



INN Days 2021

Accelerating the future of nonprofit news

June 9-10, 2021



Presented by



All times in ET

JUNE 9 AGENDA

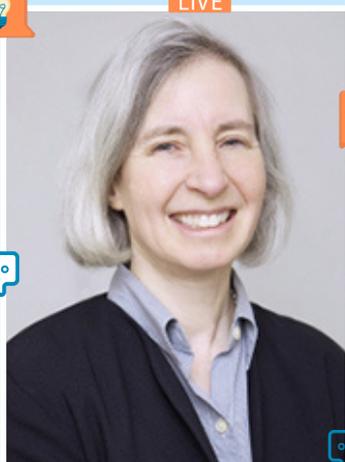
11:30 a.m. - 11:45 a.m.

Welcome: What news means to us

Sue Cross and Sharene Azimi, INN



LIVE



11:45 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

A call to save the news we can trust

Journalists question government regulation and support of news — is it constitutional, or a devil's bargain that threatens their independence? Neither, says legal scholar Martha Minow, who makes the case that not only does the constitution allow support of a free press, it compels us to save it, through financial structures, regulation and legal action. Her analysis underpins a new wave of civic initiatives to reinvent and restore news coverage, including broader government and structural support of nonprofits. Hear directly from one of the leading thinkers about why and how we save the news.

Martha Minow, Professor, Harvard Law School and author of "Saving the News"

12:30 p.m.

Transition & a short welcome from our sponsor: **digestbuilder**

12:45 p.m. - 1:15 p.m.

Rising to new challenges and public needs in a crisis year: Findings from our latest Index Report

Nonprofit newsrooms are emerging from a crisis year, and they're booming. New findings show outlets experienced substantial revenue and audience growth in 2020. This growth isn't a blip. A third of the nonprofit news outlets publishing today did not exist five years ago. Join us to learn where they grew, where they fell flat, and where we see the field going in the years ahead, drawing on new data from the INN Index, the most comprehensive study of the nonprofit news field.

Emily Roseman, INN; Jesse Holcomb, Calvin College

1:15 p.m. - 2:00 p.m.

How local funders are addressing community needs with journalism

From hunger to education, racial inequity to climate justice, there is a long list of critical needs that require philanthropic support in any community. Some funders recognize journalism as essential to the fabric of building equitable and healthy communities. Hear from local funders on why and how they have invested in newsrooms that are keeping communities informed and engaging those most impacted by social inequities. How were they able to lift a cause? How can funders and publishers partner to bring more philanthropy to journalism?

Moderator: Karen Rundlet, Knight Foundation. Panelist: Melissa Davis, Gates Family Foundation; Lolly Bowean, Field Foundation

2:00 p.m.

Transition & a short welcome from our sponsor:

TNP

Sponsored by Facebook Journalism Project

2:15 p.m. - 2:45 p.m.

Lessons from Facebook's Sustainability Accelerator

So you want to scale? For the past several years, Facebook has invested millions of dollars in its accelerator program, supporting dozens of INN members along the way. Come hear some of the key takeaways from Facebook's 2020 Sustainability Accelerator, which centered the needs of news organizations by and for communities of color.

Moderator: Dave Grant, Facebook. Panelists: Emma Gilchrist, The Narwhal; Fran Scarlett, Blue Engine Collaborative; Jiquanda Johnson, Flint Beat;

2:45 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.

BREAKOUT SESSIONS

Government support for news: A briefing on current action

Multiple media support bills are moving through Congress. The FCC is looking at platform regulation to quell misinformation. States are weighing measures to support local news through tax and structural supports. Get an up-to-the-minute briefing from the people leading this work in the U.S. and connecting to global efforts. Martha Minow provided the legal and philosophical underpinnings; now learn how those are being applied and how they could affect nonprofit news.

