

FOR RELEASE MARCH 19, 2011

Seattle: A New Media Case Study

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RECOMMENDED CITATION

Pew Research Center, March, 2011, "Seattle: A New Media Case Study"

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Seattle: A New Media Case Study

Seattle, perhaps more than any other American city, epitomizes the promise and challenges of American journalism at the local level.

In the last few years, it has experienced both a sharp loss of traditional news resources and an exciting rise in new journalistic enterprises and inventive collaborations between traditional and emerging media (see [Appendix](#) for more about these sites). A New America Foundation case study of Seattle's news ecosystem describes it as "a digital community still in transition." A new, vibrant media scene is emerging. But it also may not take hold.

Consider first the contraction. The city has lost two daily newspapers in the past four years. The King County Journal, which served suburban communities to the east and south of Seattle, closed its daily newspaper in January 2007. About half of its journalists were kept on to work at sister weekly and twice-weekly suburban newspapers. Only 10 newsroom jobs went away, but 40,000 households lost their daily newspaper.

The loss was much greater when the Post-Intelligencer stopped printing in March 2009. The P-I was Seattle's oldest newspaper, tracing its roots back to 1863, and it became the first newspaper in the country to switch to online-only publication. About 140 newsroom jobs disappeared, while 25 staff members stayed on to work for [seattlepi.com](#).

But the closures of the King County Journal and Post-Intelligencer were only half the story of lost newsroom jobs in Seattle. The Seattle Times had cut staff substantially in the years before the P-I closed. The study by the New America Foundation puts the number of Seattle Times lost jobs at 165, from 375 journalists to 210 in the five years before the P-I ceased publication.

Hit hard by declining print advertising, all three Seattle-area daily newspapers had lost money throughout the previous decade. Hearst, which had owned the P-I since 1921, put the paper's losses at \$14 million in 2008 alone.¹

PEJ's State of the News of Media reports estimate that from 2001 to the end of 2009, about 15,000 newspaper journalists across the country lost their jobs. That was about 30 percent of the industry. In Seattle, the percentage was almost twice that.

¹ Pryne, Eric. "The last deadline: Seattle's oldest newspaper goes to press for the final time." http://seattletimes.nwsources.com/html/business/technology/2008871618_seattlepi17.html. The Seattle Times. December 16, 2009.

The human toll can be felt in a report from Ruth Teichrob, a former P-I staffer who has been monitoring what has been happening to her colleagues. Of the 82 who responded to her survey in November and December 2010:

- Half have new full-time jobs working for employers, compared to less than one-third who responded a year earlier. Just over 50 percent of these people are working as journalists and the rest are in corporate or nonprofit communications, business, etc.
- Almost 25 percent have started their own full-time or part-time ventures, such as commercial photography, freelance writing/editing/graphics.
- Almost 60 percent of those who are employed say they are earning less than at the P-I.
- Twenty percent are on unemployment benefits, most nearing the end of their eligibility.²

How much hope can be found in the emergence of new journalistic enterprises in Seattle? To see how difficult it can be to settle on an answer, consider two summary paragraphs in the New America Foundation case study issued in June and updated in November 2010. They are like day and night in describing the current Seattle media landscape:

Seattle, Wash., could be considered a city singularly suited to develop a healthy democracy in the digital age. The city government, citizens and business have created a productive environment for the next generation of information-sharing and community engagement. Years of economic growth and relative prosperity have fostered new, superior practices in news and information. Yet, losing a major print newspaper, as Seattle did when *the Seattle Post-Intelligencer* closed, adversely affects a community, by leaving it with one less place to provide public service journalism, stories about people and general community updates. In parallel, Seattle has been at the center of an explosion of alternative news outlets, especially online, which has created a critical mass of information portals for geographic and social communities.

However, despite the relative vibrancy of the media scene, and even with all its demographic and other advantages, it is unclear how much of this innovation is sustainable. The local web is littered with websites that are no longer updated, and few of the startups boast anything like the journalistic firepower or profitability of the papers of the past. We applaud the efforts of these startups but are skeptical that many will sustain if their benchmark of success is profit alone. Moreover, much development is still needed for Seattle's information environment to reflect the

² Teichrob, Ruth. "Eighteen Months Later: What's Happened to Seattle P-I Journalists." Safety Net Blog. <http://safetynetseattle.blogspot.com/2011/01/eighteen-months-later-whats-happened-to.html>, January 3, 2011.

diverse perspectives of traditionally less-covered minority and financially disadvantaged communities. In short, though the media landscape in Seattle has many green shoots, few conclusions can be drawn about its longer-term future.³

Seattle's digital vitality

Many factors contribute to the vitality of Seattle's digital news and information scene.

It is among the most digitally connected cities in the country. Seattle, for instance, was first in 2009 and third in 2010 among America's Most Wired Cities, as measured by Forbes.com. Of the top three finishers in 2010, Seattle was first in having the most Wi-Fi hot spots per capita.⁴

It is also among the most civically engaged. A 2010 Greater Seattle Civic Health Index, produced by the Seattle CityClub, said the city is a national leader in core indicators of civic participation. It included these statistics:⁵

	Greater Seattle	National
Volunteering	35.7%	26.8%
Group Membership	46.8	35.1
Talking with family and friends via Internet	70.5	53.6
Contributing \$25+	60.3	50.0
Engaged in one or more non-electoral political act	40.2	21.6

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People in Seattle also read heavily. Central Connecticut State University (CCSU) has regularly ranked Seattle first or second among America's cities in a combination of factors, including book sales, education level, internet resources, library support, holdings and utilization, newspaper circulation and periodical publishers. Among the specific factors, Seattle ranked first in 2010 in booksellers and education, and fourth in libraries.⁶

Seattle's lowest factor ratings in the CCSU report for 2010 were in categories related to media. It ranked eighth in internet resources. (Internet book orders per capita, and unique visitors and webpage views per capita to a city's internet version newspaper.) It tied for 17th in combined

³ Durkin, Jessica, Glaisyer, Tom, Hadge, Kara. "An Information Community Case Study: Seattle." <http://mediapolicy.newamerica.net/sites/newamerica.net/files/policydocs/SeattleCaseStudy.pdf>. New America Foundation. Release 2.1 issued June 2010, updated November 2010.

