



The Virtual SciCon 2.0 Conference Series | Transcript

Looking ahead: New sources of energy to transform journalism

Jennifer Preston and Jonathan Heawood share ideas with Nancy Gibbs, Andy Kaltenbrunner, Leonard Novy, Sameer Padania, Anya Schiffrin, Ida Willig

Moderator: Christina Sartori

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Christina Sartori: Hello and welcome everybody to the SciCon Online Lecture – Looking Ahead: New energy sources for the transformation of journalism. Well, we just met, most of us, just one month ago, nearly exactly one month ago in person in Berlin for the SciCon Closing Conference and my impression was it was really great. Some other people said the same. We had 2 days of discussions and seminars and lectures, and in between we had lunch breaks and dinners and coffee breaks. You have always on a conference, and people were always talking, talking. It's so nice to see people directly in person if you have only seen those persons on Zoom or Internet, or Skype, or whatever. So a lot of ideas came up in those lunch breaks or coffee breaks. You know, this was like brainstorming. So that's why we are meeting again today so briefly before Christmas, to collect ideas and to harvest ideas and to brainstorm, just to get some concrete ideas on how to go on to save journalism. Our aim is finding new energy sources for the transformation of journalism. Many of you have been at this conference, many of you know each other but not everybody who's listening today. So, I will introduce our speakers, but only briefly, because most of you know each other. And I will start with me myself. My name is Christina Sartori. I'm a member of the science journalists' association, WPK, and I will moderate this session. We have also Jonathan Heawood. He's executive director of the Public Interest News Foundation (PINF). Nancy Gibbs is director of the Shorenstein Center and professor of the Practice of Press Politics and Public Policy at Harvard University in Cambridge, U.S.A. Anya Shiffrin is Director of Technology, Media and Communications at the School of International and Public Affairs at Columbia University in New York, U.S.A. Ida Willig is Professor of journalism Studies at Roskilde University in Denmark. Andy Kaltenbrunner is founder and managing director of Media House in Vienna, Austria, covered in snow at the

moment, and Leonard Novy is director of the Institute for Media and Communications Policy in Cologne and Berlin and Sameer Padania is director of the Forum on Information and Democracy and lead rapporteur on the sustainability of journalism. And Jennifer Preston is founder and director of the Accelerate Philanthropy for Journalism Project in New York. Great to see everybody again. We have about 1 hour, so let's make it count and start right away. To get the ball rolling, Jennifer Preston and Jonathan Heawood will start and give us some food for thought. Jennifer, are you ready to start?

Jennifer Preston: Sure. Okay, so I have May I share my screen?

Gabriel Fritz: Yes, certainly.

Jennifer Preston: Okay. Hello, everyone. I thought I might share a map of the current state of philanthropic funding of science around the world to help us jump-start this brainstorming, because one of the ideas we discussed is, how might science journalism serve as a catalyst for funding great journalism in Germany and beyond. So, what I'm going to share with you today is a map that was put together, it's a global map that is put together by media impact funders, which is a philanthropy serving organization in the United States. So, by that, I mean, it's a membership organization that serves foundations. Family foundations, private foundations local place-based funders and wealthy individuals, high net worth individuals who fund journalism, or want to learn how to fund journalism. The data is collected through the IRS, Internal Revenue Service and primarily foundations that are related to media. So, it's not just strictly journalism. It's media. So, what this map shows is that 26,000 funders have made media-related grants since 2015. And the map shows that a small amount of funding was specifically tagged for journalism. So, you can see most of the funding is in the US. But there is funding of course, in Europe and in the Global South. But most of this, most of the philanthropic giving right now for journalism, is centered in the US. So, one of the ideas and this is, if you look very specifically at science journalism, again, 40 million dollars since 2015 is not a big number and these were the grants that were specifically tagged science. So, there were 134 grants and 59 funders and almost 40 million dollars, and most of the grants that were tagged "science" were in the US. But there were a few in Europe. So, I share that map about what is happening globally in terms of the philanthropic support for journalism, to help generate a discussion, even though the philanthropy landscape is so different in Europe than it is in the US. Well, I guess there's lots of reasons, of course, but one of the major reasons that people especially at this time of year, step up their philanthropic giving is not necessarily because it's the holidays, but it's because it's the end of the year. In the US most people are able to deduct from their taxes their charitable giving. So, there's a real tax incentive in the US for charitable giving, and this was just a look at the funders of the private foundations

that are making the biggest investments in science journalism. So, again, just to jump-start a conversation. How might some of the science funders in the US, some of them such as the Gates Foundation, of course, our global philanthropic supporters, how might they be engaged? And here's some of the other data about some of the other organizations that are now supporting science journalism. So, I'll leave it at that, just as a little nugget to help generate discussion about philanthropy and journalism.

Christina Sartori: Perfect. Thank you very much, Jennifer, and let's just go directly to Jonathan.

