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The Knight Commission on the Information
Needs of Communities in a Democracy

MOUNTAIN VIEW MEETING MINUTES

Mountain View, California September 9,
2008

MEETING MINUTES

Commissioners Present: boyd, Ibargüen (ex officio), Jealous, Junck, Lozano, Mayer (Co-Chair), Mooney, Olson (Co-Chair), Powell, Sagan

Staff Present: Durkee, Shane, Silliman

Executive Director Peter Shane began the meeting by welcoming the Commissioners. Commissioner Powell, who had been unable to attend the Commission's earlier meetings, offered a brief opening statement reflecting on his years as chairman of the FCC. What he found most impressive during his time with the FCC was seeing the rise of the Internet and other new technologies of the digital age, watching their convergence, and seeing the effects on people's lives. As a "reformed regulator," he continued, he is particularly fascinated by the new tools available to communities and how they will change law and policy issues in ways that have not yet been realized.

Mr. Shane then gave a brief roundup concerning the Commission's community forums and other programming. Based on the Commissioners' input, he has been trying to weave together presentations around the large themes of media, democracy, community, and technology. He hopes that, by the conclusion of the November meeting, the Commissioners will feel they have been presented with a good basis for reflecting on each of these areas. Today, he hopes, the Commission will begin to look at how technology affects community information flow and look at how people translate information into decision making. In the afternoon, Sandra Ball-Rokeach will tell the Commission about community information flow, a theme to be continued at the Chicago meeting.

Co-Chair Marissa Mayer arranged for the Commissioners to hear about several of the potentially democracy-enhancing technologies so far developed by Google. In preparation for the Commission's discussion of a potential recommendation on broadband access, she also arranged for a Google colleague to brief the Commission on spectrum issues.

The first Google presentation was offered by **Larry Alder**, a product manager at Google, who addressed issues related to the effective use of spectrum. He is part of Google's Alternative

Access Team, a cross-functional team of policy members and project managers. The mission of this Access Team is to ensure that robust, innovative and open access is available to all users. This can be achieved in three ways: 1) more and bigger broadband pipes, 2) preserving open wireless broadband pipes, and 3) bring the openness of the internet to wireless. Mr. Alder remarked that there isn't the enough openness and choice in the wireless world, especially compared to the wired world.

Mr. Alder explained that spectrum is important because information is increasingly coming to us through wireless and that wired and wireless services are starting to work together. There are two kinds of spectrum: licensed (effectively owned in practice by the license holder, for example, cellular networks) and unlicensed. Currently, only five per cent of all spectrum is being used, so even though spectrum seems constrained, in reality it is mostly idle. An artificial scarcity of broadband has been created by a consolidation of spectrum licensing. Because Google is interested in universal access to information, and because spectrum is a major source for information dissemination, Google is concerned about the consolidation of this resource.

One consequence of artificial scarcity is constraint of innovation, especially in the wireless world. Google's Alternative Access Team looked for ways to utilize unlicensed spectrum and deployed a wi-fi network in Mountain View, CA using completely unlicensed spectrum. Their objective was to provide free wi-fi to all of Mountain View, 12 square miles. The network was primarily intended for laptop use outdoors, but residents could buy a wi-fi modem so that internet could reach their homes. In this wi-fi network, there is only one wire: various nodes were connected to light poles, with a rental agreement via the city, and used a 2.4 GHz band so that the signal could travel from these nodes to people's laptops and also to the wire connection at a central tower.

Use of this free wi-fi service has been quite successful, especially in outdoor areas via laptops and iPhones; it has not been so successful for home use, partly because people often buy the wrong kinds of modems (even though Google provided a list of acceptable modems for the community's information). In order to let residents of Mountain View know about the available service, Google took out announcements in the local paper, posted notices at training centers, staged booths at local art fairs, and also, most important, hosted training sessions at a local community center, advertised via signs posted in the community. And while Mr. Alder admitted it might seem strange that Google does not provide a phone number to call with questions, the rationale was that people in the community would work together to get the relevant training needed to access the wireless network.