⁴ Woyke, Elizabeth. "America's Most Wired Cities." <http://www.forbes.com/2010/03/02/broadband-wifi-telecom-technology-cio-network-wiredcities.html> Forbes.com. March 2.

⁵ "Greater Seattle Civic Health Index 2010: Success and the Work Ahead," at 3. <http://www.seattlecityclub.org/publications> Seattle CityClub. November 11, 2010. Date visited: March 3, 2011.

⁶ "America's Most Literate Cities, 2010." <http://www.ccsu.edu/page.cfm?p=8227> Central Connecticut State University. January 10, 2011.

weekday and Sunday newspaper circulation. It tied for 11th in the number of magazine and journals published per 100,000 population.

Seattle is also among the most tech-savvy places in the United States. According to the New America Foundation case study, “the information technology industry employs 90,000 people in the Seattle region, and the Puget Sound area is home to 150 interactive media companies, comprising an influential stake in that \$30 billion industry.”⁷

Among the high-tech companies based around Seattle are Microsoft, Amazon.com and RealNetworks.

Slate, introduced by Microsoft in 1996, was but one of many startups in the Seattle area that spawned a generation of digital content pioneers that have remained in the area. For example:

- Tracy Record of West Seattle Blog worked at ABCNews.com, which partnered with Starwave, an endeavor launched by Microsoft co-founder Paul Allen in 1993. It was acquired by the Walt Disney Company in 1998 and became the Walt Disney Internet Group.
- Newsvine Inc. was founded in March 2006 by veterans of Disney, ESPN and some digital media organizations based in Seattle. It became a subsidiary of msnbc.com in October 2007.
- Calvin Tang, a co-founder of Newsvine, left in June 2010 to dedicate himself to AtlasOmega.com, a website he also founded. Based in Seattle, the site provides stories and photos through the eyes of global explorers and thrill seekers.

These factors have created a sense of positive energy about the possibilities of new media landscape, not a pervading sense of loss. As I see it, some key elements to this include:

Experimentation: John Cook, co-founder and until recently executive editor of TechFlash, summed up the attitude of many in Seattle. He said in an e-mail: “A renaissance is occurring in terms of how content is produced, distributed and consumed. That’s exciting stuff for local journalists, despite the challenges this has meant for traditional business models. The media world is getting turned upside down and I believe that is creating new opportunities for entrepreneurial

⁷ Durkin, at 2.

journalists who can harness the new distribution methods and think creatively about how people interact with online content.”

He added, “There’s just a ton of creative energy in this community right now as people experiment with new models and ideas. Traditional outlets also are starting to realize the power of new media.”

Hyperlocal news sites: This high level of experimentation, and the nature of Seattle being a city broken up into distinct neighborhoods, has also led to a remarkable level of extremely local news sites. A Washington News Council database shows about 90 place-based news and blogs sites just within the Seattle city limits.⁸

As Diane Douglas, executive director of Seattle CityClub, said: “Seattle can beat its chest that it has so many neighborhood blogs. Beyond just providing information, they are doing community-building and activating citizens.”

For example, the West Seattle Blog was one of the winners of the 2010 CityClub Community Matters Awards for building public trust. It also won the Online News Association’s 2010 award for community collaboration, which goes to a news project or website that produces outstanding journalism through strong interaction with its community. In 2009 that award went to My Ballard, another Seattle local news site that is part of Next Door Media.

In 2010, Phinneywood.com won a national Sigma Delta Chi award from the Society of Professional Journalists for its coverage of arson in the Greenwood neighborhood. The site operators said the award was “thanks in no small part to devoted readers who supplied numerous tips and kept us motivated to stay on top of the story.”

A limited content analysis in the New America Foundation case study indicated that the hyperlocal news sites examined are providing original content. “And while not comprehensive,” it said, “this preliminary study suggests that these online news startups, with less content and narrower focus than the two established citywide outlets, serve different information needs than their counterparts in the mainstream media.”

Collaboration: The third feature I see in Seattle is that these experiments are collaborating with each other. Because many of the new startups are small and cover different areas, they share

⁸ Caggiano, Jacob. “Online Media Guide – Washington State.” <http://wanewscouncil.org/?s=online+media+guide> January 25, 2011. Date visited: March 3, 2011.

knowledge and experience, content and even networking with traditional media to have a greater collective impact.

At a recent discussion of the Seattle news landscape, Mark Briggs, director of digital media at the KING 5 television station, called it “collaboration squared.” The motivation is simple – everyone has fewer resources, so people leverage what they have through working together.

News outlets in the Greater Seattle area are partnering in many ways, including shared reporting and distribution of major stories. Twitter has become a huge back-channel tool for sharing tips and preparing for big breaking news stories. Journalists cooperate on freedom of information requests and sometimes on joint interviews. Collaborations that once would have been unlikely, if not unthinkable, are increasingly common.

The Seattle Times began a few news partnerships with the local blogs, funded through a grant from the Knight Foundation, in August 2009. Today the list is growing toward 40. Beyond neighborhood and community news sites, the partners include topical sites covering everything from hiking and sailing to open government and health.⁹

Bob Payne, the newspaper’s director of communities, wrote in an e-mail, “Collaborations and grant-funded journalism efforts are really taking off. With newspapers working with less in terms of money and bodies, looking for other ways to get important stories covered is becoming vital. More and more papers are dedicating time to research aimed at smart collaborations and grant applications.”

The Times utilized a different form of partnership to produce a special report called, “Invisible Families, the Homeless You Don’t See.”¹⁰ **The project was** produced as part of a fellowship through Seattle University, funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. The Times received one of the fellowship grants to use as it saw fit. Other fellows included, journalists from three other media organizations and two freelance journalists.

Payne wrote, “In our case, the Invisible Families project from last August employed both of these angles to arrive at a compelling package for both print and online: grant money from Seattle University helped fund work on the project, and our partnerships with local news blogs helped bring diverse coverage to the project.”

⁹ The Seattle Times. <http://seattletimes.nwsourc.com/flatpages/local/neighborhoodnewsfeeds.html>. February 19, 2011.

¹⁰ The Seattle Times. “Invisible Families: The homeless you don’t see.” <http://seattletimes.nwsourc.com/flatpages/local/invisiblefamilies.html> Date visited: March 3, 2011.

Acceptance of emerging media: A fourth factor is that other stakeholders in civic life of Seattle have been quick to embrace the emerging media rather than being suspicious of it. Tracy Record, editor and co-publisher of the West Seattle Blog, said, “At least in Seattle, many government and business leaders recognize the media landscape has changed. I don’t find many doors closed in my face.”