Jonathan Heawood: Thank you, Christina. Hi everyone, very nice to see many of you again. I think I agree, Christina. I think we had a really great time in Berlin last month. It's funny, you know. We all went our separate ways, and here we all are once again, little faces on the computer screen when for those happy 2 days we were like human beings in rooms, talking and eating food together. Now, I think I said something in passing at the end of the final session in Berlin, about the importance of actually talking to the public about our concerns and our priorities for science journalism in particular, but I think other kinds of important journalism as well. So, I think I'm the victim of my own mistake, and that I said something offhand. And now you've asked me to say a bit more about it. So, I will share my screen and let's see if I've actually got anything to say. So, citizen dialogue. Just very quickly for those of you who weren't in Berlin just to explain my organization, the Public Interest News Foundation. We're based in the UK. We're a charitable foundation only about 3 and a half years old. We believe everybody in the UK should benefit from great journalism that speaks to them, for them and with them. And we focus in particular on the role of smaller independent news providers, those organizations which are really close either to local communities or communities of identity or interest, or who have real specialist expertise. And we try to support those organizations, to become more sustainable, so that they can really meet the needs of the audience for the long term. We have a very simple theory of change that if we can build the capacity of those organizations then we can conduct research to understand how they operate and what impact they have. We can use that research to support our advocacy and the advocacy in turn can help to attract more funders or more political support for the sector, thereby helping us to build the capacity of the sector, and so on in a virtuous cycle. So, that's, very, very quickly, that's my organization and what we try to do here in the UK. But so, talking about citizen dialogue or public engagement, I thought I just tried to think about some of the reasons why we think it's really important to do this. I think one reason which we might forget but to me it's probably the most important, is actually to create better journalism. I don't believe in the idea that journalists should sit in ivory towers knowing everything and never descending amongst the people. I think journalists should be really, really embedded in the communities that they serve to understand what really

matters to people. And I think that's true of science journalism as it is of any other field of journalism. Science innovation, particularly medical science, is all about things that really matter to people. Life and death issues in many cases. And unless we are actually understanding people's experiences of these issues at first hand, the quality of the journalism may suffer. And then, secondly, the more we understand how this speaks to people in their lives, and how it speaks to their hopes and fears, then we can also create more engaging journalism. There's no reason why science, journalism, or public interest journalism should be boring. In fact, it should really not be boring. It should really be interesting and exciting and moving and emotionally engaging. I was surprised, I think, at one point at the conference in Berlin somebody spoke about the importance of storytelling and one or two people seemed to be very resistant to that. You know, they said, our business is not storytelling. We're here to tell the important things in life, and I think well, it's both. You know, science journalism is here for the important things in life but as science journalists, unlike pure scientists, we also have a role and a responsibility as storytellers. We're trying to get this into people's hearts and minds. So, unless you are really engaging with the audience and understanding where their hearts and minds are you may not actually be getting a story across, and then, therefore, your purpose may not be fulfilled. So those are two really substantive, intrinsic reasons why citizen dialogue is important. But the other reasons, I thought, were more strategic. Firstly, political support. So, if we actually want, and I know that that many of you are pushing for political support for science journalism in Germany and there was a fascinating discussion with some politicians about whether that was something that they could get behind or not. Obviously, if they were thinking, wow, well, the public are really behind this, and there's a big public demand for more policies, sustainable science journalism, then it starts to go up the political agenda. Whereas if it just looks like a very small group and a relatively elite group of highly educated, quite privileged people, saying, give us money to do the thing that we love doing, that's not so compelling politically. But if there's a large groundswell of public support in people out there in the real world saying, you know, we really want more science terms and we really are struggling to understand what's going on with climate change and pollution and vaccines and all these other issues - we would like this. Suddenly politicians have to take that much more seriously. And then, finally, the other really strategic imperative for citizen dialogue is fundraising. And I think that's true, whether it's direct fundraising from the public, but also trying to impress philanthropists with the importance of this work. Again, just as with politicians, philanthropists need to know this is something that the public really cares about, otherwise it might look like a low priority compared to some of the other really pressing social challenges that they face. So those are just 4 reasons why I feel like it's really important to think seriously about engaging with the public. Those are the whys, and then just a few of the hows as well, how might we do this? What are we talking about? And I think these go from very light touch to very, very serious forms of