Commissioner Mooney then asked if Mr. Alder gets the sense that people are moving away from wired and towards wireless. Mr. Alder replied that this is a free service and so people are very likely to use it. However, in terms of paying for wireless, often the quality of wireless access is not yet good enough for people to feel justified in paying for it. Furthermore, Mr. Alder says that he doesn't predict wireless supplanting wired but instead sees them as

complementary.

Commissioner Lozano then asked about some of the constraints in using unlicensed spectrum to which Mr. Alder replied that the power levels of transmission are lower for unlicensed than licensed spectrum, but that this isn't a huge hindrance to wireless capabilities. Commissioner Lozano then asked about the expense of putting this wi-fi network in place for Mountain View. Mr. Alder replied that the order of magnitude is about \$100,000 to \$150,000 per square mile; so the overall cost for Mountain View was about \$1 million. Furthermore, there really is no limit to this system; it's a quite scalable pursuit.

Commissioner Powell then asked about security to which Mr. Alder replied that there is both an open network and a secure network. He told the Commission that the lessons he learned in creating this wi-fi system were that there is a demand for low-cost broadband adoption, that quality of access is an issue, especially in determining if and how much people will pay, that community associations are growing and becoming part of the spectrum use picture, and that innovations in wireless and in guaranteeing universal access are possible.

Finally, Mr. Alder told the Commission briefly about the potential use of TV "white space" saying that white space is a strong complement to the 2.4 and 5.8 GHz bands that make up unlicensed spectrum. It allows innovation to occur in multiple hands with differing characteristics. Google itself does not want a license for the airwaves; instead they are pushing for unlicensed use and are part of the Wireless Innovation Alliance; Google partnered with Microsoft on the White Spaces Coalition and has launched freetheairwaves.com.

Mr. Shane then asked the Commissioners to consider whether they would want to make an early recommendation about broadband access. The questions are (a) whether the Commission believes it already knows enough about the broadband access issue to make a recommendation and (b) even the Commission might now have a consensus view, whether the Commission would be better advised to advance a more integrated set of proposals after the conclusion of all its fact-finding/

Mr. Shane then summarized the brief memo he had sent out to the Commissioners before the meeting, saying that the answer to the question, "Should there be a national broadband policy?" appears to be all-but-unanimous among informed commentators. No private provider is going to be able to capture all the value of providing universal access, so the question is, is there a public good in having everyone connected that justifies some form of government initiative? That the answer to this question seems to be "yes" is evidenced, in part, by both Obama and McCain camps championing some version of national broadband adoption. Mr. Shane's memorandum suggested a possible policy goal of achieving universal broadband access in the United States at a minimum speed of 10 Mbps broadband within the next five years, and articulated a series of steps aimed at achieving that goal. He concluded by reminding the Commission that the maximum network effects of universal broadband could be achieved only if accompanied by universal adoption, and other steps beyond creating access need to be taken to incentivize people to switch to broadband.

Commissioner Boyd offered that she thinks we have a habit of focusing on the spatializing of networks, and that we're obsessed with each space having a different access point (for example, each home having its own access point). One of the things she suggests the Commission think about is how we can move away from localized access/networks to universal networks. This is especially so because mobile penetration is going to exceed laptop use in two years. The iPhone, she believes, is a game-changer in getting people to demand wireless networks that move across and between spaces.

Commissioner Powell responded that one of the reasons there is a problem with broadband access is that it comes out of a regulation model that is regionalized. For example, Verizon is limited to regional geography, and cable companies are licensed on a regional basis. During his time on the FCC, he continued, he thought hard about how to shatter the telecom regulation approach. Google is unique because it's a modern "über-company," but Google isn't going to provide fiber cables to all homes. For telephone service, a system of cross-subsidies was used to help assure affordable access to low-density, low-traffic regions comparable to the service and prices available in high-density, high-traffic regions. He sees the policy challenge now as coming up with a policy nuanced enough to get the right mix of tools available in each region given the region's needs and what's most efficient and practicable.

Commissioner Boyd asked Commissioner Powell whether users should be able to remain online easily as they move from space to space. Commissioner Powell replied that he regards universal access as being a higher immediate priority. He continued to say that he doesn't feel that home-based access and mobile access need to preclude one other. The mobile phone will always be a different user experience than the laptop and they can do different things.

