I'm going to skip a lot of the research and focus on the data and some of the trends we see. If you're interested in the details, it's in the paper that's online ... or will be. So, our question is, what are the dynamics? What's the network look like? We know that networks have certain structural properties.

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Do we see these in the network in San Francisco? And the second is, our question is, what's happening with the news agenda? And one of the arguments is a structural one about agenda setting and says, we used to have just a few big institutions and they could set the agenda because they had common values [and] common practices, but today we have lots and lots of institutions, many, many, many websites, different ethical values, as we've heard today, [and] a lot of different agendas going on, so there's no single agenda. So, that's a structural argument. So, we wanted to see what that looked like.

Very quickly, we identified 114 sites in San Francisco; everything from the big, traditional San Francisco Chronicle and the TV stations and radio down to any blog that we could find that was doing public interest coverage on at least a weekly basis. We used WebSPHINX, which is a crawling program, to map the links between all of the sites. So, I know this is going to just look really crummy anywhere beyond where I'm standing, but this is what the network looks like, and this is a picture of the 114 sites. Each site is a node and the lines between them are the number of links. The wider the line, the more links. So, you can see a few big, heavy lines there in the middle—the center of the node.

So, what a network analysis does is it counts the number of links and it looks at the location of the sites in relation to other sites. And that tells you different things. So, the first thing we looked at was, who gets the most links? It turns out it's Mercury News, San Jose Mercury News, the online site of the newspaper. They get the most links. Now, we're only counting links from the other news sites. The numbers get really big if you look at everything. So, we thought, well, we'll start with just the relationships between the news sites, because if there's any agenda setting going on, we might be able to see it in the way that the patterns — the way that they're linking. So, San Jose Mercury News gets almost 58,000 links just from other news sites. You'll notice, if you could tell, if you knew the sites, seven of those are online newspaper sites [and] three of them are online only. So, Oakland Tribune, San Jose Mercury News, the Contra Costa Times, Palo Alto. SF Gate is the San Francisco Chronicle. So, a lot of newspapers in this list.

Then we looked at the sites [and] how many are sending *out* the most links? Some common names here, common sites, but SFEater.com is a site from a media company in New York. They now have 19 sites in urban areas throughout the United States. And you can guess that it's about food. And in San Francisco, that's a really, really big deal. So, they started in 2007. And you can tell they have a very aggressive strategy of linking. So, as Gingras talks about, there's a lot of SEO work going on here, so there's a lot of linking in order to improve one's page rank. So, linking happens for a lot of different reasons. So, they've been, in just a couple of years, able to get themselves the most linked-out site. Again, Contra Costa Times, Mercury News. SF Curbed is the same company as SF Eater, but it's about real estate, which is the second most popular topic in San Francisco. Oakland Tribune.

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Ibabuzz is a sports blog run by the Media News Group; mostly the Oakland Raiders. So, just looking at those, the first conclusion we made is, traditional media sites are by far the most popular sites. So, they are dominating the linking in the news network.

We looked at the Eigenvector centrality, which is.... Isn't that a cool name? It's a little bit like Google page rank, so it measures the number of links to other nodes that are central. And from there, you can see the San Francisco Chronicle, by this measure, is the most central site in the news region. So, this idea that, gosh, there's all these other sites and nobody can compete because it's fractured, the San Francisco Chronicle still has a lot of weight in this system, at least within the news sites. So, that's a big caveat. Mercury News, ABC Local. First time we see a TV site show up. Inside Bay Area is Media News again. And the Contra Costa Times.

So, if any of you are from the Bay Area, you'll recognize that most of those newspapers are all owned by the same company. So, Media News Group owns the San Jose Mercury News, owns the Oakland Tribune, the Oakland Raiders site, [and] the Contra Costa Times. So, we quickly realize that what we're looking at are just ownership links from templates and doubling of content. So, almost 90% of that great number of links are to each other's sister publications. So, it's actually, to us, not as meaningful in terms of being central to the network. They're a cluster of sites all owned by the same company. So, that was an interesting observation. So, you can see that really are linking a lot to each other.

So, we thought, what explains? What are the structural characteristics of the network? So, first of all, there's a theory called Preferential Attachment, which you could think of as 'the rich get richer.' And in a network, the first sites that — the first nodes in a network, the next node that comes along tends to attach itself to them, and so there's not an equal chance of being linked to every node. The first nodes and the most popular nodes get linked to by the most. So, it's absolutely natural that the San Francisco Chronicle and San Jose Mercury News would have a lot of links, because they were very early in the news network. So, part of this is, is definitely a structural pattern of the way networks work. Nodes tend to attach to the most popular nodes. So, we're seeing that dynamic of the network, which again means there's a structural advantage to the existing and long-term news nodes in the Bay Area.

