

PIVOT POINT  
Reinventing Community Information  
for a Participatory Culture  
June 26-27, 2012  
The Hotel Lincoln / Chicago, Ill.



*A Reynolds Journalism Institute Action Summit*

## **CONVENING PURPOSE**

*The purpose of Pivot Point is to define and affirm a shared civic purpose, a common vocabulary, and a framework for delivering trustworthy, compelling, actionable, community-sustaining information informed by the values, principles and purposes of journalism.*

Digital disruption is rampant. Scarcity of information has given way to information overload. The complexity of daily living has placed people in a constant whirlpool. The news as told in traditional forms is no longer broadly compelling to users willing to seek and create their own mix of information sources on open web, mobile and tablet platforms.

Undifferentiated, mass-market advertising is no longer capable of fully supporting journalism, as we've known it. News providers need to develop deep, one-to-one relationships with their users as part of trustworthy, flexible, personalized knowledge services.

Our first focus is to do all that we can to come to Chicago with open hearts and open minds to create a new community-information paradigm. Our current paradigm has been ingrained in us for so long that we barely see it – something happened and we report on it given the constraints of our print and broadcast production systems, and then slap a disruptive ad next to that report. We do that objectively, with primary emphasis on accuracy, not effect. With our new digital tools, we play the same game, only faster, and with more participants. Everyone is a publisher. We have been playing this game for over 80 years, the newcomers have exploded in the last five years, and our communities are more and more fractured and passive.

We know what our communities want – what all human communities want – the ability to have meaningful relationships to pursue common purposes such as the discovery and dissemination of knowledge and wisdom; the creation and distribution of wealth; caring for others; nurturing joy and beauty and the appropriate exercise of power. For an example of one community's common visioning, see the attached graphic, which was developed to guide Cedar Rapids, Iowa following the devastating floods of 2008.

## **PRE-MEETING CONSENSUS POINTS**

---

Our two-day process is being prepared and guided by Chuck Peters, CEO of The Gazette Co. of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, and by Susan Leddick, an experienced multi-industry strategy consultant. As we've planned Pivot Point, we've reached consensus on these points:

- There is a strong desire to discover new ways of providing information in compelling ways that enable people to take action either in their public or private lives
- The meeting should generate a design framework that leads to experiments and projects undertaken subsequently by the group members
- We would like to focus on the question – what can we do better together?

## REPRESENTATIVE QUESTIONS

---

- How do we develop the ability to share context and actionable information in a community, and enhance the ability to make meaningful connections?
- What is the common framework that can guide us as we take on this work?
- If they were starting from scratch today, what service(s) would news organizations provide to meet community information needs -- and how?
- In a world of data overload, what do we know about the information experience users seek, and how can we help them to discover trustworthy information that informs, inspires -- and entertains?
- What is the role for established news organizations in the personal-data ecosystem – the world of privacy, identity and “personas”?
- What would it take for journalists to be at the start of conversations about vibrant, sustainable communities?
- What’s now possible at the intersection of journalism and technology to answer those five questions?

## PARTICIPANT COMMITMENT

---

Each participant in RJI Pivot Point-Chicago is expected to participate in these pre-convening efforts:

- Immediately provide ideas or links relevant to our convening purpose for exploration by fellow participants before and during Pivot Point - please send these links to [densmorw@rjionline.org](mailto:densmorw@rjionline.org).
- Agree to conduct a short phone conversation a few days before we gather with one other assigned participant and report the gist of the conversation by email to the group through an email list that will be provided.

Review a selection of pre-convening reading materials and links to help identify topics we will be considering.

**PIVOT POINT: Reinventing Community,  
Reinventing News for a Participatory Culture  
June 26-27, 2012  
The Hotel Lincoln / Chicago, Ill.  
An RJI Action Summit**



**SUMMIT AT-A-GLANCE**

**DATES/TIMES:**

- Start: 9 a.m., Tues., June 26 (optional dinner, Monday evening)
- End: 3 p.m., Wed., June 26

**LOCATION/TRAVEL / HOTEL CONTACT:**

The Hotel Lincoln, 1816 North Clark St., Chicago IL 60614 / 312-254-4700  
Jeff Beeson, RJI / [beesonj@rjionline.org](mailto:beesonj@rjionline.org) / o: 573-882-7303 m: 816-294-1901

**GOAL:**

Define and affirm a shared civic purpose, a common vocabulary, and a framework for delivering trustworthy, compelling, actionable, community-sustaining information informed by the values, principles and purposes of journalism.

