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Story

From Computer-Aided Journalism to Data Journalism
The Data Visualization DC Meetup was a very successful and enjoyable event: the location (Washington Post old printing press room), the attendance (250), the food (5 different types of wrap sandwiches), and the first roundtable event discussing Data Journalism.

Sean Gonzalez organized the meetup and presented a new visualization of the Data Visualization DC Meetup membership and other data sets in 3-D maps produced by SynGlyphX. Data Visualization DC is the fastest growing community within the Data Community DC.

The eminent roundtable panel consisted of the following:

- Moderator: Frank Sesno is director of the School of Media and Public Affairs (SMPA) at The George Washington University, an Emmy-award winning journalist, and creator of http://PlanetForward.org, a user-driven web and television project that highlights innovations in sustainability.
- Panelists:
  - Jeremy Bowers: Jeremy is a developer on the news applications team at NPR. Previously, he was a senior embedded developer at the Washington Post and news technologist at the St. Petersburg Times/PolitiFact.
  - Nikki Usher: Nikki Usher is a professor at The George Washington University. She studies news production in the digital age, and most recently has been at work studying the intersection of tech and journalism.
  - Derek Willis: Derek Willis is an interactive developer at The New York Times and works mostly on political projects. He maintains The Times’ congressional and election data.
  - Kat Downs: Kat Downs is the Graphics Director at The Washington Post where she designs, develops and edits information graphics and multimedia projects.

Moderator Frank Sesno mentioned that new Washington Post owner, Amazon’s Jeff Bezos, would have liked to have been there. He had each panelist define what data journalism is to them, and their responses were:

- Jeremy Bowers: Based on collected data
- Kat Downs: Making numbers consumable and meaningful
- Derek Willis: About things that can be measured
- Nikki Usher: What's different about it from computer-aided journalism (she did a two week stint at the Guadian Newspaper which is considered to a be a gold standard for data journalism - see Data Journalism Handbook)

Moderator Sesno asked for closing sound bytes from each, starting with himself:
• Frank Sesno: "Dazzle me with Statistics" from his multimedia reporting - story telling class at GWU
• Kat Downs: Smart charting, maps, and timeline examples from her recent stories
• Jeremy Bowers: Get smarter with readers
• Derek Willis: Not progressing fast enough
• Nikki Usher: Stay on the site to make money

The lively Q&A from audience included questions about Jeff Bezos plans for hiring (no response), automating screen scraping, reader preferences for types of visualizations, paying attention to reader feedback, etc.

Moderator Sesno concluded by thanking the panelists and audience for their participation and asking what GWU could do to help?

I am sure that Sean and the members will think of something, including being part of the the retweet program.

The meetup adjourned to Data Drinks at General Assembly across the street from the Washington Post.

Brand Niemann, former Senior Enterprise Architect and Data Scientist with the US EPA, completed 30 years of federal service in 2010. Since then he has worked as a data scientist for a number of organizations, produced data science products for a large number of data sets, and published data stories for Federal Computer Week, Semantic Community and AOL Government.

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Slides

Spotfire Dashboard

Research Notes

http://www.synglyphx.com/#demos

Data Journalism

Source: http://www.meetup.com/Data-Visualization-DC/events/147273352/?af_eid=147273352&a=uc1_vm&af=event

http://semanticommunity.info/Data_Science/Data_Journalism
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The term "data journalism" is nearly as prevalent as the term "big data." With more and more access to data, improvements in technology, and the transformation of traditional print journalism, today's readers are expecting a different type of reading environment than ever before, which often includes data visualization. Where does this leave traditional journalism? Where is journalism heading?

In DVDC's first roundtable event, four experts will discuss the present state of data journalism, where it is headed, and what that means for both journalists and readers. Moderated by Frank Sesno, Director of the School of Media and Public Affairs at George Washington University, and with panelists from GWU, the Washington Post, NPR, and the New York Times, this promises to be an exciting evening.

**Moderator**

Frank Sesno is director of the School of Media and Public Affairs (SMPA) at The George Washington University, an Emmy-award winning journalist, and creator of PlanetForward.org, a user-driven web and television project that highlights innovations in sustainability.

**Panelists**

**Jeremy Bowers**

Jeremy is a developer on the news applications team at NPR. Previously, he was a senior embedded developer at the Washington Post and news technologist at the St. Petersburg Times/Politifact.

**Nikki Usher**

Nikki Usher is a professor at The George Washington University. She studies news production in the digital age, and most recently has been at work studying the intersection of tech and journalism.

**Derek Willis**

Derek Willis is an interactive developer at The New York Times and works mostly on political projects. He maintains The Times' congressional and election data.
Kat Downs

Kat Downs is the Graphics Director at The Washington Post where she designs, develops and edits information graphics and multimedia projects.

Schedule

530-615: Dinner and mingling
615-630: Opening and DVDC announcements
630-715: Moderated roundtable discussion
715-745: Q&A from audience
745-Dawn: Data Drinks

How was the Meetup?

Janet Dobbins

Interesting panel and insights. Here are links to the articles discussed:

http://www.jsonline.com/watchdo...

http://www.nytimes.com/projects...

http://apps.npr.org/buried-in-g...

http://www.washingtonpost.com/s...

Rick Ducey

Rick Ducey

See my post for more thoughts, http://blog.biakelsey.com/index....

Rick Ducey

Rick Ducey

Great info and perspectives. Particularly enjoyed the range of viewpoints and examples of what "data journalism" means to the different panelists. Thanks, Frank, for excellent moderation.

Jessica Schillinger

Lots of great insights about what a journalist's role in data, state of data-driven projects in news, and struggles from the news orgs. Great panel!

Cynthia Hsu
Cynthia Hsu
Great. Insightful.

Robert Dempsey

Robert Dempsey
Thanks to all the panelists and the moderator for making tonights meetup excellent. Had a great time! Thanks also to everyone who asked great questions.

Dhruv

Dhruv
couldn't make it tonight but really wanted to. I wrote a paper on the topic of digital news biz models for the future a while back in case anyones interested that ill share: http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/pap...

Carolyn Peake

Carolyn Peake
This is a great idea!! It is so true that our expectations of news organizations are growing. Unfortunately, I won't be able to attend, but I commend you on addressing this very interesting topic. Great speakers too!

Chris

Chris
Sean, Thanks to you and the Post for pulling this together (but I'm not sure I'll last till dawn!). Sounds like it will be very informative. Any fee to attend or for the dinner? -Chris

Sean Moore Gonzalez

Sean Moore Gonzalez
No fees, we want these to be open events. That being said, we are a sponsor driven non-profit, so any introductions you can facilitate are greatly appreciated!

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