As an example, government public information officers “seem to answer neighborhood news people’s inquiries the same way they answer citywide media’s inquiries. The mayor’s media brown bag includes a mix of online and offline, for-profit and nonprofit. In the business realm, sources and interviewees seem to understand where the readers are, and are usually savvy enough to answer inquiries from nontraditional sources,” Record said.

The acceptance also affects how people engage with emerging media, Record said. They are more apt to alert news outlets when they see breaking news and are receptive to guidance of how to do it better. “On the other hand, the people who ‘were the audience’ also enjoy teaching when they can. We have commenters who are firefighters, lawyers, pilots, grocery clerks, etc., and not shy about explaining something unique to their occupation if it somehow plays into a discussion. I learn a lot from them,” she said.

Social media: There has been a notable embrace of social media as a way of extending and connecting many of the new news experiments. John Cook, co-founder and executive editor of TechFlash, said, “Social media may be a buzz word. But it is real, and when utilized properly it can drive significant adoption of quality journalism.”

Certainly, the Seattle Times has embraced it. Bob Payne, the paper’s director of communities, commented in an e-mail, “The single biggest trend is obviously the importance of social media, particularly Facebook, as far as disseminating the work that The Times does. And I don’t mean just getting people to link to our articles. I mean *all* the work that we do, from videos, to poll questions, to partner links to live chats. If your site is not optimized to take full advantage of this viral marketing, you need to get that done pronto.”

For example, The Times started a Facebook page dedicated to its Community News Partnership to highlight some of the best partner content on a daily basis. It has also held live chats on projects that news partners have contributed to.

What Is Lacking

For all of this journalistic vitality, Seattle’s changing news ecosystem clearly has urgent news and information needs that are unmet, and some elements are more difficult to cope with.

Diane Douglas, executive director of Seattle CityClub, says that her civic group must communicate to everybody, using all forms of communication. It cannot depend on big regional entities to distribute information. While that may be healthier, she has to acknowledge that “it’s harder,” and there is more risk that certain communities will not be reached.

People told me it is also harder to find beat reporters who understand a subject and have authority in the community. For Douglas, that means her group has a harder time finding moderators for its discussions, especially in the areas of health and education.

“Clearly some vitally important stories are less likely to be covered. It’s very frightening to think of those gaps and all the more insidious because you don’t know what you don’t know,” Douglas said.

Hyperlocal blogs are effectively covering many neighborhoods and some “scrappy” startups are great sources of information, but Douglas says she does not know how well they are equipped to do comprehensive coverage.

Kathy George, a former P-I journalist who became a lawyer, said in an e-mail that sources of news are much more diffused than in the past. “As a result,” she said, “big stories may escape the kind of attention necessary to bring about government reforms or social change. Unless a story appears in one of the few major media outlets remaining in Seattle, it is unlikely to have a lasting impact.”

George said that Investigate West, a nonprofit investigative startup launched after the P-I stopped printing, has produced stories that resulted in three bills being introduced in the current legislative session. “However, those stories appeared on MSNBC and in the Seattle Times,” she said. “It seems that stories appearing only in a news blog (i.e., Crosscut, Post-Globe, I-West, pi.com, or a neighborhood blog) are not having comparable impact because of their limited audiences.”

George was of two minds about the overall impact. “On the positive side,” she said, “The Times, Seattle Weekly, and a few radio stations are still functioning as major outlets for competitive news reporting. But staff cuts and funding troubles seem to be taking a toll. Lately, The Times has been running large house ads in place of news, and seems to be running more wire stories or news borrowed from other sources. The Weekly seems to be distributing fewer papers.”

Some clear gaps can be seen in the news and information ecosystem:

State capital coverage: As with most states, Washington has seen a significant decline in the number of reporters covering its state capital. David Ammons, an Associated Press reporter who covered the state capital in Olympia for 37 years before leaving in 2008 to work for the secretary of state, said the press corps “has shrunk to a shadow of its former self.”

During most of his tenure, he said, “We had between a dozen and 15 fulltime reporters, plus occasional drop-in by TV and radio, and session-only reporters and interns. During the past five years or so that has shrunk to about seven or eight or so year-around staff. . . . There is barely manpower enough to cover the waterfront, never mind much time for digging, analysis, etc.”

Barry Mitzman, a former journalist who leads a new undergraduate major in strategic communication at Seattle University, said: “No one misses the dog that doesn’t bark. A one newspaper Seattle, once dreaded, is now the accepted norm. Olympia? We don’t know what we don’t know, so we don’t miss it.”

Arts and culture coverage: At a CityClub discussion about local journalism in the fall of 2010, audience members commented on the loss of news coverage and reviews about the arts scene. Diane Douglas of CityClub says, “This is especially painful in a time of economic stress because arts organizations are hurting and can’t get their stories told.”

Former P-I journalist Kathy George said: “There are not enough people working full-time in competitive journalism. As a result, there is just generally less reporting, and less news and commentary being generated. For example, the former P-I arts and entertainment critics are generally not working anywhere now, and there is less diversity and quantity of arts coverage.”

Public Insight or networked journalism: While many Seattle area news organizations are using social media to connect with their communities, none has a robust, sophisticated effort to tap into the expertise of their audiences. KUOW, the University of Washington’s NPR affiliate, has a fledgling “public insight network,” in which it asks listeners to share their experiences in regard to specific stories. (The gold standard for “public insight network” journalism is Minnesota Public Radio, which has established a database of 75,000 listeners whose knowledge can be tapped in the reporting process.)

Many news websites have reader blogs and other interactions, and hyperlocal news sites rely heavily on reporting from their communities. But the opportunity for serious crowd sourcing to engage the public in creating content is largely untapped.

Foundation support: Foundations across the country are feeling the loss of journalistic resources in terms of coverage about the issues they support, which is creating new awareness about the importance of funding journalism. For the most part, this is translating into funding for coverage of specific topics or stories. It is far from clear, however, what will happen when the initial seed money is gone. Many foundations do not want to be seen as long-term underwriters of these media startups.