Moderator: Brant Houston, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Panelists: Steve Waldman, Rebuild Local Coalition & Report For America; Nora Benavidez, PEN America; Antonio Zappulla, Thomson Reuters Foundation; Elizabeth Hansen Shapiro, National Trust for Local News

Privacy, digital platforms and the news

The impact of digital platforms in shaping Americans' access to news and civic life is the challenge of our time. Get insights on what news, philanthropy and civic leaders should be watching and doing from President Nabiha Syed of The Markup, the newsroom covering Big Tech like no other media, and see new tools journalists have to cover this beat. The Markup represents a new wave of nonprofit news outlets developing shared resources for other newsrooms, an aspect of the emerging news ecosystem that strengthens reporting on a local to global scale.

Nabiha Syed and Ramsey Isler, The Markup

The reinvention of Indian Country Today

For-profit to non-profit conversions. Startups. Multiple changes of ownership and control. This is an era of rebirth for news, as publishers and editors guide radical changes to save and update news organizations that are central to their communities. One of the most successful reinventions is Indian Country Today, a beloved news organization that briefly closed, and is back now in a big way: on sound footing as a nonprofit, spinning out inventive products and coverage across all formats, finding new readers, connecting distanced communities. Indian Country Today demonstrates how news that is local to its readers can be strengthened on a national scale. Come learn what that looks like from the inside, and what other communities can take away.

[Mark Trahant, Indian Country Today](#)

Opening up the field: What it means to be a journalist

This past year has been a year of reckoning, in which newsrooms and journalists have had to confront the reality that our industry's efforts to be equitable and inclusive have fallen short even as we continue to lose the trust of our communities. At the same time, our ability to respond to those challenges are constrained as newsrooms everywhere struggle to survive. In a Nieman Lab article in December, American Journalism Project's Loretta Chao proposed that one solution would be to broaden our definition of what it means to be a journalist. "If we boil our purpose and skills down to the very basics of what it means to pursue the truth and tell it, we'll find it isn't about college degrees, awards, writing skills, or the logos on our business cards," she wrote. "It's about curiosity, tenacity, and an obsession with transparency." In this panel, three INN members share their experiences, rewards and challenges in their communities, collaborating with non-traditionally trained reporters and writers to do journalism.

[Moderator: Loretta Chao, American Journalism Project. Panelists: Darryl Holiday, City Bureau/Documenters; Yukari Kane, Prison Journalism Project; Floyd Hall, Canopy Atlanta](#)

Sponsored by Microsoft

3:45 p.m. - 4:15 p.m.

Entrepreneurial transformations by nonprofit newsrooms

The Bay City News Service was a long-running, under-the-radar news organization serving San Francisco. Enter Kat Rowlands, who took the old organization and shook things up, launching a complimentary nonprofit to do the sort of reporting that traditional news organizations no longer would. Meanwhile, across the country, the team at Scalawag recognized that reporting on the South was often incomplete, at best, or completely inaccurate, at worst. Cierra Hinton talks about how Scalawag has adapted, pivoted and crafted a space for their organizations amidst all the challenges media organizations face. They'll be joined by journalist Vera Chan who works to support publishers in her role at Microsoft.

[Moderator: Jonathan Kealing, INN. Panelists: Vera Chan, Microsoft; Kat Rowlands, Bay City News; Cierra Hinton, Scalawag](#)

4:15 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Don't just save journalism. Transform it.

The decline of local news and journalism in the U.S. impacted the ways people participate in civic life and see one another. And the truth is, many traditional media models never worked well enough for many communities from the start. During this session, you'll hear from innovative news leaders who are creating solutions and building a more equitable and sustainable future for news. Hear why they decided to build something new, what impact they have had on their communities (and beyond), and what unique challenges remain to sustain and grow their work.

[Moderator: Courtney Hurr, INN. Panelists: Nissa Rhee, Borderless Magazine; Dawn Rhodes, Block Club Chicago; Jim Malewitz, Wisconsin Watch](#)

JUNE 10 AGENDA

Sponsored by **The Lenfest Institute**

11:00 a.m. - 11:45 a.m.