engagement. So, I think the lightest touch is simply surveys. Simply run a survey. A 1,000 to 2,000 people, ideally, a good representative sample of the public, and ask them for their views. Surveys can be very scientific and rigorous and methodologically robust, or they can be quite tactical. You can ask very leading loaded questions. But either way, you're gathering useful data which you can then use in your advocacy or use for your own planning purposes. So that's one very easy way at fairly low cost to start finding out what people think. The next idea is focus groups: more expensive, more intense. You work with a small number of people, but often you have much richer and more revealing discussions, and you might start to find out if you think that there are challenges to public support. If the public are saying, well, actually, we're not very interested in science journalism, then you run the focus groups and try to understand, well, why is that? And maybe you find out. People say, well, it makes me feel a bit stupid because I didn't do well at science at school, so I don't read these stories. I don't understand them, or it's not for me, or whatever. But you don't know until you've asked the question. Have the discussion what the barriers might be. Maybe you find something much more positive. But again, get in a room with people and talk to them just as we did in Berlin. Then there's more strategic forms of engagement where you think you know what the answer is, and you want to tell the public, awareness raising, you run campaigns. Look! Look what we helped you to do. Look what science journalism did, how much it supported public health during the pandemic, or how much it can help people campaign around climate change, etc. Then there's crowdfunding and the great thing about crowdfunding is, I think, it always does two things at once. If you run a crowdfunding campaign for a particular project A, you raise money, but what about B? It also has public awareness raising benefits and ideally, if it's a successful campaign, people start to share the campaign between themselves. In a way that's much more effective than you doing it in a top-down way, so that can be very productive. Then there's what I would call stakeholder forums. I suppose this is a bit like taking a focus group, but going much deeper and actually getting people together from across a community to think seriously about how they might all work with you on the solution. So not just asking for people's opinions, but actually trying to dig deeper and get people's commitment to supporting the science journalism of the future. I'll say a bit more about that in a moment, because there's an example of something that we've done in the UK which is relevant to this. And finally, I think the most transformational approach of all is what I would call co-creational media, where you genuinely involve the public in the business of journalism. So, you think about organizations like Bellingcat, which investigates war crimes in Syria and Ukraine and elsewhere, and does so by involving thousands of members of the public and looking at YouTube footage and looking at satellite imagery and comparing all of this data, and actually seeing things which one journalist sitting in an office in London or Berlin can't see. And when you do that kind of deep, deep, co-creational media, you immediately have public support, because by definition you are the public. You are the collective

working in that way, and I think there's a huge, untapped opportunity to think about how science journalism could take more co-creational forms rather than the old-fashioned, rather kind of elite, I'm the expert, you're the passive patient or member of the audience. So just to say a little bit more about stakeholder forums, and then I'll finish and we can have some discussion. So, this is a project which we ran in the UK and I, and I must say Sameer Padania, who's also on this call, designed the project and ran it with me, I was involved but Sameer was at the heart of this project, so I'm hoping that he can say a bit more about it in a few minutes. But very briefly. This was about local news. So, our focus here was not science journalism, but I think some of the same issues could apply and some of the same techniques might be useful when we're thinking about science journalism. But we were concerned about local journalism and understanding what people's experience of local journalism was, and how they might help to build solutions. We went to 6 different places in the UK. Very different places, big cities, small towns, England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland and we engaged with a real cross section of stakeholders, people from the public sector, the private and the voluntary sector, and in each place, we got people together for a half day workshop to really dive deep into their experiences of local news. What they remembered about it from the past, what they liked about the present, what they don't like, what's missing, and what they thought the future should look like. And then we really talked about what could you do? You're a local business. You're the local council. You're the local education college. Is this someone else's problem someone else is going to solve for you, or actually, maybe, is there something that you can do? You can provide funding or advertising or you can think about a way of having your young people involved in internships and apprenticeships with local news outlets. You could provide space. If you're the local council, you could be a lot more supportive of the local news outlet, and make a commitment to answering their questions properly, and so on. So many ways in which people could be doing a lot more to create a more positive ecosystem for local news. In each place we distilled the key ideas into a local news plan for that area, setting out those priorities and challenges, for the process itself. So, it resulted in a plan which was a clear output, but at the same time it also revealed so many insights into people's views and beliefs that they really want local news to be truly local. They don't like it being parachuted in from a corporation thousands of miles away that confirms that local news providers are really struggling to meet that need, but local stakeholders are keen to support local news of the future. They just don't know how, they didn't know how. What we're now doing at PINF is reusing the plans as the first step towards actually creating local news funding those areas. We've got the very first one about to launch in Newry in Northern Ireland, very important town, the home of Jennifer Preston's family. So, we're taking all of these insights and enthusiasm, but actually putting some money in the hands of the local people, so that they themselves can decide how best to invest that in the future of local

news in that area. So, I hope that is useful. Just a few thoughts really about what public engagement might look like, what it might achieve and where it might take you.

Christina Sartori: Great. Thank you both Jennifer and Jonathan. Many points. I do have several questions, but of course, first, it's your call whoever's here today to ask or to add something. I hope I do see everybody, raise your hand or just wave. Let me see. Nancy, you're waving right? Just go ahead.

Nancy Gibbs: I would just love to pick up on something, Jonathan said I think, that I've been wrestling with a lot that's really important, especially in thinking about science journalism, which is that it is important for us to try as hard as possible to be platform agnostic. This goes for local journalism, too. But your imperative about to not be boring, Jonathan. I think it's so easy, especially when we're talking about more complex issues to think that this requires text, and this requires text at length and that if we're only communicating with other people who are very scientifically literate and engaged, then maybe, you know, long detailed text-based delivery is the ideal. But I think the pandemic was just the latest lesson that to really have an impact that I think we want it to have, we really need to be creative about every difference. This goes for storytelling. But just format, including, you know, interactive formats and games and videos of different lengths, and all the different ways of communicating information. Because if science journalists aren't experimenting with those different formats, then they are relying on more general audience journalists to be the translators, and I'm not sure that that's a responsibility you want to cede to any other.