Another thing we looked for were Power Law Distribution. This is something very common in scale-free networks or in small worlds, where you get 80% of the nodes have almost no links and 20% of the nodes have almost all the links. And in our network, that was true in an even more concentrated manner. So, less than 10% of the sites had 85% of all the links. So again, it's a very concentrated network. Most of the sites are very small and not many links, and then you have these big, dominant nodes.

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Then we went further. So, another measure that a lot of network analyses use is about centrality to the network and closeness. So, the closeness centrality measure looks at how close the sites are to each other, in terms of reciprocity and how far you have to go to get to the next node. So in one way, you can think the San Francisco Chronicle had a lot of ties, but weak, and these sites might have fewer ties, but they're more central and they're closer to each other.

This is a very, very different list. The first two are community newspapers owned by Embarcadero Publishing. They were started in the sixties, most of them. They are print-based, weekly newspapers, but they have a pretty active online site. So, they're much closer in their network to a lot of other nodes. You get two Patch sites, so again, they are linking in a very different way, say, than the San Francisco Chronicle. I should have mentioned the San Francisco Chronicle only links out to 26 of these 114 news sites. Very little linking is going on to other news sites from the Chronicle; whereas, these sites are much closer. So, SF Bay View is a black newspaper. Claycord is a blog started by a mayor in the East Bay. So, this is a much more richer variety. Different kinds of sites are in the network. They're much closer to each other.

So, we thought, okay, well, let's go back and look at the centrality of the San Francisco Chronicle. And we discovered that almost all of the links to the Chronicle from the other news sites are coming from SF Eater and SF Curbed. They are linking to a lot of different pages in the San Francisco Chronicle. Most of the other news sites that do link to the Chronicle, it's to news briefs—there is a murder and it happened to get covered in the Chronicle from Berkley, for example. So, it's a lot of daily — but it's not even daily. But when there is spot news that relates to a community, they'll link to the Chronicle, but nothing [big], at least so far, because we haven't done a serious content analysis. These aren't big stories that are getting linked to, and so a lot of the linking activity appears to be for very commercial reasons. It has to do with very soft news, light news, things about restaurants and real estate. And we can see that just from the network.

So, then we thought, okay, let's do a cluster analysis looking at some of the new non-profits that are developed in the Bay Area. You've got the Bay Citizen. The Center for Investigative Reporting is 35 years old, so they have been around for a long time, but are working. They started California Watch. If you're familiar with their work, they do a lot of very deep, serious investigative reporting. There is SF Public Press. There are several sites here from the graduate students at Berkley—Albany Local and Richmond Confidential. So in looking at this, we discovered a much, again, more collaborative, deeper linking among sites in this portion of the network. So, unlike the San Francisco Chronicle, where it seems like a lot of the linking is for a very highly commercial reason, this seems to be more relationship building. They're sharing content on a deeper level. They're collaborating on

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stories. There's a lot of work going on by public radio that's being linked into these more collaborative non-profits.

So, we just thought this was a very interesting pattern to see the linking in and out within the news ecology of these types of sites, as opposed to the cactuses that are sort of standalone and prickly and we're not going to link out. That's just not part of our culture.

So, we [have] three arguments:

1. We think that the number of links can represent popularity but not necessarily influence;
2. That the linking practices of traditional news sites reveal an emphasis on commercialism and a voluntary weakening of agenda power;
3. And that the emerging network of non-profit news sites has the potential for setting influence and perhaps developing a specific agenda in a very different way.

So, thank you.

[Applause.]

### Question & Answer Session

**Amy Schmitz Weiss:** Perfect. It looks like we have our first question. Please go ahead.

**Man:** I'll just yell, [not on mike], which is appropriate, because my question is about Topix. [laughs; on mike] And you totally intrigued me. And I just had to ask this follow-up. So, if anybody doesn't know, there's a thing called Godwin's Law, which is kind of a joke made by an Internet geek that said, "As an online discussion grows longer, the probability of a comparison involving Nazis or Hitler approaches one." [laughter] Right? And so among Internet geeks, there's this idea that the longer it goes, the more likely it is to happen. And it sounds like to me that you have the statistical evidence to like answer this question. How many posts does it take before the ethnic slur comes in?

**Linda Jean Kenix:** That's a great question, and I don't have an exact answer. I can tell you "more," the more that there are at this stage. And that's actually a fascinating question that I'd like to figure out exactly what that number is. But I've never heard that, and I love that. I'm going to have to....

**Man:** There's a whole Wikipedia page. You could be famous if you could put this number up. [laughter]

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**Linda Jean Kenix:** I have to go. [laughs/laughter] I'll be busy now. Yeah, great. You've just given me a research agenda. Thank you.