Pre-conference social conversations

Start off the day by joining small groups of fellow participants for peer-led conversations. Discussions will cover a mix of topics about life at work and outside of it, and can happen in different formats, some conversational, some active, some more just listening.

Sponsored by **Associated Press, Patch & SmartNews**

11:45 a.m. - 12:15 p.m.

Finding your audience on others' platforms

INN members are doing some of the most essential reporting around right now, and yet they do not always have the audiences they deserve. One way to quickly expand your audience is to partner with established players to share their content with other audiences. Come hear some of the success stories and what to keep in mind as you consider whether working with a distribution partner is right for you.

Moderator: Jonathan Kealing, INN. Panelists: Noreen Gillespie, Associated Press; Rich Jaroslovsky, SmartNews; Colin Miner, Patch; Ramona Giwargis, San Jose Spotlight

12:15 p.m.

Transition & a short welcome from our sponsor:  **Newspack**

12:30 p.m. - 12:35 p.m.

Welcome back, from the INN Staff

Sue Cross, INN



12:35 p.m. - 1:00 p.m.

BIPOC creators in documentary and news

Erika Dilday will speak about journalists, publishers and documentary filmmakers who are Black, Indigenous and people of color who have adequately resourced and produced work with authenticity and power. She will be joined by Susan Smith Richardson, deputy editor at The Guardian, who was a keynote speaker at last fall's INN at Home

Erika Dilday, Executive Director of American Documentary Inc.



1:00 p.m. - 1:45 p.m.

What's needed to transform how communities support news?

As a result of a failing business model for media, nonprofit newsrooms are emerging and looking to build support from individuals and community institutions as a path to sustainability. Journalism is relatively new to this world of philanthropy. What have newsrooms done to successfully build community support? In this session, you will hear from two mission-driven newsrooms and donors that are investing their work. Why have they chosen to give their support? And what barriers still exist to transform how people and institutions view and support journalism in their community?

Moderator: Courtney Hurtt, INN. Panelists: Candice Fortman, Outlier Media; Jeni De La O, Outlier Media Donor; Kimberly Spencer, Chalkbeat; Melissa Davis, Gates Family Foundation

1:45 p.m.

Transition & a short welcome from our sponsor: Do Big Things

2:00 p.m. - 2:45 p.m.

BREAKOUT SESSIONS

The essential role of the campaign in fundraising with members, subscribers and low-dollar donors

Hosted by the INN Community of News Fundraising Professionals: When it comes to low-dollar fundraising, whether it's membership, donations, or subscriptions, one of the best ways to grow this group is through campaigns (like a pledge drive, only more fun). In this session, we'll talk about why campaigns work so well, and then show you how to plan and execute one.

Jill Shepherd, ProPublica; Marcia Parker, CalMatters, INN Board Member and Committee Chair, INN Community of News Fundraising Professionals

Workshop: Thank your way to more and bigger gifts

You go all out to get donations. But are you diluting that effort on the “thank you” side? Did you know, for example, that there is one simple technique that increases the odds of that ever so important second gift by as much as 40%? During the session, you'll learn how to: Increase the likelihood your donors will keep on giving—and at higher levels, thank your donors throughout the year, and transform your “thank you” letters into active donor stewardship communications. This is a workshop. Bring one of your organization's thank you letters. You'll leave with: Research-based “thank you” secrets, ways to thank your donors at least four times throughout the year, and a sample “thank you” letter. We'll be looking at “thank you” research along with “thank you” techniques and strategies that inspire your donors — and that next gift.

Diane Remin, MajorDonors.com

Don't leave money on the table: How to bring in advertising, sponsorship and underwriting dollars

Looking to grow your outlet's earned revenue (dollars from advertising, sponsorship and underwriting)? In this session, you'll hear how two news organizations (Grist and Block Club Chicago) did just that, as a part of the GNI-INN Sponsorships Lab, led by Blue Engine Collaborative. Block Club Chicago's Maple Walker Lloyd and Grist's Brian Troyer will showcase how they made money this past year from building relationships with local and national businesses and selling newsletter ads, display ads, sponsored content and more. Business coaches Susan Scott and NJ Spotlight's Steve Shalit will also highlight ways you can level up your outlet's offerings and sales pitch. Don't leave money on the table and join this session!