Jonathan Heawood: I quickly jump in, Christina. Because this reminds me, Nancy, it's a really great point. A conversation I was in last week where people were talking about Tiktok and the threat of Tiktok and all the sources of disinformation and misinformation on Tiktok. But then someone said but there are also amazing story tellers on Tiktok, and if journalists simply say, well, we stand over here and Tiktok is over there, then we're just letting go of all those audiences, and we're allowing the disinformation people to own that territory. But, on the other hand, journalists may not be very good at Tiktok like we have to accept the kinds of skills that got people into journalism may be different from the skills that make people into big 1 million follower influencers on Tiktok. So, the challenge seems to be "Can we work with those 1 million, follow up influencers on Tiktok and provide them with the knowledge and some training and some oversight or whatever, some way of actually getting really quality information to their outputs?", because they are very, very good at what they do.

Nancy Gibbs: And that's a two-way process, too, which we're working on at my center, which is both, what are the skills and capacity building we can do to help influencers, but also, what can journalists learn from them about building trust with audiences which we know from all of the research? Especially with certain age groups, and in

certain populations they have been more successful than traditional journalistic entities.

Christina Sartori: So, you showed different ways, Jonathan and Jennifer, of getting support for journalism, science journalism. Jennifer, you showed several foundations. Jonathan, you had several things like “fundraising is important”, “stakeholder forums” and “crowdfunding.” I'd like to put a spot on those different ideas, and to see how easy or how difficult it is, and which one should be done by joining forces, maybe across countries in Europe, or which one should be tried by smaller institutions like this stakeholder forums you had as an example, Jonathan. How did you get those stakeholders, I mean, did you approach them? Did you call them directly? How did you do this?

Jonathan Heawood: Yeah. I can, if Sameer's here, he can say a bit more, but briefly, in each location we first try to identify a really trusted partner. So, we felt like, we're a national organization and we just don't know the people on the ground, and we don't have the trust on the ground. So, the first challenge was to find a trusted partner and then working with the partner. They could then help us to identify between 50 and 100 stakeholders in each community. And then I'm not saying they all took part, like we invited 50 to 100 and maybe 20, 30, 40 people took an active part in the procedure, but we tried. We had a list of all the different types of stakeholder that we wanted to engage: local council, elected politicians, education, health, civil society, business and so on. Faith, sports, different areas, you know, but mostly not local news people. The idea was to engage people who aren't already thinking about these things, but the crucial thing was to have at least one key partner who could open the doors.

Christina Sartori: And could you? Was that a business partner or was that an institution? Or what could you describe? Usually it was either a civil society organization or a news organization. So, the kind of people who know everyone.

Jonathan Heawood: Hmm! That's what you need. Players. I don't know how to call them in English.

Christina Sartori: Jennifer, you mentioned that, I don't know whether now or in our discussion before the session, that you are also helping journalists, teaching them how to get funding, how to ask for money or journalism institutions, and I think that in the US there's a lot more philanthropic funding than in Europe, or at least as in Germany. I think we are not as experienced in this field, in this area, like people in the US.

Christina Sartori: This teaching? Ha! Do you think this could be translated directly into European journalism? Or would we have to change things because things are different in Europe? Could you please elaborate a bit?

Jennifer Preston: Sure. So, in the US, I'm a coach in the lab for journalism funding, which is supported by the Google News Initiative. And it's managed by the local media association and since it started at the end of 2020, more than 90 news organizations have gone through it. They've raised 20 million dollars in their communities for their journalism. So, one of the reasons why the lab started is in the last 10 years we've seen a steady increase in philanthropic giving for journalism in the US. What is new is journalism is a new charitable sector. It is not yet an established, charitable sector. It is still new. So there needs to be education about the supply side and the demand side. So, we need more news rooms to understand how to seek philanthropic support for their work. This is not just for profit newsrooms. This includes for profit newsrooms, and one of the things that Jonathan said, which is so important, and it's one of the major findings of this work in the lab for journalism funding is, when journalists have to position their work for philanthropic funding in a community at the local level, it often makes the journalism better. Why? Because newsrooms again. I spent 30 years in a newsroom. So, I understand the mind of a journalist, and I was trained. You do the reporting, and you tell the public. You know we will tell the public what we think is important, but one of the important shifts that has taken place, and local philanthropy has helped fuel this, is increasingly newsrooms see the value and importance of, as Jonathan said, engaging with members of their community, creating journalism for them, with them. Not just separate and apart. So, I think that there is opportunity on both the donor side to increase philanthropic giving for journalism, for science, for local journalism globally and obviously, there are a lot of markets where that's not going to work. Obviously, and I do think that in the same way that many established newspapers, especially in Europe, have learned to shift away from dependence on advertising to an audience focused strategy, I'm thinking of the table stakes work that we developed in the US, that I know is being deployed at newspapers major news organizations around Europe. That strategic shift in the Financial Times has done a lot of consulting in this area towards audience focus. So, a lot of news organizations understand that their revenue stream is going to be subscriptions, and the opportunity for news organizations in Europe and around the world is to add philanthropy as a revenue stream. Because this conference is about saving journalism sustainably, we need multiple revenue streams, too, for journalism to be independent and to flourish. And we need most of those revenue streams to involve engaging people. So, one is subscription based. That does seem to be working for some news organizations. But another opportunity is membership donations and major donors and private foundations.