Commissioner Lozano returned the conversation to the Commission's broadband recommendations and wondered about the communities that are outside the basic internet access: what is the broadband safety net? Mr. Shane followed up this question and asked if those communities who don't have the service available or if those individuals who simply can't afford the rates, and who don't have the likelihood for market investment, need to receive some sort of government subsidy for the basic infrastructure. Does the Commission want to make an early recommendation on this front?

Commissioners Sagan and Powell answered that they do not think the Commission should offer up early recommendations, for a couple of reasons. First of all, as Commissioner Powell remarked, "we're late to this party," and there are hundreds of people already making these recommendations and it's not clear that we're offering anything new. Secondly, if the Commission took longer to work out its analysis, it might be fresher and might get more attention as part of a comprehensive report. Third, he thinks the Commission needs to do more than write a hypothetical letter to the president. He is not sure that, taking this subject as the sole focus of a recommendation, he's not sure that the collection of Commissioners has the expertise to do more than merely restate the obvious on this issue.

Commissioner Olson then agreed with this opinion, after having initially thought it would bring some attention to the Commission. Ex-Officio Commissioner Iburgüen agreed, but wanted to remind the Commission that they are not assembled to be experts, but to act as a diverse and smart group of people to come up with some ideas of how things should be moving forward. He concluded that even though broadband policy isn't new and isn't different, it is an important part of creating a comprehensive report. The Commissioners present decided by consensus to postpone consideration of the universal broadband access issue until they could address the issue of policy recommendations more comprehensively.

Following this discussion, **Krishna Bharat**, the creator of Google News, continued the presentations on democracy-enhancing technologies. He told the Commission that the mission for Google News is to organize the world's news and make it universally accessible and useful. They seek to achieve this through organizing, based on searches and the clustering of stories based on topic and rank, as determined through a computer algorithm and through consulting editors around the world about relevance and importance. Google News gathers 100,000 stories daily from 4,500 sources in 22 countries and every language, and makes the web effective for news searching based on freshness. There are also 200 years of historical newspapers scanned and searchable online. In terms of helping journalism, Mr. Bharat remarked that Google News increases the amount of news read, it makes the "news web" more efficient by collecting and organizing links to all the news on a particular story, and it makes news engaging with visual connections, comments from authorized sources cited within the particular story, matching user preferences, and providing news alerts. Google News also includes blogs, such as Huffington Post, if they appear to follow standards of editorial oversight, consultation of multiple sources, and fact-checking. Google enables users to make their own editions, emphasizing local news or requesting stories in multiple languages. As a last note, with regard to supporting enterprise reporting, Mr. Bharat said that Google values such work and is thinking about ways to make it more economically viable including letting this journalism surface more conspicuously through search. But ultimately, he concludes, the community needs to figure out ways to fund this kind of reporting.

Adam Smith, Google's Print Product Manager, spoke to the Commission about Google Books and Google Scholar, which are partnering with various libraries and academic institutions to bring books and scholarly information online, to make it searchable, and to be able to do deep crawls of their information in full text, instead of only in the index, thereby allowing cross-referencing and searching in ways that weren't previously available. There are considerations with copyright (only 20% of books are in the public domain which can be downloaded freely, 75% are copyrighted or have unclear copyright status, and 5% out of print) that limit full-viewing at present, but there is information about teach book that includes links to other books, books that have referenced this book, and geo-points culled from the content of the book (users can also search for books by first picking a geographic location). Overall, Mr. Smith says, Google Books wants to raise the profile of books on the web, wants to take books off the library shelves and the retail shelves and put them into the user's

everyday search experience. There has been an increase in long-distance library loans from books coming up in people's searches, rare books are becoming more accessible, and, on the publishing side, this can be an effective marketing strategy to get more visibility for published products. Also, on the business side, Mr. Smith emphasizes that Google does not benefit from the "buy the book" links and is trying to ensure that ad revenue is getting back to the publishers and to the libraries.

