

Disruption is a good thing for editors

By LAURA SELLERS
The Daily Astorian

Digital. Diversity. Disruption. These three words could apply to today, I imagine, every enterprise out there.

The 3Ds mean different things to different industries. Together they generally mean one thing: CHANGE.

In newspaper and broadcast media newsrooms around North America, the 3Ds were explored at the Associated Press Media Editors and American Society of News Editors conference in October on the Stanford University campus in Palo Alto, California.

More than 350 newsroom leaders met for three days to share journalism, innovation, ideas and battle scars. These are editors from our nation's largest publications to the smallest, which I daresay, just might be The Daily Astorian and EO Media Group. It was our largest gathering in years.

What did we learn, besides celebrating our successes, dissecting our misses and getting a boost of renewed energy for the cause of quality journalism? Here are some takeaways that likely relate to your business, too.

Among the discussions:

- Millennials are our pathfinders: Tom Rosenstiel of the American Press Institute says millennials, or people being born or reaching young adulthood around the year 2000, are not just our next audience or customer base — they are a path to all users or customers by leading their parents and family members. Look at the rise of Facebook, Twitter, texting, mobile and streaming in sharing news.

"I believe there are still new audiences to be conquered," said Alfredo Carabajal, managing editor at Al Dia at The Dallas Morning News. "We continue to define audience as the people that at some point chose to give us money to get a print paper, and we struggle with that idea to go beyond that. Now, everybody who has a smart phone is potentially your audience."

- You can transform your data and analytics: Rosenstiel points to a study that aimed to boil down the many statistics we can get from digital — page views, visitors, time on site — with what that meant for the value readers found online. The study found: Major enterprise stories earn nearly 50 percent more engagement. Long-form stories drive 23 percent more engagement. Adding a photo gains a 19 percent boost. Adding audio and video gets a 36 percent.

- Improve coverage of your magnet franchises: He suggests a news organization finds its niche and blow it out of the water rather than being thinner in many areas. This plays out for The Daily Astorian in our reduced national/international coverage and a focus on what impacts the Columbia-Pacific region.

Rosenstiel says we need to get away from the "general store" mentality. Another panelist, Mizell Stewart, said: "We need to be able to do a select number of things extraordinarily well. It's not good enough to be all things to all people anymore. Editors have to be far more focused on identifying what's working and doing more of that and being willing to make the hard decision to do less on areas that are not working."

We also examined the gaps between scientists and the public in a session titled The War on Science: What Journalists Need to Know.

Too often, people rely on personal experiences, political affiliation, or demographics to formulate opinions about science, said Lee Rainie, director of Internet, science, and technology at Pew Research Center.

A survey Pew conducted last summer contained startling results comparing what scientists believe and what the public believes. For instance: Thirty-seven percent of U.S. adults believe it's safe to eat genetically modified food, compared to 88 percent of scientists;

On climate change, 50 percent of the general population think it is due to human activity, compared to 87 percent of scientists;

Just to be contentious: 65 percent of the general public believe humans evolved over time; and the scientists, 98 percent;



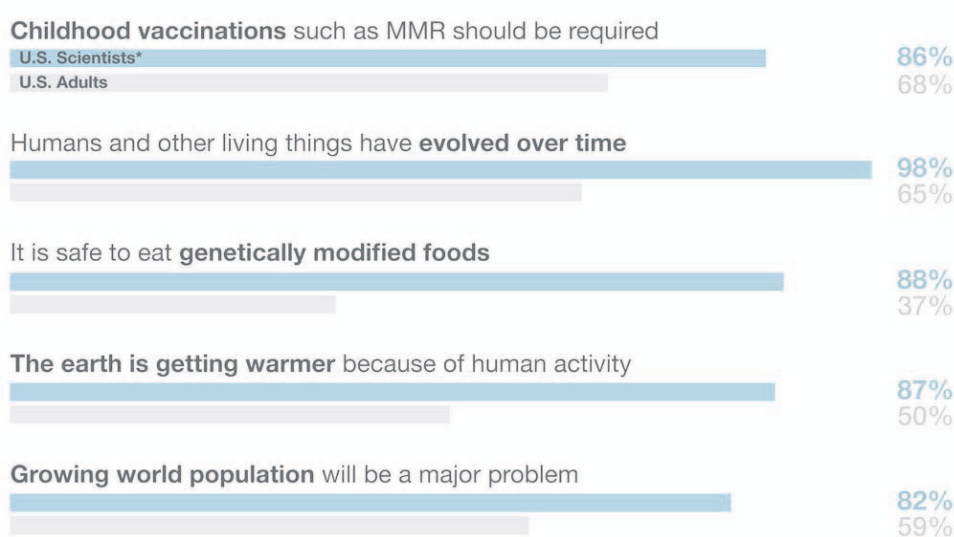
Laura Sellers



Laura Sellers/The Daily Astorian

Editors listen to a presentation by American Press Institute's Tom Rosenstiel about "What's New? What's Next?" at the Associated Press Media Editors and American Society of News Editors conference at Stanford University.