Christina Sartori: You talked about the campaign in the US. The principal is matching foundation, right? So, could you describe this in one sentence? I would need 10. What do you think, would this be possible in Europe, too?

Jennifer Preston: Sure. So what NewsMatch is? It's a national pool of dollars in the US. So multiple foundations contribute to NewsMatch and what NewsMatch does is it helps individual news organizations in the US. It's a nonprofit organization that belongs to the Institute for Nonprofit News. And it matches the individual contributions and donations that individual news organizations collect as part of their end to the year charitable campaigns. It has proved to be enormously effective because the research shows when any charity is campaigning, and says, if you give us a donation, someone else will match it, or double match it, or triple match it, they are more likely to get that donation. And the reason why individual donations are key to the strategy of many organizations in the US and could be in Europe is they become recurring donors like subscribers, but they are members and donors because they have a closer relationship and care more deeply about the news organization. And then what we found is that it has unlocked major donors from that pool and bigger donors. And it's real. It's become a source of recurring revenue. That's essential for journalism. We need recurring revenue.

Christina Sartori: Okay, I'm always checking here. All your pictures. But if anybody wants to say something, and I don't see you just jump in, right? Anya. Hi.

Anya Schiffrin: Hi! Good morning, everybody. I was just wondering when you think of all of the member-funded European outlets that already exist, I was wondering whether the German colleagues in the room have talked to that for the most robust one, are clearly in Germany, and whether you had to partner, or what kind of lessons learned from what they're already doing, you know. Is there appetite for another member funded outlet in Germany, what's just your sense of that landscape given the helpful comments made by Jennifer about that membership and subscription?

Christina Sartori: Good question.

Anja Noster: So, I think, the membership movement, and also the donation-based movement, is a bit slow at the moment in Germany, for regulatory reasons or legal reasons, because we don't have a proper legal framework for that to take up in speed. So, I think that really makes it a bit difficult to become something bigger. I think, for regulatory and legal reasons this movement is a bit slow.

Anya Shiffrin: But what are the reasons? And how do people like Krautreporter or Correctiv, or some of the other German outlets get around them.

Anja Noster: I mean, I think they have multiple revenue streams, just like Jennifer pointed out. So, the thing is they can still receive donations, right? It's just that they cannot issue receipts for them which makes it a bit more difficult to reach out to more than just the typical foundations. So, it's not like there isn't anything happening. It's

just that it's always the same stakeholders, because others would love to receive or receive for their tax declaration. So Correctiv, Krautreporter have a membership model, yes, but then donation is another part. So, it's a mixed model, but I don't see many newcomers in the field at the moment. I also rather see, like, especially in local journalism, I rather see, I mean, there aren't many local journalism projects in Germany. Anyways, I'd say it's like maybe 6 to 10, and then 3 of them are struggling very much right now. So, I think it's a bit of a tough time.

Christina Sartori: Leonard, you.

Leonard Novy: Yeah. Hi, everybody. I was just gonna say, I mean, I couldn't agree more with what Anya said. I guess there's several reasons. And one of it also being that we're still in Germany, I mean, it's really fairly saturated, high quality market at the top. The surface level things seem to be going rather well and local journalism is a case in point, even there, where the problems are really sort of significant. These projects haven't really been successful, for the reasons that Anya mentioned. Nevertheless, I do think that when it comes to science journalism, that small but super important niche that there is, if not a silent majority, then a sizable group of people who we could mobilize for such projects. And that brings me to Jonathan and Jonathan's points. I mean a group, by the way, which also is fairly affluent and has the resources, and a group that I think, even though it doesn't always and consciously think about it, that has a certain dissatisfaction or worries when it comes to the state of science journalism, or our public discourse on matters related to science. So, the question to me is, how do we reach these people? And I think many of Jonathan's remarks, sort of can inform the way of thinking or way of engaging these groups, and I myself have worked on it. I do believe it should be a debate. Not only about, sort of a meta debate, about the kind of science journalism that we want, and that we need as a society. And with the pandemic behind us, I mean, there's so much evidence and it is so obvious that this is needed. So, I do think designing formats along the lines that Jonathan sort of outlined or described can be very beneficial in terms of maybe gathering or collecting donations, mobilizing micro donations, raising awareness generally. And also adding legitimacy to whatever bigger contribution philanthropy, and bigger philanthropic organizations can make, so both when it comes to the actual quality of science journalism, it's legitimacy, and its impact. I think these kinds of formats, I like to think of them in terms of deliberative formats and I think, are much needed in Germany, and personally, I've been very much pushing for this, and I think I mentioned it in Berlin when it comes to our debates around public service broadcasting. And there are interesting models also, colleagues of yours in the UK. Lee Edwards, and others have done it. With regard to Ofcom at a very small level. But it's kind of citizens assemblies about the question. Which kind of journalism do we actually need? And I was really intrigued by what you describe when it comes to local journalism, working