There is one other issue that matters when foundation funding is involved: transparency. In all foundation support for journalism, news organization and funders must make sure the public can see and evaluate where the money comes from, where it is spent and what strings, if any, are attached. Transparency is critical in maintaining trust, as evidenced by a Seattle Times article headlined “Does Gates (Foundation) funding of media taint objectivity.”¹¹

Mapping and metrics: Few communities have adequate methods for mapping information needs and measuring information health. Seattle is no exception.

The Washington News Council has made an excellent start with development of its Online Media Guide (yes, the acronym is OMG). It has a database of more than 800 websites and provides a strong starting place for examining the scene.¹²

Diagnostic tools are needed to identify news and information gaps as the first step in developing potential solutions. Tracy Record of the West Seattle Blog says the current situation is “all over the map. Some content areas and geographic areas are fairly well covered. Some are virtually ignored. Some are over covered. And while there is a great deal of unprocessed information available, from both official and unofficial sources, it’s overwhelming and difficult for the average person to sort through.”

Sustainability: Whether established media, emerging media, freelance, for-profit or nonprofit, finding a sustainable business model is elusive for everyone. “Online-only news sites are running on fumes, yet they persist,” says Barry Mitzman of Seattle University. “They risk exhausting the human capital that’s sustaining them. An improved economy—where starving online journalists could find other, decent jobs – might cause them to fold. But they’re surprisingly resilient.”

There is a sense that innovation in content creation is not being matched by innovation in business development. Some organizations are waiting for an economic rebound, rather than generating

¹¹ Doughton, Sandi, Heim, Kristi. “Does Gates funding of media taint objectivity.” http://seattletimes.nwsourc.com/html/localnews/2014280379_gatesmedia.html. The Seattle Times. February 19, 2011.

¹² Caggiano.

new revenue strategies. Kathy George, formerly of the P-I, observed somberly, “Financially, it appears nothing is working. Journalism needs a new business model,” as well as “capacity building and fundraising/development help for upstart or emerging outlets.”

KING 5 and The Seattle Times announced in October 2010 they were forming a joint partnership to build and manage a local online advertising network. “The Seattle Times and KING 5 will be working with online publishers to sell ads onto their web pages and share the corresponding revenue as part of the beLOCAL Ad Network. Community blogs and other niche publications throughout the Puget Sound region will benefit from the sales resources of the larger media companies without sacrificing their own sales efforts or relationships,” the announcement said.¹³

While that is an encouraging development, it is too soon to tell whether the relationship will succeed and whether it will prompt other similar ventures.

Tomorrow’s Seattle

About a year ago, more than 240 people convened at the University of Washington for a Journalism That Matters Pacific Northwest conference with the theme, “Re-imagining News and Community in the Pacific Northwest.” Their hope was to better understand the changing Northwest news ecology, with the aim of developing partnerships and innovations to make it better.

They were citizens, editors, writers, broadcasters, bloggers, producers, entrepreneurs, philanthropists, educators, students, technologists, media activists, community journalists, public advocates and public-policy experts. Many felt a deep anguish about what had been happening to journalism.

“I don’t know anybody from my profession who isn’t heartbroken, devastated, terrified, scared, enraged, despondent, bereft. I just don’t know anybody,” said a former colleague of mine at the Seattle Times. She was talking about the mood around the country, but the loss of newsroom jobs was even worse in Seattle than it was nationally.

By the end of the first evening, however, a different sense was emerging when people were invited to share their reactions. Despite all of the heartache and hardship, people were moving from a sense of crisis to one of possibility.

¹³ KING 5. “The Seattle Times and KING 5 partner to create local online advertising network.” <http://www.king5.com/community/news-releases/The-Seattle-Times-and-KING-5-partner-to-create-local-online-advertising-network-105697913.html> News release. October 25, 2010. Date visited: March 3, 2011.

Monica Guzman, then of seattlepi.com, pointed out that the event was being held almost a year to the day from Hearst's announcement that the P-I would be sold or closed. As hard as that year had been, people were moving forward. Uncertainty was being replaced by collaboration, Guzman said. Journalists were working together to mitigate the effects of diminished resources. News organizations were forming alliances. Startups and traditional media were teaming up. Even at the level of reporters, people were collaborating.

Two other themes were clear that evening as well:

- While business models may not be obvious, the rich experimentation under way was creating a feeling of optimism.
- Whether we work for mass media or local media, telling stories as if we love the place (even hard-hitting stories) serves communities and nourishes journalists.

For the next two and a half days, attendees participated in wide-ranging conversations about the news and information environment in the Pacific Northwest.¹⁴ Ten initiatives were created. They concerned issues such as global health journalism, digital literacy, civic engagement, government access and accountability, journalism ethics and standards, mapping the news ecosystem and increasing support for new forms of journalism.

A year later, nine of those initiatives are still active and moving forward today, and the message in Seattle is clear.¹⁵

The more diffuse news and information ecosystem is more complex and more difficult to imagine. It is also still vulnerable. But its potential seems richer than the once more stable system that it was replacing.

About the Author

Michael R. Fancher is a co-convenor of Journalism That Matters Pacific Northwest, an effort to improve the news and information health of communities in the Pacific Northwest. He is an investor in and a member of the Journalism Advisory Board of Intersect, a web platform to enhance people's ability to share stories. He is also vice president of the Washington Coalition for

¹⁴ All of the JTMPNW conversations were captured in notes posted on the Internet, videos and in illustrations that charted the ideas expressed, and are available online at the JTMPNW Wiki. <http://www.newshare.com/wiki/index.php/Jtm-pnw> A report of the event is available online. <http://www.jtmpnw.org/knightReport.cfm>

¹⁵ The initiatives, with links to their current status, are listed in the appendix to this paper.

Open Government and serves on an advisory committee to the Fordham University Graduate School of Business.

Fancher retired from the Seattle Times in 2008 after 20 years as executive editor. After retiring he served as a 2008-2009 Donald W. Reynolds Fellow in the Missouri School of Journalism. He received a B.A. in journalism from the University of Oregon, a masters degree in communication from Kansas State University and an M.B.A. from the University of Washington.

Appendix

Any list of a cities news and information sources is going to be flawed and incomplete, but here are some noteworthy outlets that illustrate what is happening in digital journalism in Seattle.