Moderator: Emily Roseman, INN. Panelists: Maple Walker Lloyd, Block Club Chicago; Brian Troyer, Grist; Susan Scott, Blue Engine Collaborative; Steve Shalit, NJ Spotlight News

Whose voices are we amplifying? Source tracking 101

When the pandemic began, many journalists interviewed experts who often had two things in common: They were men, and they were white. At the same time, a racial reckoning in newsrooms shined light on our industry's failure to ensure that our journalists — and our sources — reflect our communities. Newsrooms across the country want to better reflect the communities they serve, and one way to find out if they're on target is a source tracker. This panel shares what it takes to get a source tracker up and running, communicating goals with communities, making tracking work for newsroom staff and how tracking information can inform decision making and shape better stories.

Moderator: Corrie MacLaggan, The Texas Newsroom. Panelists: Susanna Capelouto and LaShawn Hudson, WABE; Ju-Don Marshall, WFAE; Jennifer Hack Wolf, The Beacon; Matthew Long-Middleton, KCUR

Unleashing the powers of collaboration: Enriching your journalism and expanding revenue

Rather than a spirit of competition that once kept partners at arm's length, new models are emerging in the nonprofit news industry that put collaboration right at the center from the very start. We see these in local expansions from ProPublica, in the way Report for America generates attention and money for hundreds of small outlets, in pop-up ideas like VoteBeat, in service journalism collaboratives like News414, and in hub and spoke models like Chalkbeat, Kaiser Health News, or Open Campus that combine national expertise with local knowledge. What does it really mean to have well-aligned missions? How does putting everything in writing keep partnerships on the right path? How can we talk with donors — both foundations and individuals — about the power of collaboration so we expand the pie rather than fight over it?

Moderator: Bridget Thoreson, INN. Panelists: Sara Hebel, Open Campus; Nicole Avery Nichols, Chalkbeat; Chris Baxter, Spotlight PA; Ron Smith, Milwaukee Neighborhood News Service; Adam Ganucheau, Mississippi Today

2:45 p.m.

Transition

Sponsored by Google News Initiative

3:00 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.

Rewarding talent: Bringing diverse voices into news, and ensuring they want to stay

Journalism has a long way to go in order to be a field where people of color feel welcomed, rewarded and allowed to thrive. Our speakers will talk about their experiences and work they're doing at all stages of careers to help build a better industry for the future.

Moderator: Kyra Kyles, YR Media. Panelists: Mayra Quintano, former Emma Bowen Fellow now at Google; Ayia Gospodinova, Emma Bowen Foundation; Ashley Edwards, Google



3:30 p.m. - 4:15 p.m.

BREAKOUT SESSIONS

Practice product thinking today

A skills-based workshop that focuses on educating journalists and leaders on product thinking, then walks them through two major concepts through hands-on activities: prioritization of tasks and competing interests, and roadmapping a plan for success. The News Product Alliance is committed to breaking down barriers between tech/product teams and other departments of news organizations.

[Emma Carew Grovum and Becca Aaronson, News Product Alliance](#)

Audience-centric vs community-centric, and how local newsrooms can be both

It's not enough to be audience-centric. If you're going to ask for community support, both from institutional donors and individuals, you also need to be community-centric. But what does it mean to be community-centric, and how is that different? We'll probe the difference between the two and why community centricity is critical today, how it contributes to growth and revenue, and then will share some practical frameworks and advice for thinking through and applying this change to your own newsroom.

[Anna Nirmala and John Ketchum, American Journalism Project; Ariel Zirulnick, Membership Puzzle Project](#)

Taking the first steps to measuring and explaining impact

Learn how nonprofit newsrooms are approaching impact strategy, measurement and communication. Telling the story of impact can help improve your community engagement, reporting and financial sustainability. Participants will leave the session with a deeper understanding of media impact, a draft framework for their organization, and ideas for how to begin impact measurement and learning to inform editorial, audience development, revenue generation and general organizational strategy.