Lior Ron told the Commission about Google Earth and geo-related products whose mission is to organize the world's information geographically and make it universally accessible, remarking that over 80% of data on the web have localized, geographic components. The ultimate goals are to provide a comprehensive map base on top of which users can map their information and to provide a canvas so that users can start drawing their own geographic information. For example, "mapmaker" is meant to fill in the gaps in Google Maps by allowing users to create, moderate, and correct their own maps and to refine details on existing maps. Google Maps is a useful storytelling tool and enables users to understand information in context and to understand how information and users are situated and connected to each other. Mapping is also very useful in disasters; for example, mapping evacuation points during Hurricane Gustav or the map created locating the San Diego County fires. Today, there are over 10 million various "My Maps" that will invite collaborators in such efforts and which also highlight weaknesses in infrastructure or areas where there has been increased violence.

Jason Miller is a Group Project Manager for Google and works on AdSense for Content, which helps individuals and large companies alike to monetize their websites by partnering national and local advertisers with users' sites identified by topic or geographic location. Advertising is a key part of Google's mission statement in that it connects users to relevant and useful products and services, supports the proliferation of new voices on the web, and brings together small businesses with consumers that they wouldn't have otherwise reached, although at this time, AdSense does not allow users to choose what ads are displayed on their pages. AdSense generates ads for a user's webpage that will maximize revenue for web publishers, dynamically target ever-changing content (as pages change, so do the ads relevant to the consumers), and match advertisers with pages based on freshness and relevance, thereby maximizing profit. Mr. Miller provided many examples of people who make enough from click-through rates via AdSense to support themselves. Also, AdSense is working out a way to become a platform for content distribution as well, for example, distributing videos of certain relevance in ad spaces, in order to share the revenue between creators, advertisers, and Google instead of going through a publisher or network. There are also opportunities for free advertising set aside for nonprofit groups.

Following lunch, Mr. Shane introduced **Sandra Ball-Rokeach**, Professor and Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs, USC Annenberg School of Communication; Director, Communication Technology and Community Program; and Principal Investigator, Metamorphosis Project, to make a presentation to the Commission on **Communities and Information Flow**.

Dean Ball-Rokeach began by saying that the Metamorphosis Project, which investigates how information sources are transforming urban communities in the Los Angeles area, shares with the Commission a deep commitment to understanding how to create civil society in the global arena and a belief that media must help in this process. Ball-Rokeach's research with the Metamorphosis Project begins with local, geographic communities, looks at how these communities are the building blocks of civic life, and then also examines how cyberspaces tend to ground themselves in geographic spaces. The order of the day, she emphasizes, is the convergence of spaces, not the replacement of geographic spaces with cyberspaces.

The communication infrastructure of any community -- which Ball-Rokeach defines as a complex storytelling network consisting of the communication flows among local residents, community organizations, and geo-ethnic media -- are usually invisible until a disaster occurs. Ball-Rokeach believes all communities are constructed through these storytelling networks with critical stories being told about belonging, shared spaces, and shared experiences.

Geo-ethnic media are media that target particular ethnic or racial groups and/or a geographic area and is the first, or primary, storyteller in the storytelling network. This typically does not include mainstream media which, Ball-Rokeach claims, has generally abandoned the telling of local stories. The importance of local storytelling is evidenced by the fact that, while many mainstream media venues are in decline, geo-ethnic media are growing fast. The second storyteller is the community organizations that are helpful in local issues (this includes non-profits and various community intermediaries). The third "story-teller" consists of residents in the family and neighborhood networks. The most important characteristic of a healthy communication infrastructure is not merely the added effect of these three story-tellers, but the dynamic, networked interactions between and among them.

In order for residents to be neighborhood storytellers, there have to be local meeting and greeting places; if communication environments are poor, then it takes people out of the storytelling networks and opportunities are missed. Residents of local communities create their own communication ecologies through everyday contact, but the communication environment can both encourage and undermine the vitality of the storytelling network.

When Metamorphosis researchers surveyed residents of the Los Angeles area and asked residents their most important ways of receiving information, only Anglos cited the Internet, with Latinos citing geo-ethnic media, though Latinos in different neighborhoods differed markedly from each other as well. Ball-Rokeach concludes that Latinos living in different communities rely on different communication ecologies and suspects that interpersonal communication also includes cell phone texting and face-to-face storytelling. She urged the Commission to keep in mind that communication ecologies change and that, while today, the mainstream newspaper may not seem as important as it once was, this does not necessarily mean that it is completely irrelevant.