on a local news plan that would be much needed in a great start for the science journalism. Last remark. I would try to combine it, and I think I mentioned it towards Holger and Franco, maybe combining this sort of bottom-up approach with really mobilizing sort of high-level celebrity academics in Germany and Austria, our chief sort of our, the main figure of the pandemic Corona debates who's been very visible, very present. Every now and again he voiced his frustration with the way the debate was going, and how his statements were sort of represented by the media. He was then often accused of calling for a ministry of truth, which obviously, I mean as it happens, cause he's not a journalism expert, and I think he feels very sad about that, and I think he'd be one of the people who might be open for calling for such a kind of comprehensive engagement. So, to get VIPs we shouldn't leave it at that level. It should really be okay. Sameer, you raise your hand.

Sameer Padania: Hi, everyone. I had a couple of observations. One related to what Jonathan was talking about the local news plans project. I think one of the things that is curious about what we're talking about, and you know I was struck when Nancy was talking about it, you know, the don't be boring bit is that this? There is a format which is also what Jonathan described at the beginning, which is that we all get in a room together and journalism has periodically sort of discovered and rediscovered that idea and the relationship between public engagement in a physical space and journalists is something that I think is massively underused, and I think around, you know I mean, if you wanted to use the word embedded or embodied, that's kind of what I mean that you know, when you're doing something and I think when you look at the sort of deliberation thing that Leonard just talked about, I was struck by when I was at the Nonprofit News Festival in Berlin the month before the SciCon event. There was a big nexus between the local democracy initiatives, for example, where you know Deutsche Bahn would hand over a building unused building for 24 months and say, you know, to a community, into a social enterprise, and say "Okay, what can you make out of this?" Some of which might involve some journalism, but others, you know, might involve vegetable growing. It might involve Yoga. It might involve, you know, tango classes, but I don't know but things that relate to people who are in a place together and are facing common challenges in that place, and I think that there is something that journalism has not yet cracked about that, and, I think, given the pandemic and given all the other stuff that everyone's talked about there is something in the nexus between, you know, health services, all the other public services and things like that in a local area that I think is part of that bedrock of what science means in, you know, in people's daily lives. So I wonder whether there's something that you need to look at you know, maybe in one or two *Länder*, you know where you could do a controlled experiment, if you like, where you could work with people who are already doing democratic renewal at the very local level, who are already doing things through Correctiv, you know, and then it's just a matter of joining the dots, if you like, from a sort of science journalism

perspective, and the relationship with society. So, look a bit outside. Not only ask journalists to join the forces 100%. I think if you look within journalism, you will always be chasing your tail. If you look to other sectors, one, you're building a broader alliance, and two, are more likely to be visible to a wider range of people and more relevant, you know, in theory. And I think the other thing that's happening a lot is, and I'm involved in some conversations about this, is what's happening at the city level, so literally at the city level. And again, I think that's because these are seen as very containable policy environments. But there are also ones in which there is money flowing around, and there are businesses, and there are places, and there are, you know, asset holders. And then a couple of other things I'd sort of observe just for understanding cities. And as Jonathan was saying, we looked at very many different scales of places, I think, for us, for what we're trying to do, yeah, it's more local than that. If you want to operate to like, for example, in Manchester we struggled a little bit, being honest. It was like more difficult because the scale of that place, it has multiple layers of governance and things that it's like a hard place to work. So, you have to break down, you know, for the kind of work that we're doing, which is very, very grounded and very embodied. You need people to be in a place where they might encounter each other accidentally. You know, when you're working at sort of city level, I think what you're able to do is something a bit more with, you know, maybe even with authorities at high level. Couple of other small things I wanted to mention. One is events that you know, people talk about sort of live journalism, and often it's in a very commodified form, you know, or a kind of product produced form, and that can be very valuable. But there are also very participatory forms of doing journalism in public space, you know. There's a long sort of history of doing these sorts of things. And I think that's something that has been underused in citizen science projects. For example, there hasn't been that much relationship between citizen science and journalism. I actually accidentally helped them shut down their journalism program by advocating that they should expand it, and they went. "Oh, God, no! Let's shut it down." So, I apologize to the world and posterity for that and then the last thing I was gonna say is that well, there's two little things: One, I think you know, around membership and things like that, we have to keep remembering that this is a very, very, very deep economic and cost of living crisis. So, when you look at the actual figures it's still pretty poor, you know, in terms of the mix of what people can afford. Whether the market can bear more membership-based media, I think, is a moot point. And then the other thing, I think that I would say and you know, everyone who's spoken said some sort of variation on this, but I think allying to something bigger, something, you know, that will already exist, so that I mentioned it in my closing remarks. In the event itself, the Forum got my Mitzvah. Journalism, you know, has already got political will behind it, has already got bundled will behind it, and has already got journalism organizations in it, and I think, using that as a way, may you know, you'd obviously need to strategically talk that through with them. But how things like science

journalism can be more proactively kind of foregrounded within that as something that really, really needs a particular kind of spurt, you know, alongside the other types of journalism, I think is something that you know I would prioritize as a conversation really strongly.