[Lindsay Green-Barber, Impact Architects; Sonya Quick, Voice of OC](#)

The pipeline is not the problem: Recruiting, retaining and promoting the next generation of BIPOC leaders

It's not enough to say we want more diverse, representative newsrooms and media organizations. Change means challenging journalism's deeply held ideas and structures, and it means new, thoughtful approach to recruiting, retaining and promoting BIPOC employees. Join us for concrete information on how media organizations can build inclusive newsrooms and move beyond thinking the pipeline is the problem.

[Moderator: Sara Shahriari, INN. Panelists: Kyra Kyles, YR Media; Emily Holthaus, Nonprofit HR; Omar Rashad, CP Mustang News and CalMatters Fellow](#)

Sponsored by The Trust Project

What do users want? New insights from qualitative research by the Trust Project

Emotion and trust in news are tightly linked, and not necessarily in ways we might expect. Learn from the Trust Project's latest research on its 8 Trust Indicators, which show people when and why a news site is trustworthy. Discover insights that can translate into a stronger future for your site, including on the revenue side.

[Sally Lehrman and Willa Crolus, Trust Project](#)

4:15 p.m.
Transition

4:30 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Turning the Tables: How a new generation of community-driven media is redefining its relationships

So you think you've found the solution to your audience diversity problem — partner with organizations that are already doing a great job serving BIPOC communities, right? Not so fast. These organizations are innovating in how they interact with and center their communities and they want you to take a giant pause before you think about what an equitable partnership might look like. Come hear about the innovations these organizations are pioneering and how they're working with other news outlets in their communities.

Moderator: Angilee Shah, Listening Post Collective Coach and Independent Journalist. Panelists: Madeleine Bair, El Tímpano; Mukhtar Ibrahim, Sahan Journal; Mazin Sidahmed, Documented

5:00 p.m.

Closing INN Days

Sue Cross, INN



The Institute for Nonprofit News strengthens and supports more than 300 independent news organizations in a new kind of media network: nonprofit, nonpartisan and dedicated to public service. From local news to in-depth reporting on pressing global issues, INN's members tell stories that otherwise would go untold – connecting communities, holding the powerful accountable and strengthening democracy. Our vision is a world in which all people in every community have access to trustworthy news. INN programs help these news organizations develop revenue and business models to support strong reporting, collaborate on editorial and business innovation, share services and advance the diverse leaders who are forging a new future for news.

To register for INN Days 2021, [click here](#).

To learn more about the Institute for Nonprofit News visit <https://inn.org>.

Thank you to our sponsors for making INN Days 2021 possible:

Platinum



Facebook Journalism Project

The Facebook Journalism Project works with publishers around the world through trainings, programs and partnerships that strengthen the connection between journalists and the communities they serve. For more information, visit [Facebook Journalism Project](#).



Google News Initiative

The Google News Initiative is Google's effort to work with the news industry to help journalism thrive in the digital age. Our efforts focus on three pillars: working with the news industry to evolve their business models and drive sustainable growth, elevating quality journalism and empowering news organizations with new technology. For more information, visit [Google News Initiative](#).



Microsoft

Microsoft News is the world's largest cross-platform news and content feed, reaching over 63M users in 31 languages each day. Our mission is to delight and engage users daily with a high-quality, personalized content feed. We accomplish this using some of the best technology available today, through a unique partnership model with publishers – over 4500 news and media brands in the world share 170,000 pieces of content daily. This partnership model enables publishers to generate additional revenue – with over \$1 Billion paid to our publishing partners since just 2016. Publishers get access to a larger, global audience and sustainable revenue. Users get a personalized feed of the content and stories that matter to them. Learn more about [Microsoft News here](#).