Common Language Project <http://www.clpmag.org/about.php>

The CLP is a nonprofit multimedia journalism organization housed in the University of Washington's Department of Communication. Three talented young Seattle journalists founded it in 2006: Sarah Stuteville, Alex Stonehill and Jessica Partnow. CLP works in three key areas:

- International Reporting – “CLP reporters frequently undertake topical reporting projects around the globe. We also accept submissions from emerging journalists and media makers working around the world. Our work tends to focus on the people affected by key social justice issues – the small human stories that illuminate broad social, political or economic issues. Our coverage is focused on human rights, gender equality, social and economic justice, immigration, education, labor, health and the environment.”
- Local Reporting – “Inspired by the diversity and globalism of the Puget Sound region, the CLP regularly reports from our home city of Seattle on issues that connect our region to international community such as immigration, refugees and global health.”
- Journalism in Education – “The CLP believes that a journalist's first duty is to educate. We believe media education is the key to fostering a diverse media landscape and encouraging informed and engaged global media consumers.”

In January 2011, CLP launched the Seattle Digital Literacy Initiative in partnership with public high school teachers and the University of Washington. The purpose is to foster understanding about the functions and methods of journalism and to encourage students to be better engaged as

citizens. A summer camp program to teach investigative journalism and media production is planned for summer 2011. <<http://www.seattledigitalliteracy.org/>>

Crosscut.com <http://crosscut.com/>

David Brewster, who founded the Seattle Weekly in 1976, started Crosscut, whose motto is “News of the Great Nearby,” in April 2007. It began as a for-profit entity, but closed and reopened with nonprofit status in December 2008.

Crosscut.com says it is “a daily guide to local and Northwest news, and a forum where writers and citizens with many points of view can report and discuss local news.... Crosscut is a general-interest news site, with coverage ranging over politics, business, arts and lifestyle, and the world of ideas. It does thoughtful and fresh analysis of the important issues of the day, not routine breaking news.”

In addition to aggregating links to local news sites, Crosscut publishes its own stories and has 40 contract writers and freelancers. It has posted openings for a CEO to work with Brewster and an editor.

In June 2010, the Seattle Foundation was awarded an \$185,500 Knight Foundation Challenge Grant “to expand in-depth and explanatory coverage” on Crosscut.com.

Brewster said in an e-mail, “I think our model, with six revenue streams (ads, sponsorships, members, major donors and foundations, events and syndication) is working, though it is tougher by being general interest and nonpartisan. My sense is that investigative sites and initiatives will capture foundation and individual donations, since that is fading away so completely (except for the dailies).”

Data.Seattle.Gov <http://data.seattle.gov/>

Launched in February 2010, Data.Seattle.Gov is intended to increase public access to “high value, machine-readable datasets” generated by various departments of Seattle city government. It provides abundant material for citizens and news outlets.

DataSphere Technologies <http://datasphere.com/>

Based in Bellevue, Wash., DataSphere Technologies is a provider of hyperlocal web technology and sales solutions for media companies. It announced recently that it had launched its 1,000th

community website nationally. It announced in September 2010 that it had raised \$10 million in venture capital funding, following \$10.8 million in funding earlier in the year. Seattle's KOMO-TV and Radio use its advertising system called LocalNet for their hyperlocal news network.

Grist <http://www.grist.org/>

Grist describes itself as “a beacon in the smog.” A nonprofit funded by foundations, donations and advertising, it says of itself:

“You know how some people make lemonade out of lemons? At Grist, we’re making lemonade out of looming climate apocalypse. “It’s more fun than it sounds, trust us!

“Grist has been dishing out environmental news and commentary with a wry twist since 1999 — which, to be frank, was way before most people cared about such things. Now that green is in every headline and on every store shelf (bamboo hair gel, anyone?), Grist is the one site you can count on to help you make sense of it all....

“At Grist, we take our work seriously, but we don’t take ourselves too seriously. Because of the many things this planet is running out of, sanctimonious tree-huggers ain’t one of them.”

Despite that lightheartedness, Grist and its founder and CEO, Chip Giller, have received national recognition for their work. The CJR News Frontier Database says Grist “reaches about 800,000 individuals per month through its website, e-mails, and avid use of social media. The site was on pace to spend \$3 million in 2010, about \$500,000 of which comes from corporate ads and sponsorships, \$300,000 from reader donations, and the balance from philanthropic foundations.” http://www.cjr.org/the_news_frontier_database/2011/01/grist.php

HistoryLink.org <http://www.historylink.org/>

Founded in 1998, HistoryLink calls itself the “free online encyclopedia of Washington State History” and says it is “the first and largest encyclopedia of community history created expressly for the Internet.” With more than 5,550 original, sourced essays as of March 2010, it is an incredible public resource. The nonprofit site says it serves an average of 5,000 unique visitors a day, one third of whom are K-12 teachers and students.

Intersect <http://www.intersect.com/>

Seattle-based Intersect says it is “a site where storytellers of all kinds can explore what happens when stories are mapped by time and place and shared with the world.” It launched in beta in 2010 and is now fully operational. Its CEO, Peter Rinearson, a Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist and entrepreneur, founded it.

In October 2010, Intersect and the Washington Post collaborated on an experiment in which Post reporters and the public could use Intersect.com to post reports from the Jon Stewart-Stephen Colbert rally in Washington, D.C. <http://specials.washingtonpost.com/intersect/>

InvestigateWest <http://invw.org/>

InvestigateWest says it “rose from the ashes of the Seattle Post-Intelligencer” but prides itself on not being “limited by those roots.” Founded in July 2009, it is a nonprofit organization dedicated to investigative and narrative journalism whose mission statement says, in part:

The old model for supporting and conducting public service journalism has collapsed. Thousands of traditional journalism jobs have simply vanished in this region, and along with them the opportunity for the kind of in-depth, investigative reporting and memorable storytelling that keeps citizens engaged and informed about changes shaping their lives.

InvestigateWest continues the reporting essential to democracy. Our passion for investigative journalism is paired with the ambition to find and connect with new audiences using the new tools of the digital revolution now available to journalists. Investigative reporting and storytelling takes time, resources and talent that many traditional news outlets can no longer afford.

InvestigateWest was started by a group of accomplished journalists with a track record of producing investigative stories and, with them, change in public policy and corporate practice. Our mission is to cut across the old media borders to reach and engage audiences by new and powerful means. We harness the synergies of the printed word with the evocative power of photography, video and audio to produce reports used and distributed by a wide variety of news organizations, whether online, print, television or radio.