Christina Sartori: Great many points. Thank you! Andy, you raised your hand. Go ahead.

Andy Kaltenbrunner: Yes, and you already use some keywords for me. I'm still under the impression when it comes to some city level finding events how to cooperate. I'm still under the impression of a big party we did last week with 150 people joining us. That journalism innovation in some way projects only in Vienna that have been funded by the media initiative program to you in Berlin before, or had been trained on the master class. I'm doing journalism innovation. They don't know each other, some do, some are competitive, but in the city of Vienna was so surprising to have 150 people there with their projects and that kind of networking. This doesn't cost a lot of money, is worth much more than other funding given to bringing them together and exchanging ideas and one thing, and we invited Jeff Jarvis, who did a little speech that motivated everybody, that there's open future in journalism also, and people did a lot of exchange. But my learnings throughout the last weeks, months is... well in this exchange, they are asking for something like foundation funding. And so, of course, so one of our key topics here, and we have to tell them there's nothing like that in Austria. We have state funded as I explained to you. That very often doesn't work at all, it is funding legacy media in a rhetoric in traditional way that doesn't help the new funders to start the project, etc. And then we have some crowd funding initiatives where people are learning from each other how to do that and the other questions people are asking, and that's something interesting. We slowly started, and I hope to have some interesting ideas here in the room also, and for the future, how do we connect internationally? Isn't there any projects? Of course, especially in the German speaking world? What do the Germans do? And still, that's not so much knowledge about that with the Austrian project, and while we have some of it that we connect people some time then. But is there a forum is just something where maybe someone, or even one or the other of the German foundations at least, would be if we do, a pro check would be something for Austria also, maybe even some of the international ones. The American ones are wherever from. So, people don't know very much about what's going on internationally, I think that will be sorry. That's a big key point to develop that on a local level.

Christina Sartori: To give international connections. Hmm, well, this is where cycles started to bring people internationally together and to live with this. Thank you very

much. Big party. Good point. Just let us remember our next big meeting party and Anja, you raised your hand.

Anja Noster: Yes, I think my points are just a bit adding to what has already been said. I think one of the questions I also ended up with was similar to Sameer and that is, if we should actually think about science journalism as a separate beat of journalism, or if in this idea, to get sustainable journalism, if it would make more sense to build alliances with other movements. But I think the difficulty I see currently is how to make sure - and I also see that in other countries, by the way - how to make sure that we don't get to fragmented in this discussion. Because, I mean, yes, we have the full ongoing ticket journalism. We have all the different foundations, which is nice. I mean, that means there is probably enough money, but it also means that everyone, at least, that's the feeling I have at the moment, tries to come up with something themselves instead of joining forces, because obviously, it also builds a bit mean for foundations. I guess it's good if they're like, okay, we were the first to do this. We had this idea, and then like Publix, I mean, this is a cool idea, but and it is integrated with others. But then it's also not integrated with everything. So, I think the questions that I sometimes have at the moment in this discussion is not so much, where do we get the money from, but how do we make sure that all the stakeholders are connected? And then my last point, it's more of a question: do you know, if there's any research into what would be good percentages for each of the revenue streams? For example, my research looking at Canada. I, for example, found out that, like some of the startups that receive money, like from different stakeholders, receive about 10 to 15% from the government, and then 30% from donations. And then 50% is readers revenue. But I can see all kinds of different models, and I don't know if there's even an answer to the question I just asked. Like I don't know if there is a good percentage that we could say each of those stakeholders should contribute to journalism. But it's something I was thinking about more recently, if there was, and if there were a percentage if it were easier to aspire for that or to achieve it.

Christina Sartori: Might depend on the model of funding and support. But I'm not an expert, so anybody wants to answer this. Anybody? Yes, Jonathan.

Jonathan Heawood: No. It seems that I think from our research in the UK, Jennifer may have different figures in the US, but in the UK the more revenue streams the better. So, the very simple correlation is that news organizations which have higher overall revenues usually have more different revenue streams than the smaller ones, which tend to be dependent on only one or two revenue streams. But I'm sure there's a more sophisticated answer than that, because some revenue streams are much more efficient than others. I think, another conversation I was having last week where we were talking about how there are so many experiments now in the US and Europe

where people are trying different business models. And actually, maybe we could use our friends in the AI world to start to really interrogate these different models and come up with some analysis of which are the most efficient models. There'll never be one single right answer. I think that's the other key point. There were so many variables the nature of journalism, the nature of the audience, the nature of the location, the nature of the market. So, I think even when we start to find the more and less efficient models it will always be a case of tuning them to the specifics.