Why does a strong story-telling network matter? Because civic engagement flows out of strong story-telling networks. To determine this, Ball-Rokeach looked at three basic components of civic engagement: 1) belonging (attachment and neighborly behaviors), 2) collective efficacy (the belief that the neighborhood can come together to solve neighborhood problems), and 3) civic participation (when citizens actually get involved with engaging community issues). Her research found that civic engagement in the Los Angeles area was higher among new immigrant areas than in more affluent areas and that there is evidence that local news is important in creating communities with high levels of civic engagement.

What does a strong story-telling network look like? Each story-teller prompts the others to tell their own stories. Usually, when civic engagement is weak, it is due to a weak link between geo-ethnic media and community organizations. This link is also crucial for the sustainability of storytelling networks because residents come and go, but media and community organizations persist over time. If these organizations are strong and the link between them is strong, Ball-Rokeach concludes that they can help buttress resident civic engagement with the storytelling process and can enhance democratic capacities. The South Los Angeles Project, for example, is attempting to bridge the gap between media and community organizations by training journalists in story-telling, strengthening the storytelling links, creating stories that are told on multimedia platforms, and expanding and improving the established media's coverage of local news.

Story-telling networks can be strengthened 1) through creating new multimedia venues for community organizations to tell their stories (about health, safety, community building, organizing, issues, events, etc.); 2) through disseminating these stories to traditional media venues (for example, geo-ethnic media outlets, especially radio, TV, and newspapers); and 3) through helping to establish media organizations that serve these areas to expand their local coverage so that key storytellers (i.e. those voices that the residents care about) can be heard by community organizations and by media.

Dean Ball-Rokeach concluded by emphasizing her research-based belief that efforts to strengthen the story-telling network will spawn civic engagement and that it is therefore essential in creating a democratic community. Furthermore, the future, she predicts, is in new communication ecologies in which new and old media converge and mutually support and play off each other. It is not enough to compile rich information or to reach information sources; information must come along in the storytelling networks of communities so that communities become enlivened and so that information via these networks is turned into the building blocks of civic society.

In response to a question from Commissioner Jealous about community organizations and non-profits getting their voices heard, Ball-Rokeach responded that her idea is to identify the most important community organizations from the viewpoint of the residents and then have the residents decide on a system that would best get their stories heard and would best collaborate with media organizations. Therefore, she continued, a new media platform should develop, not

that was prescribed from above, but which was created through the need to make collective decisions and that would then foster helpful linkages between media and community organizations. The media, she reminded the Commission, do not necessarily know what the most important community organizations are to the residents of the local community; this needs to be discovered. And furthermore, she clarified, her researchers did not go into communities looking for indigenous storytelling networks. Their importance became clear only over time.

Regarding multiple storytelling networks within a single community and a question from Commissioner Boyd about the possibilities to bridge these networks, Dean Ball-Rokeach told about SCOPE [Strategic Concepts in Organizing and Policy Education] which is trying to bridge the gap between African-American and Latino communities in the Greater Crenshaw area. What Ball-Rokeach and researchers suspect is that conflict arises from the disparate and disconnected storytelling networks of the two groups and that specific community organizations, such as SCOPE, need to be devoted to bridging these networks. The questions SCOPE and Ball-Rokeach are trying to answer are how one becomes a successful bridging agent, what effects such efforts have had, and how can these results be effectively publicized to both storytelling networks and to the mainstream media as well.

The storytelling network divides exist at multiple junctures, with race being one and generation being another. Unfortunately, she told the Commission, schools and churches are not doing the bridging work that one would hope of such vital community organizations.