Major gaps between scientific consensus and beliefs among the general U.S. public:



*U.S. scientists — members of American Association for the Advancement of Sciences (AAAS)
Data source: <http://www.pewinternet.org/interactives/public-scientists-opinion-gap/>
Data published: July 1, 2015
Survey of U.S. adults conducted August 15-25, 2014
Survey of AAAS members conducted September 11 - October 13, 2014.

Pew Internet

Research into the gap between scientists and public opinion. Learn more online at <http://pewrsr.ch/1O4MJ1w>



Carl Earl/The Daily Astorian

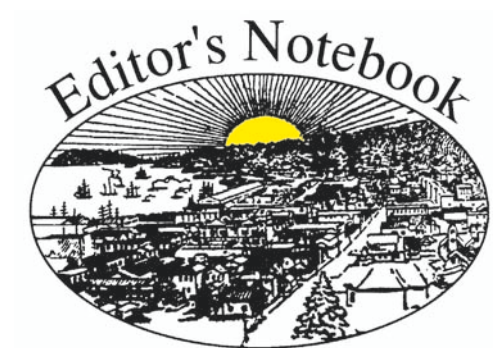
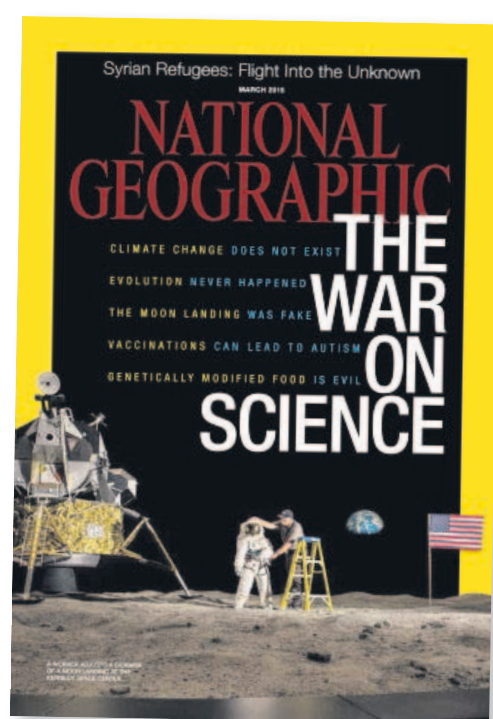
A few of the APME regents at their annual dinner in Palo Alto, Calif. From left, Andrew Oppmann of Middle Tennessee State University, Suki Dardarian of the Minneapolis Star-Tribune, Annette McGruder, Laura Sellers and Karen Magnuson of the Rochester (N.Y.) Democrat and Chronicle.

We all need to occasionally recharge our businesses and lives.

Through the APME experience over the last 20 years, I have watched newsrooms transform through editors around the nation. Some of those changes were cataclysmic and some were just a part of rolling with the punches.

In the past year, I've watch Gatehouse Media buy the family-owned Columbus Dispatch, while its longtime managing editor became the editor and struggled with budget cuts.

Bill Church, the executive editor of the Sarasota (Fla.) Herald Tribune and formerly



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ONLINE

Pew Internet research:
<http://pewrsr.ch/1O4MJ1w>
Seelig's Insight Out video:
www.youtube.com/watch?v=sWKDu8lrb0
APME/ASNE conference coverage:
<http://bit.ly/1LbNOQD>

of the Salem Statesman-Journal, has re-imagined his newsroom to tackle huge enterprise projects on a tight budget.

I've watched as Karen Magnuson and her Rochester (N.Y.) Democrat and Chronicle leads the way in diversity through action and community discussion.

The chance to celebrate and commiserate with peers and be inspired by new ways of framing the issues and solutions is a good way to be ready for the next disruption, which is likely just round the corner.

Laura Sellers is the managing editor of The Daily Astorian and the president of the Associated Press Media Editors.

Open forum

Thanks for the help

How many Masons does it take to screw in a light bulb?

I am an 86-year-old widow of a Master Mason, and while I was at the Masonic Lodge I happened to mention that I have about five burnt out light bulbs in my house, and that my son

lives in Portland. One of the men overheard and immediately volunteered to replace the bulbs. He not only came to my house, but also stopped at the store and bought the bulbs on the way.

This action is not uncommon for these men, but I seldom see a public thank you in

print, so here it is. Thank you very much, Masons.

SALLY SMITH
Gearhart

The dilemma

In reference to the article, "The homelessness dilemma"

(The Daily Astorian, Oct. 23), I suggest that our community's bigger problem is, in fact, the 95 percent of homeless people "... who usually are just fine (behaviorally)," and not the 5 percent who insist on disrupting the tranquility of our lives.

For those of us who have a home, with a bathroom just down the hall, with closets and drawers in which to safely store our belongings, with a kitchen where we have a stove on which to cook the food we have in abundance and can save in the fridge, and a bed-

room where, in its warmth, we can sleep through the night without fear of the elements, human and otherwise — for us, the real dilemma is how best to continue to ignore the realities of those 95 percenters.

JULIE SNYDER
Astoria



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