InvestigateWest is led by executive director and editor Rita Hibbard, formerly an assistant managing editor and investigative editor at the P-I. It got a \$100,000 grant from Ethics and Excellence in Journalism Foundation <<http://www.journalismfoundation.org/default.asp>> in February 2010 and another in February 2011. Other funders include the Brainerd Foundation, the Bullitt Foundation, the Russell Family Foundation and the Fund for Investigative Journalism. It also solicits funds from the public.

More than 20 national and regional media partners, including MSNBC.com, AOLNews.com, the Seattle Times, seattlepi.com and The Oregonian, have distributed its work.

The Columbia Journalism Review published a first anniversary review of InvestigateWest, which it called “new pioneers of the west.” http://www.cjr.org/the_observatory/blazing_trails_changing_paths.php?page=all

Instivate <<http://www.instivate.com/about>>

Instivate is a technology innovator headquartered in Seattle’s Central District. It offers technology for online content and advertising, audience measurement and local blogging.

Instivate is the parent company of Neighborlogs, a Seattle-based community news blogging platform and ad-sharing network that was launched in June 2007.

“Neighborlogs is a free, hosted placeblogging platform with an integrated local advertising service,” it says. “It is designed for local content entrepreneurs and organizations to document the news and information that matters most in their communities and gives local businesses a relevant, engaged audience for their advertising messages.”

More recently **Instivate announced it would focus exclusively on its local ad network in Seattle, <http://seattleindieads.com>, [our advertising tools](#) and data services.** “We’ll be continuing with our local and regional ad sales efforts,” it said, “and helping all of the existing members of that network to better monetize their great local content.”

<http://www.neighborlogs.com/2010/10/29/goodbye-neighborlogs-hello-seattleindieadscom>

Journalism That Matters Pacific Northwest <http://journalismthatmatters.org/>

Ten initiatives were either spawned or invigorated at the Journalism That Matters Pacific Northwest gathering in January 2009. Slightly more than a year later, nine of those are moving forward. The initiatives, with links to their current status, are:

- JTMPNW Collaboratory is an ongoing initiative to encourage experimentation and collaboration to improve the news and information health of communities in the Pacific Northwest. <<http://journalismthatmatters.org/jtmpnw-collaboratory/>>

- Puget Sound Civic Communications Commons is an effort to enhance civic engagement in neighborhoods, communities, the non-profit sector, government and business. It is undertaking three pilot projects in 2011.
<<http://journalismthatmatters.org/blog/2010/10/01/civic-communications-commons-development-retreat/>>
- Public Eye Northwest is an independent nonprofit entity that says it is designed “to boost digital civic literacy, build community news creation capacity, and best practices in voluntary government transparency.” <http://publiceyenorthwest.org/>
- Online Media Guide is under development by the Washington News Council as a means of mapping the state’s news and information ecosystem.
<<http://journalismthatmatters.org/blog/2011/02/08/omg%E2%80%94the-wnc-online-media-guide-makes-its-first-public-debut/>>
- JTMPNW Journalism Commons is developing as a clearinghouse of information and engagement on journalistic needs and opportunities in the Northwest.
<<http://journalismthatmatters.org/blog/2011/02/18/seattles-bold-plan-for-a-journalism-commons/>>
- Seattle Digital Literacy Initiative says it aims “to help empower youth in our region as educated consumers and critics of – and producers and participants in – today’s complex media landscape.” <<http://www.seattledigitalliteracy.org/>>
- Journalism That Matters, explores ways to improve global health journalism in the Northwest. <http://journalismthatmatters.org/blog/2011/02/11/improving-global-health-journalism-in-the-northwest/>
- JTM Online assists Journalism That Matters members by providing social networking technologies including member profiles, a searchable / sort-able members directory, friend connections, and public and private messaging between members. <<http://journalismthatmatters.org/jtm-online/>>
- The “TAO of Journalism Seal” was developed by the Washington News Council to encourage news sites to emphasize Transparency, Accountability and Openness.
<<http://wanewscouncil.org/?s=tao>>

KING 5 <<http://www.king5.com/>>

KING 5's website reflects its newscasts and is an audience leader, but it has not yet broken new ground online. That could change because the station hired Mark Briggs as director of digital media in July 2010. <<http://www.king5.com/community/news-releases/KING-5-Hires-Director-of-Digital-Media-97515184.html>>

Briggs is a journalist-turned-entrepreneur. He is the author of two books, "Journalism 2.0" and "Journalism Next," with a third book on entrepreneurship in journalism in the works.

KOMO-TV and Radio <<http://www.komonews.com/>>

In August 2009 Fisher Communications Inc., parent of KOMO-TV and KOMO Radio, launched "KOMO Communities," a network of 43 hyperlocal neighborhood websites in the Greater Seattle area. Today the network includes 21 sites in the city of Seattle and 34 in communities through much of Western Washington.

Promotion for the sites says, "Go beyond the region's headlines and find the latest news in your community. This is the place for conversations to start and communities to connect on important topics and issues. Your community news—be a part of it."

<<http://www.komonews.com/communities>>

KUOW 94.9 FM <<http://www.kuow.org/>>

The NPR Seattle affiliate is highly regarded for its radio programming, but its website is mostly a guide to that programming. The station says it employs 63 full-time employees; plus freelance reporters, part-time staff, interns and work-study students. It also says it produces 20 hours of news and information a week. It has started a "Public Insight Network," which is still in relative infancy.

KUOW has done some powerful investigative work recently, including a project with the Seattle Times about injuries to combat soldiers from carrying gear that is too heavy http://seattletimes.nwsourc.com/html/nationworld/2014209155_weightofwar06.html and a report on hospital executive pay <http://www.kuow.org/program.php?id=22556>

Living Voters Guide <<http://www.livingvotersguide.org/>>

The Living Voters Guide is noteworthy for how it was funded and how it was developed. It is one activity of a National Science Foundation-funded research project to design, build and test new

software systems to better support civic engagement and participation. It has been developed by a team of researchers and civic engagement practitioners, including CityClub of Seattle, the Design, Use, Build group at the University of Washington, the Center for Communication and Civic Engagement, also at UW, and Reinspire Me LLC.

The developers are interested in other ways of using the software, including in the area of news and information.

msnbc.com local <<http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/22454530>>

Msnbc.com Local aggregates top story links from a variety of local sites, notably KING5.com.

