

## FUTURE JOURNALISM PROJECT

ScribeLabs is producing *The Future Journalism Project*, an investigation into the disruption and opportunity in the American news industry.

The FJP is a multi-platform initiative. It's a feature length documentary, a video driven Web site, a Podcast Series, an Event Series and a book.

The FJP is exploring four major investigatory themes described below.

### **JOURNALISM EDUCATION**

Traditional Journalism schools teach broadcast, print and radio. Over the last decade they've included concentrations around the lines of "New" or "Digital" Media. Continued segmentation appears inadequate when compared to the cross platform demands of practicing journalists. So how should current and future journalists be educated? Apart from traditional study (ie, reporting, ethics, etc.), what skills should they acquire, and how are — or can — other disciplines such as computer science augment a journalist's education.

### **JOURNALISM PRACTICE & EVOLVING NEWSROOMS**

It's no longer enough to be a print, TV, radio or Internet reporter. Instead, these disciplines are merging and practitioners must be skilled in each. Newsrooms are evolving in both the technologies they employ and the speed they need to produce. If cable brought us the 24-hour news cycle, the Internet introduced the minute to minute news cycle.

Markets are changing as well. While major news organizations attempt to cover local, national and international news, a number of new initiatives now focus on the hyper-local.

How are these changes, and the fact that journalists and newsrooms are being asked to do more with less, affecting journalism? How many news organizations are prepared?

### **JOURNALISM BUSINESS MODELS**

If our current digital age can be seen as one of immense disruption and opportunity, journalism — and especially print journalism — has taken a major hit. Countless newspapers have closed in the past few years and those that remain struggle to stay afloat.

Many attempts to come up with new business models have been discussed. Some hope updated subscription models or charging for content delivery through new platforms can pull the industry out of its doldrums. Others believe that traditional revenue models must

be revisited in their entirety. Still others think there is no way out except to flip to non-profit models endowed by foundations and grants.

The questions are many, but what are the answers? And is there light at the end of this very dark tunnel?

## JOURNALISM AND DEMOCRACY

It's long been a cornerstone belief that a strong democracy needs a strong, independent and free press, but where did this idea come from and how was it formed?

Will American democracy and politics change in the face of weakened journalism institutions? And with an already low public opinion about its nation's media, does the American public really care? Should they? If so, how are the stakes made known to them?

## THE DOCUMENTARY

The FJP is exploring these topics through interviews with journalists, educators, publishers, advertisers and civic leaders in order to outline the stakes and provide a wide perspective on the current and future state of journalism in the United States.

Filming for the *Future Journalism Project* began during Summer 2010 with a feature-length documentary scheduled for a 2011 release. The documentary will be pitched to major television outlets and played to film festivals across the country.

## PLATFORMS AND DISTRIBUTION

In addition to producing a traditional documentary, ScribeLabs plan to utilize multiple platforms to distribute the wealth of content and information gathered throughout the project. These include a:

- **Dedicated Web Site:** the *Future Journalism Project* Web site will hold video of all interviews conducted. Each interview will be edited down to a series of 4-6 minute segments organized by subject matter and presented in an interface similar to video sites such as YouTube and Hulu. The goal is to let site visitors explore the ideas of individuals and also dive deeply into specific topics as discussed from a variety of perspectives.

The Web site will also enable community submissions so that those interested in contributing to the project can upload interviews that they have independently conducted. For example, ScribeLabs plans to target students at US journalism programs to encourage them to interview peers and faculty about the future of journalism and upload the results to the project Web site.

- **Podcast Series:** Each *Future Journalism Project* interview conducted by the producers will be made available and presented in its entirety as an audio podcast. Listeners can subscribe to the entire series or download podcasts with the interviewees they are most interested in hearing from.
- **Book:** A book of essays written by leading thinkers is planned to accompany the project. The subjects and themes explored will echo and expand upon the video content, with authors focusing on Journalism Education, Journalism Business Models, Changing Journalism Practices and Journalism and Democracy.

The book will appear in both print and digital versions.

## ABOUT THE PRODUCER

Michael Cervieri is an Emmy Award winning producer, Co-Founder of the media production and strategy firm ScribeLabs, and Executive Producer of ScribeMedia.org, the organization's publication on the business, technology and culture of digital media.

Michael taught at the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism from 2006-2009 before being recruited by the university's School of International and Public Affairs to create and teach a course on Internet and Mobile communication technologies and strategies for NGOs, non-profits, governmental agencies and citizen journalists.

## ABOUT SCRIBELABS

ScribeLabs is a media production and strategy firm based in New York City. The company runs ScribeMedia.org, a publication focussing on the business, technology and culture of digital media, produces internally developed documentary initiatives such as the FJP, and works with clients and partners on developing content and distribution strategies of their own. For more information, please visit [ScribeLabs.com](http://ScribeLabs.com).