Silver



Patch

Patch is a hyperlocal platform that allows people to share local news and events in more than 1,000 communities around the country. In 2019, recognizing that the local news landscape is changing, Patch started a partnership program aimed at providing a wider audience for other news organizations. As part of this, Patch also offers a revenue share program. Program members include The Texas Tribune, The Marshall Project, Chalkbeat, Kaiser Health News, and Consumer Reports. Learn more at [Patch](#).

Thank you to our sponsors for making INN Days 2021 possible:

Silver (continued)



SmartNews

SmartNews is a leading global news-discovery company, dedicated to delivering quality information to the people who need it. SmartNews provides news that matters to millions of users thanks to its unique machine learning technology and relationships with over 3,000 global publisher partners. Founded in 2012, SmartNews has been downloaded more than 50 million times globally. With a \$1.2 billion valuation, SmartNews is the first news app unicorn since 2015 and has raised \$182 million in total venture funding. For more information and a schedule a demo, visit [SmartNews](#).



The Lenfest Institute

The Lenfest Institute for Journalism is a non-profit organization whose sole mission is to develop sustainable solutions for local journalism. The Institute is the non-controlling parent organization of The Philadelphia Inquirer, and it supports journalists and news organizations serving local communities in Philadelphia and around the United States. For more, visit [Lenfest Institute](#).



The Trust Project

The Trust Project is an industrywide collaboration building a more trusted and trustworthy press through transparency tools that the public, technology platforms and advertisers can easily recognize. Hundreds of news sites around the world show our Trust Indicators™, which together form a globally accepted standard that highlights journalism values and responds to user needs, enabling reliable, trustworthy news to stand out from the crowd. The Trust Indicators empower people to sort fact from fiction by learning just who and what is behind the information they see. Technology platforms and others also use our Trust Indicators to improve the authority and integrity of the news they present to the public. For more, please visit [thetrustproject.org](#).

Bronze



Associated Press

The Associated Press is an independent global news organization dedicated to factual reporting. Founded in 1846, AP today remains the most trusted source of fast, accurate, unbiased news in all formats and the essential provider of the technology and services vital to the news business. More than half the world's population sees AP journalism every day. Visit [Associated Press](#) for more.

Thank you to our sponsors for making INN Days 2021 possible:

Bronze (continued)

digestbuilder

DigestBuilder

Our mission is to build modern technology for nonprofit news organizations. Our service, DigestBuilder, is a simple platform to launch and manage mobile apps. It connects directly with your current technology stack (website, payments, donor management) for a seamless workflow. We believe mobile is an important channel that can extend the reach of your journalism and increase individual donations. Visit us at digestbuilder.com.

Do Big Things

Do Big Things

Do Big Things is a mission-driven digital agency that uplifts candidates and causes through storytelling and tools that amplify diverse voices and empower communities. They are women-owned and women-led, with a staff that's 50% people of color. By partnering with progressive campaigns, causes and companies, they're striving to create powerful, lasting change that will help build a better world. Visit dobigthings.today.



Newspack

Newspack is an all-in-one platform for small and medium-sized news organizations that simplifies publishing and drives audience and revenue right out of the box. Think of it as an “opinionated” CMS that combines the best of what the industry has learned about publishing and revenue generation, while giving you the flexibility to focus on journalism. A project of WordPress.com and the Google News Initiative, Newspack was built with the help of a dozen charter news organizations. Today, more than 100 news sites have launched and dozens more have signed on and are active in our Slack community every day. Learn more at [Newspack](https://Newspack.com).



The News Project

The News Project is a company founded to make quality technology and services available to small to medium-sized news organizations. Backed by WordPress and 23 other investors, TNP It's to provides “news business in a box” services including an affordable, comprehensive platform for news entrepreneurs as well as ongoing SaaS (software as a service) support, business services and audience development expertise. It is too complicated and expensive to launch and operate news sites and in a world where small to medium-sized newsrooms are a vital part of the news future we're solving an urgent global problem. Visit [The News Project](https://TheNewsProject.com) for more.