MyNorthwest.Com <<http://www.mynorthwest.com/>>

The news on MyNorthwest.com is mostly from the Associated Press. The blogs are from three Bonneville broadcast outlets – News Talk 77.3 KIRO FM, 770 KTTH The Truth talk radio, and 710 ESPN Seattle.

Newsvine.com <<http://www.newsvine.com/>>

Seattle-based Newsvine was launched in July 2005 and went public in spring 2006. It was acquired by msnbc.com in October 2007.

It says: “At Newsvine, you can read stories from established media organizations like the Associated Press and ESPN as well as individual contributors from all around the world. Placement of stories is determined by a multitude of factors including freshness, popularity, and reputation. Contribution is open to all, and editorial judgement is in the hands of the community.”

Next Door Media <http://www.nextdoormedia.com/>>

Next Door Media says it presents “news powered by your neighborhood,” a network of 10 news sites and a regional portal serving the North Seattle area. Two journalists, Kate and Cory Bergman, both of whom had worked at KING 5 TV and Northwest Cable News, founded it in 2008.

“Unlike many blogs,” it says, “Next Door Media’s sites are authored by experienced journalists who produce original, objective news coverage. Next Door Media’s MyBallard.com won a 2009 Online Journalism Award for community collaboration, beating the LA Times and Miami Herald for the

award. And PhinneyWood.com won the national Sigma Delta Chi Award from the Society of Professional Journalists for deadline reporting.”

The operators say their network grew 37 percent in 2010, serving up 13.3 million page views for the year. “Every site grew in the double digits, and Queen Anne View jumped 57% last year alone!” it said. “Next Door Media sites now reach 200,000 unduplicated unique users every month.”

Kate Bergman also created Seattle Chic, an urban shopping site. <http://www.seattlechic.com/>

Patch.com < <http://www.patch.com/>>

AOL’s Patch network of local news sites was operating in 14 Washington State communities roughly along the I-5 corridor from Tacoma to Everett, as of February 2011. Its first site was launched October 10, 2010, in University Park. Its Seattle regional editor is Mike Lewis, formerly with the Seattle Post-Intelligencer.

Public Eye Northwest <http://publiceyenorthwest.org/>

Under development for more than a year, PEN launched this year as an independent nonprofit dedicated to boosting digital civic literacy, building community news creation capacity, and best practices in voluntary government transparency. It works to surface and distribute important public sector data and to assist citizens in engaging with government data.

PEN’s founder and executive director is Matt Rosenberg, “a former Seattle Times op-ed columnist and think tank senior fellow, with 27 years experience in journalism, strategic communications, issue advocacy and public policy.” A board of 12 directors from business, technology, new media, legacy media, law, government, education, civic engagement and development oversees it.

A key PEN program is an ongoing government transparency project called the Public Data Ferret, which was launched in March 2010. PEN uses the Ferret project as a “tool for teaching digital civic literacy and building community capacity for content co-creation centered around government.”

The Ferret project also highlights the importance of government information that’s already available online, and produces material that enriches news ecosystems. <http://socialcapitalreview.org/public-data-ferret/>

Publicola < <http://publicola.com/>>

Publicola, which calls itself “Seattle’s News Elixir,” was launched in January 2009, it says, “to fill the void created by the collapse of print media. The site originally focused on state government in Olympia, where the press corps has been decimated.” Its founder and editor is Josh Feit, a longtime editor and reporter for *The Stranger*, an alternative weekly in Seattle. It is funded by advertising and by investors.

The site says of itself:

“While we wear our urban green politics on our sleeves and aren’t afraid to state our opinions, we’re also a nonpartisan site that prioritizes a more balanced and nuanced approach to reporting than the screechy blogsphere.

People were afraid that blogging would change journalism. Instead, journalism is changing blogging. PubliCola is a blog about Seattle, by journalists.

“Publius Valerius PubliCola was the alias for the authors of the Federalist Papers — the original bloggers.”

Its staff list shows an editor in addition to Feit and five staff writers.

Puget Sound Business Journal < <http://www.bizjournals.com/seattle/> >

Puget Sound Business Journal is part of the American City Business Journals, which is in more than 40 markets nationally. PSBJ offers print and online coverage of 16 industries, a host of networking events and expos, a “book of lists” of industry data in several formats, a regional business directory and various other business-related services and publication. Its staff list includes 15 people.

In 2010, its investigative series about the failure of Washington Mutual won several national awards and was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize.

PugetSoundOff.org < <http://www.pugetsoundoff.org/> >

Puget SoundOff is an online space “created by and for youth” to encourage young people to be involved in their communities. It was developed in 2007 by an inaugural PSO Youth Council with the City of Seattle Department of Information Technology, University of Washington Center for Communication and Civic Engagement and Metrocenter YMCA.

Real Change <<http://www.realchangenews.org/>>

Real Change is a self-described activist weekly newspaper that “exists to create opportunity and a voice for low-income people while taking action to end homelessness and poverty.” Founded in 1994, it is sold on the street by homeless people, and claims to have a current circulation of 18,000 per issue.

Reel Grrls <<http://www.reelgrrls.org/>>

Reel Grrls is about “empowering young women from diverse communities to realize their power, talent, and influence through media production.” It offers workshops for teenage girls in animation, cinematography, script writing and more.

Sea Beez <<http://seabeez.com/>>

Sea Beez is a “hive for hyperlocal ethnic news.” Dr. Julie Pham, founder and director, says it focuses on building capacity in ethnic media. Sponsors are New America Media and the City of Seattle’s Department of Neighborhoods. Seattle is blessed with many ethnic media outlets, and more than 30 have committed to participating in the program, which includes forums, workshops, citizen journalism and developing a common website so that participating media outlets can share news content and gain wider readership. <http://seabeez.com/participants/ethnic-media-outlets/>

Seattle Channel < <http://www.seattlechannel.org>>

The Seattle Channel is a government-access channel granted to the City of Seattle under Federal law for the purpose of cablecasting government television programs. Programming decisions are based solely on content, and are made independent of the mayor and the City Council. The Seattle Channel website offers streaming video and an archive featuring video on demand of all programs. The cable station and website offer coverage of many community events.

SeattleCrime.com <<http://seattlecrime.com/>>

SeattleCrime.com is exactly what the name implies, an aggregation of news reports from police blotters and various news sources. Its “about” page says:

“Welcome to Seattlecrime.com, your new go-to site for news about cops, crooks, neighborhood crime, and all (or at least most) other aspects of law enforcement in Seattle.