Christina Sartori: I would like to ask about crowdfunding. It's always mentioned, and I may be old fashioned, but my feeling is that it is off. Is this really sustainable? Does this help people for more than one or two years? Is this worth the trouble to be blunt? Does anybody have an answer to that or experiences?

Jonathan Heawood: I'm looking at Jennifer.

Jennifer Preston: I think crowdfunding can be helpful if it is designed from the start as a way to build a relationship with the funders, so that a collection of donations of one-time donations can be turned into recurring revenue. That's what journalism needs to be independent, recurring revenue from multiple sources. Because, as we all know, editorial independence is vital and multiple sources is the way to do it. So again, crowdfunding great. But how might it be designed to ensure that you can get that same level of funding and build on it in the following year?

Christina Sartori: Hmm, hmm! So, is it my impression, or is it really always coming back to the public support? Whatever you do you need the public support? Even if you go to a philanthropist and ask for support. But if you can show that the public rewards you or needs you that will help you a lot.

Jennifer Preston: Well, I think, as we all know, Google and Facebook have broken, have destroyed the traditional revenue stream for many news and media organizations, and that is advertising. That is what has fueled independent journalism. In many parts of the world. For many, many years, and that's gone. These are trillion-dollar companies that are paying, now, paper boy tips. There is nothing worse than a paper boy tip defined as when the tip that you would get for delivering the newspaper was always tiny. And that's what news organizations are getting. And that's what Anya's very important research has shown. It has to be a much bigger number. If the technology companies are going to be held responsible for the content that they use to fuel their trillion-dollar businesses.

Christina Sartori: One other idea that came up at one of the lunch breaks at the conference in Berlin was we should have the SciCon meeting more regularly. It was a one-time event, and it was great. And do you think this might help if you too join forces

to forge alliances? I mean, it doesn't have to be every year. But maybe every second year. Or would this help journalists in the US and in Europe to learn from each other, or even to learn how to teach journalists to get more funding. What do you think? Not everybody has to answer it right now. You can think about it. I mean I can start, but I'm really interested to hear what others.

Jonathan Heawood: This seems to me the short answer is, yes, but I think it has to be married up with the other points that people are making on this call. If it's just a small group of us who already believe in the importance of journalism and science journalism, then it's very nice for us to get together and each co-reversed, you know open the audience, but it has to be bigger though not necessarily. I mean that there are many different things, and you have to do each thing well. So, to try to marry lots of different objectives in one forum may go wrong. There is an argument for having a fairly elite gathering of leaders in different countries to come together and share experiences and ideas and make strategic plans but then, separately or alongside, there needs to be much more public engagement, and there needs to be much more engagement between this community and other neighboring communities of people who care about public health and strong communities and other relevant values. So, I think you have to do everything, but you don't have to do everything at once.

Andy Kaltenbrunner: If I may. I would fully agree with what Jonathan said right now. One experience we do have in Austria with the kind of international conferences we sometimes like to organize, if you can, etc. But this that it makes, if you open the Forum, and you have well different stakeholders involved, it really impresses people much more if it comes with, for good reasons, with the international experience, and you do not simply bring it home. So, in any case it would help the place where it takes place. So usually we find, while more interest in our topics and funding plans, and whatever, if some international experts with expertise are discussing it on that level with the locals, be it politicians, scientists, or others. So, I mean, I would be highly interested to find ways to do something and to see many, many of you maybe someday in Vienna, with an interesting program and well with people from Austria also listening and learning from which they really do usually.

Christina Sartori: Well, Vienna is good call because you just said you had this big party. So, you seem to have a lot of 1815 or so. I think the Vienna Congress, you know. But still there's no need to have voice before to have. I was joking. Okay? I think anybody else otherwise. Yes, go ahead.

Jennifer Preston: Yeah. I just add one quick thing, and I put it in the chat. I do think that there is an opportunity, and I don't think one currently exists for an international convening of funders around specifically around science journalism, and I think, you know, as Jonathan said, getting it right in one sector can inspire, fuel success

elsewhere. But focusing on science journalism is an extraordinary opportunity. And here's the why. Because you don't have to - I mean, science is all about right data and the facts and the science. So, you don't have to have some of the other silly conversations that go along with what journalism is or isn't. It's science, and it's journalism about science. The other thing is that increasingly, one of the biggest areas of growth for single topic funding is climate change and the environment, and that touches all aspects of science, and a lot of money is going to be pouring in. But it doesn't know where to go for climate change. So how might science journalists lead that conversation about where the funding should go? So, I do think that there is an obvious potential next step.

Christina Sartori: Very good. Last words. Next step. If there aren't any more questions, I'd like to thank you very much for all your ideas, your questions, your input, your insights. I guess this is the end of SciCon for today and probably for this year. But we won't give up, right?. I guess we will see each other next year, I think we will continue with meeting and discussing and finding solutions hopefully to save journalism. I wish everybody, if you celebrate, happy Christmas and a good start for the next year, and see you in 2024. Thank you very much.

Jonathan Heawood: Thanks so much. Thanks. Everyone. Goodbye.

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