When pushed by Gary Kebbel of the Knight Foundation to distinguish between storytelling "cultures," presumably of immigrant communities, and storytelling "networks," Dean Ball-Rokeach hesitated to explain the strength of storytelling networks in immigrant communities by linking them to a general storytelling culture, saying that there is also a strong culture of Anglo story-telling but this has not translated to strong storytelling in her own neighborhood. Furthermore, Ball-Rokeach provided an example of recent Korean immigrant storytelling networks whose gaze was back home instead of in local communities. She did clarify that one major impediment and constraint to civic engagement is too much work, whether from having to work multiple jobs or from working long hours. One way to overcome this constraint is by everyday actions of storytelling, a lot of which happens through informal encounters, such as dog-walking or picking kids up from the bus stop.

In responding to Mr. Shane's question about the role of traditional journalistic functions in terms of getting the "stories straight" and truth-telling, Ball-Rokeach responded that hopefully this comes through the media and that this is more liable to happen if the media are grounded in local communities and storytelling networks. She continued that reporters need not live in these communities and that finding the best information and sources is where community organizations are key because they can direct media to meaningful and factual information.

Ball-Rokeach fervently agreed with Commissioner Powell's suggestion that, in talking about

storytelling networks, we should not forget about the arts and entertainment, citing murals as an opportunity for storytelling. She regards the arts in general as providing essential entrances into civic engagement. The important fabric of communities that enables civic engagement and mobilization, she continued, is not created through facts but through sharing stories of common concerns and common values.

Regarding two questions from Mr. Shane, one about differences in technologies as an additional level of causation for civic engagement and the second concerning the relationship between mainstream and geo-ethnic media, Ball-Rokeach responded that each communication ecology engages with technology in a different way and that one must know these communities and their communication ecologies in order to get information to citizens. And this is why mainstream media isn't prominent in the storytelling network: the LA Times is not positioned at the core of local information ecologies, although that's not to say that mainstream media cannot be essential in other communities. She clarified that, when she talks about storytelling networks, she's talking about from church newsletters up to the mainstream. There do not necessarily need to be formal media channels, be they geo-ethnic media or mainstream. But, she emphasizes, one cannot know what the dominant media are until one goes into the specific community itself.

In an aside about Robert Putnam and her views on social capital, Ball-Rokeach remarked that one of the major problems she sees in the social capital literature is that Putnam is talking about old ways of coming together (bowling leagues, for example) and that, for the sake of comparable data, he keeps tracking the same kinds of organizations from the 1940s to the present. Furthermore, when she talks about community organizations, unlike Putnam, Ball-Rokeach is talking about libraries, health centers, recreation centers and informal spaces as well as formal associations and leagues.

On the topic of libraries, Ball-Rokeach told the Commission that they are some of the best resources and historians about the local community; they are the first place to go to find out about the local information ecologies and storytelling networks. Libraries are frequented across age groups, across languages, and are very information-rich and safe meeting and greeting spaces. Regarding community technology centers, Ball-Rokeach said that those most successful in addressing the digital divide were those that were embedded in local storytelling networks, and one way to be embedded is to be part of the library.

Finally, on the topic of schools, Ball-Rokeach told the Commission that, though her researchers have not yet paid enough attention to the issue, it is evident that schools are not doing enough to bridge the divides between residents. Some teachers know nothing about the everyday lives of their communities or about their students, and this makes it very difficult for them to be engaged in their storytelling networks and to help bridge the divides between groups in the schools and between students and parents. She concludes that the public schools need to be revitalized, and more research needs to be done about their role in local communication ecologies.

After thanking Dean Ball-Rokeach for her presentation, Mr. Shane related two things that the November Commission Meeting needs to accomplish: 1) it has to include a report of the three community forums, and 2) it has to make some headway into moving towards some recommendations. Commissioner Mooney and Mr. Shane had been talking about using the November meeting to add to the Commission's understanding about relationships between civic engagement and democracy and between civic engagement and community welfare. Mr. Shane supposes that, eventually, the Commission will also want to talk about transparency and open-meetings and open-records laws, but didn't think an explicit presentation on such things was necessary given the expertise of some of the Commissioners on these topics.