**FORMAT:**

- Preconvening one-on-one interviews / reading links
- Topical detail, frameworks and outcomes created by participants
- Facilitated breakouts and discussion
- Participation by invitation only
- Proceedings generally “on the record”
- Post-convening teleconference / discussions

**IMAGINED OUTCOMES:**

- Identify shared challenges to meeting community information needs in a participatory democracy
- Propose areas for appropriate collaboration: Technology / shared infrastructure / revenue generation / new forms of storytelling
- Agree on next steps

**CONVENOR:**

- The Donald W. Reynolds Journalism Institute at the Missouri School of Journalism

**SOURCE OF PARTICIPANTS:**

Researchers, scholars, journalists, editors, publishers, technologists, entrepreneurs, new-media experts, foundations.

PIVOT POINT: Reinventing Community,  
Reinventing News for a Participatory Culture  
June 26-27, 2012  
The Hotel Lincoln / Chicago, Ill.  
An RJI Action Summit



## WORKING AGENDA

### ***Day One: What Is and What's Next***

- 9:00** Convene and charter the work for the conference  
Briefly introduce participants (name, role, one hoped-for the outcome of this meeting)
- 9:45** Working Session I: *The World We're In* (5 working groups of 6 people each; post in a common location and review after each round; breaks as needed)  
Initiating questions for Round One: Which **trends** are affecting our collective ability to develop and deliver the compelling, actionable information we desire? Socioeconomic trends? Societal? Cultural?  
Initiating questions for Round Two: Which **industry forces** are operating—either positively or negatively? Stakeholders (groups to whom our collective success matters)? Competitors—both incumbents and new entrants? Substitute products and services?  
Initiating questions for Round Three: Which **market forces** are at work? What's happening to market segments? Customer needs and demands? Costs to users to switch to alternatives? Revenue attractiveness?
- 12:00** Lunch Break
- 1:00** Synthesis of Key Points and Observations from the Morning's Work  
Vocabulary and Key Terms – How well does the draft of key terms align with the morning dialogue? Do we need revisions? (Assign the task if it's indicated.)  
Consensus on the shared civic purpose for delivering information. (May be iterative, but this is the first attempt.)
- 2:30** Working Session 2: *The World We Want to Create*  
Reconstitute the five working groups. Initiating questions: what functions would our industry fulfill? What structures or elements might be useful? How might key processes operate? (Record and post.)
- 4:00** Break and structured gallery review of the posted information.
- 4:30** Full group circle-up. What tentative conclusions can we draw? (These are design parameters--the first iteration of the design framework.)  
Review tomorrow's agenda.  
Overview evening logistics.
- 5:15** Adjourn
- 6:15** Convene for transportation to group dinner

## ***Tuesday Evening: Informal Team Discussions***

At dinner venue, possible evening program or catalytic discussion toward design framework and project ideas. Working groups are encouraged to continue their interaction.

Transportation back to hotel; adjourn for evening; information collaboration.

## ***Day Two: What's Next and What Now***

- 9:00** Convene and the give the day's charge to the group  
Relevant afterthoughts and reflections from prior day.
- 9:30** Working Session 3: *Design Framework for the World We Want to Create*  
Keep the working groups from Working Session 2 intact. Charge: build on the results from Working Session 2 to envision the next generation of how to share context and actionable information in a community. Be literal and specific. Produce a 5-minute presentation for the full group. Visual representations and sketches are very helpful.
- 11:00** Design presentations (5 minutes each with 5 minutes of clarifying questions). Purpose is to find the most exciting and worthwhile ideas to expand into learning projects.
- 12:00** Lunch break. Continued conversations about learning project ideas.
- 1:00** Working Session 4: *High-potential Projects and Commitments*  
Full group decision on criteria for high-priority learning projects\*.  
Prioritize learning projects.  
Match learning projects with participants, their interests, and their willingness to continue with the project phase of Pivot Point.  
Describe next steps.
- 2:30** Meeting wrap-up
- 3:00** Adjourn

---

\* RJI will provide a protocol for these projects.