**Amy Schmitz Weiss:** We have a question over here.

**Woman:** Hi. This question is for Mark, but anyone else can also fill in if they would like. So since you were talking about entrepreneurial journalism being something students should learn coming into the market, because there is a lack of jobs being available, the one question that I had about that was, is there any concern that that could possibly create a disparity between so-called new journalism and traditional journalism if students who are entering the market are instead, you know, maybe having to go toward an entrepreneurial side instead of going into traditional news markets and bringing in their new perspective?

**Mark Berkey-Gerard:** I'm not sure. I think I would just say based on kind of what I've seen in Philadelphia, is that the first website, Philly.com, which is the website of the Daily News and the Enquirer, is the most popular news website in Philadelphia. The first time they linked to another outside news organization was to Technically Philly, which is kind of interesting. So, I think there used to be more of a separation kind of between the—at least in Philadelphia and what I've been looking at—between kind of the legacy and the startups. I think as it progresses, they're realizing that they're in this together. I'm not sure as far as students. I mean, I feel like you have to do what you.... You have to find your own path within the news industry. My sense is that that path has widened and there's lots of different routes than there used to be.

**Woman:** Thank you.

**Amy Schmitz Weiss:** Did you have a question over on this side?

**Man:** Linda Jean, I'm was very interested in your study.

**Rosental Calmon Alves:** Closer to the mike.

**Man:** Oh, I'm sorry. [I] was very interested in your study on Topix. I was wondering, how much of that do you think is unique to that particular forum? And do you think that's something that's more par for the course for Topix or is that something that you think is partly on any online forum?

**Linda Jean Kenix:** Well, I think anybody that spends any time floating the Internet, I mean, you see this over and over again. And I think, you know, this is a real challenge for.... You know, it wasn't just kind of a rhetorical question at the end. I mean, it's a big challenge for people that do want to do these very kind of.... You know, I'll give Topix the benefit of the doubt and think that they really do want to create a space where people can intelligently discuss and exchange ideas about the news. But where I think

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Topix falls flat, and a lot of people do, a lot of websites just shut down discussion now, because it's become so vitriolic that they, you know, they'd rather just not deal with it. But Topix, there's no one managing the store, you know? So, these comments do denigrate quite quickly as we see throughout the Internet. I don't know. I just think as we continue to develop, I think that news organizations in some way need to take on some sort of responsibility if they, like as is the case with Topix, [are] proposing this kind of democratic sphere. I mean, democracy is messy, but it doesn't need to be that ugly, you know? [chuckles] And it's a challenge. It's a challenge. But yes, I think it's very pervasive on the Internet.

**Man:** Did you find any glimmers of hope? Were there any spots or examples that you had where actually they did have a little bit of a...?

**Linda Jean Kenix:** Well, in the roughly quarter of forums that, you know, were connected back to news, that's 25% more than zero, so that's great. And in the early points of discussion, there was some really interesting analyses of content, and that's wonderful too. Now, just how to build from that.

**Man:** Yeah. Thanks.

**Amy Schmitz Weiss:** Have a question on this side.

**Alejandro:** Yeah. Hello. Alejandro from Mexico. It's for the study from the University of Nevada. I don't know your name, so I'm sorry, but, you know, these studies that you make, you use some sort of a crawler that makes some search. We, as a journalist, how can we talk to our audience with these crawlers that are not some sort of a scientific study, but are something very interesting related to dimensions. How do you suggest to make reports about this that is very real, but how do you explain to the user that you're just a crawler that has a very specific way to go to a big audience?

**Donica Mensing:** I guess in very simple language, I think it's possible, because it's a very simple concept [that] at its base is just looking at the links between them, but it is difficult. And I have a challenge. It's a graduate student in computer science who's helping me with this, and we have a terrible time communicating. We have very long meetings. [laughter] But I'm not sure I understand. Did I...? Do you want to elaborate on your question?

**Alejandro:** Well, yeah. It's just like these are resources to talk to people, you know, to make stories about how are audiences or how do you measure an audience? So, you make a report. But for daily news, you know, we can make reports of these, for instance, from Twitter or Facebook. If you make a report, how can you tell your people that it's not an academic study, but it's a very strong crawler that you use? So, my question is, is it possible to make stories every day about that using the crawler as a source?

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**Donica Mensing:** I don't know. I never thought about it. But we could try if you want to work together. [laughs]

**Alejandro:** All right. Excellent.

**Amy Schmitz Weiss:** OK. Looks like we don't have other questions at this moment. But basically I [want] to wrap up our day and this last panel of great researchers and scholars and the wonderful work they've been doing. I think we have a good understanding in terms of looking at exactly what are the different kinds of cases we can see that are happening around the world right now. And when we look at innovation, when we look at news startups, when we look at cases that are working, cases that are not working so well, [we can see] the challenges and opportunities that exist within each area when we think about all of what's been part of the discussion today. And I just want to give a round of applause to our presenters for this afternoon.

[Applause.]