With regard to suggestions at the August meeting from Commissioners MacCallum and Mayer, Mr. Shane asked about the Commission's thoughts on providing communities with tools that a community can use to identify glitches in information resources. Commissioner Sagan asked if tools were different than the questions that were sent out in a previous email, to which Mr. Shane replied that the questions were intended as a sort of self-assessment tool. He didn't think the questions could offer a complete measure of the strength of a community's information environment, which, as he stated in August, had to go beyond information per se to a variety of processes and enabling conditions. He took these to be openness, access to media tools, and the existence of a vibrant forum for the exchange of views, fact-based reporting, and media literacy.

Commissioner Sagan suggested putting the tools online and then adding databases about things that are thought-provoking and action-provoking for communities. Commissioner Jealous then added that there seems to be a big chunk missing in these questions about the role of local media in connecting communities; perhaps a sixth condition should be identified that could be called something like "media that create social connectedness." Commissioner Boyd added that it's not just about getting to know one another but really connecting across different communities of interest within local communities. Dean Ball-Rokeach further added that there needs to be both bridging between storytelling networks and bonding within them to create social connectedness.

Commissioner Mooney then suggested that a way to make such tools/questions useful might be to think about them from the viewpoint of, for example, a community organizer and ask: "If I'm organizing a community, what do I need in order to enhance the civic life in my community?" Also, he asked, who is telling all of these parties how to create infrastructures within their communities?

Commissioner Junck then added that, even if we do develop a list of "15 things that constitute a healthy democratic information community," the Commission hasn't yet addressed how to modify these tools for different communities (LA versus Missoula, for example). Commissioner Boyd agrees and adds that what the Commission should be doing is thinking about all the actors that need to be accounted for within a local information community/ecology and map out how they should be interacting.

Mr. Shane then steered the discussion toward the question of how to frame a democratic enterprise that starts with what the public needs that will make the life of the community better. There is a case, he continued, for the social support of journalism/fact-finding activities, even if that support is merely certain policies that allow such activities to thrive. Mr. Shane asks of the Commission, 1) whether there is agreement on the existence of enterprise and verification-based fact-finding as a distinct journalistic activity, and 2) whether there will be a social shortfall in the amount of such activity without some level of public support apart from payment for content via the free market.

Mr. Shane emphasized, in response to a question from Commissioner Powell asking if he was framing fact-based journalism as something uniquely valuable, that he is not talking about mainstream journalism as a uniquely valuable product that necessarily deserves salvaging from market forces. This is not a Commission on "how to save the newspaper"; however, Mr. Shane is of the view that among the many forms of information gathering and dissemination that are valuable to a community, enterprise journalism might be of special concern because, unlike other information activities, it is costly to do well and likely not to be sufficiently funded through market forces alone. He does not think this would be an argument for government-run journalism, as in other countries, which would be inconsistent with our traditions and perhaps the First Amendment. But, if he is right, then government and civil society initiatives to bolster enterprise journalism will be necessary to improve the information environment of local communities.

Mr. Shane listed six areas that witnesses at the first three Commission hearings had suggested were problems for local communities: 1) people lack access to media communication resources, 2) communities are less informed than they should be because of a lack of government transparency, 3) there are voices that are systematically excluded, 4) enterprise journalism is threatened, 5) too many people lack the skills to be active in the current media environment, and 6) media is fractured in a way that prevents the creation of a common narrative.

Commissioner Powell suggested that the Commission think of needs to be met, not as "problems" needing "solutions," but instead come up with a well-thought out way to think about what a healthy information ecology in a situated geography in an American democracy would look like. The needs, then, must entail something about what it means to be an informed citizenry: what are the needs that must be served so that I, as a citizen, can play the role my founding fathers envisioned my playing in this democracy? The Commission cannot deal with every bit of information that every citizen needs to advance his or her own personal well-being.

Mr. Shane agreed with Commissioner Powell but added that the line may be hard to draw. "Where can I buy fresh lettuce?" may be a personal question. But, "Why isn't there a food store in my neighborhood?" is a civic question (and it's also a threat to democracy if some

citizens have more opportunities than others to secure answers to questions about their personal well-being).

In conclusion, Mr. Shane and Co-Chair Olson agreed that, in addition to the producing recommendations, the Commission can serve as a very valuable circulator of information about innovative initiatives in new media and community communication technologies.