“Currently, all of our potentially libelous content is being produced by unemployed (some would say unemployable) crime reporter Jonah Spangenthal-Lee. If you’re interested in becoming part of the Seattlecrime.com team, or want to advertise with us, send us an e-mail.”

The site offers a list and map of 911 events, membership signup and an iPhone app so citizens can provide reports.

Seattle Gay Blog <<http://seattlegayblog.blogspot.com/>>

The blog describes itself as the blog of the Seattle Gay News staff. Seattle Gay News also has a website that is essentially a link to content from the print publication, which is a weekly arts and entertainment publication founded in 1977. <http://www.sgn.org/>

Seattlepi.com <http://www.seattlepi.com/>

Michelle Nicolosi, executive producer of Seattlepi.com, says, “Nearly two years after seattlepi.com became the first major metro daily newspaper to go online-only, I’m happy to report that our readership is stronger than ever. We serve around 4 million readers per month, and our local readership is seeing strong growth.

“We haven’t made significant changes to our editorial mission since we launched in March 2009. Our goal is to be Seattle’s home page — to reach as many local readers as we can with an engaging mix of staff content, partner content, content from our community and ‘curated’ content that tells the reader about the interesting stories they can find on other local, national and international sites.”

The site’s staff of about 20 people includes editorial cartoonist David Horsey, winner of two Pulitzer Prizes. Its “about” section calls out politics, crime blog, Microsoft, Boeing and sports as areas of coverage. In addition to many contributed blogs, the site has content partnerships with Sound Publishing, KOMO-TV, Q13Fox and others.

Seattle PostGlobe <<http://seattlepostglobe.org/>>

Seattle PostGlobe was launched by former journalists at the Seattle Post-Intelligencer after it stopped printing in March 2009. It says it is “a nonprofit news organization devoted to independent reporting for changing times. We focus on social- justice journalism that links Seattle to the world, including issues and countries often ignored by mainstream media.” It lists a core staff of five, with other contributors, many of whom worked for the Seattle Post-Intelligencer when it stopped printing.

The PostGlobe site says, “In the beginning we worked as volunteers. Today, we’re still mostly volunteers. But, thanks to your donations, we’ve been able to begin paying a little — but far less than what it will take to get off unemployment. We’ll keep the Seattle PostGlobe running as long as we can, but we’re going to need your support, as contributors to our news site and as financial contributors.”

The Seattle Times < <http://seattletimes.nwsourc.com/html/home/index.html> >

The Seattle Times website is a full menu. In addition to news, features and commentary, the site includes a host of staff-produced blogs, photo galleries, videos, interactive databases and regular live chats.

The Times began a string of news partnerships with the local blogs — funded through a grant from the Knight Foundation — in August 2009. Its announcement said the partnerships had four goals:

1. Enhancing communication between the respective web sites and the Seattle Times, and discovering ways to share news tips and collaborate on future newsgathering.
2. Linking to and promoting stories on partner sites when it may help fill coverage holes.
3. Exploring tools that could enhance advertising opportunities across the partner sites.
4. Learning about how such partnerships can benefit the respective sites.

<http://seattletimes.nwsourc.com/flatpages/local/neighborhoodnewspartners.html>

Today the list of partnerships is growing toward 40. Beyond neighborhood and community news sites, the partners include topical sites covering everything from hiking and sailing to open government and

health. <http://seattletimes.nwsourc.com/flatpages/local/neighborhoodnewsfeeds.html>

Bob Payne, The Times' director of communities, says, "We have an endless list of ideas on how to improve the partnerships, so we're pretty bullish on its future prospects. For example, we recently held an in-house training session for site editors, and also announced a program with Poynter to offer a subsidized journalism training module to site editors."

The Times won a Pulitzer Prize in 2010 for breaking news in covering the shooting deaths of four police officers. It also won the Innovator of the Year Award from the Associated Press Managing Editors for its use of digital and social media in the shooting story and for partnering with neighborhood blogs in its Networked Journalism Project. In addition to an iPhone news app, The Times developed apps for special content about University of Washington football and basketball.

Seattle Transit Blog < <http://seattletransitblog.com/> >

How much can a nonprofit blog created by a handful of contributors tell you about transit in Greater Seattle? Would you believe *everything*?

"The blog also focuses on density and the urban form, and other forms of alternative transportation like bicycling and walking," it says.

Seattle Weekly <http://www.seattleweekly.com/>

The Seattle Weekly is a free-distribution alternative weekly that prides itself on having traced "Seattle's cultural arc" since the days before Microsoft, grunge, double-tall lattes, Amazon.com, soaring downtown condos and fusion cuisine. It was founded in 1976, back when, it says, "Seattle was a dreary little blip on America's radar, best known for airplanes, clinical depression, acres of clams and rain — lots and lots of rain."

Founded by David Brewster, The Weekly initially focused on arts, culture, politics and an ongoing re-examination of what Seattle might be if it grew up. The Seattle Weekly moved from paid to free circulation in 1995 and was sold in 1997 to Village Voice Media, which was acquired by New Times Media in 2005.

Today it offers a steady print diet of "best of" guides (including Best of the Web), extensive entertainment news and the occasional meaty cover story. Online it offers "The Daily Weekly," a general interest news blog, "Reverb," a music blog, and "Voracious," a dining blog. It introduced a Flipbook format online in July 2009. <http://www.seattleweekly.com/flipbook/>

Seattlest <<http://seattlest.com/>>

Seattlest was launched in January 2005 as a local blog of local happenings. It is part of network of similar sites in major cities, including New York and London.

The Stranger <http://www.thestranger.com/>

The Stranger is a free alternative weekly tabloid that considers itself “Seattle’s only newspaper.” Founded in 1991, it changed the alternative competitive landscape with a combination of free distribution, edgy writing and extensive entertainment coverage, as well as personal and classified ads. It includes a range of content, from serious government reporting to snarky social commentary. Its signature writer and one-time editor is Dan Savage, the nationally recognized commentator and author. In addition to “Savage Love,” a weekly column, he produces podcasts and a blog.

Anyone contemplating a move to Seattle should probably read The Stranger’s main blog, called The Slog, for a week or so. After that you’ll know whether this is your kind of town or not. <http://slog.thestranger.com/blogs/slog/>

Sportspress Northwest <http://sportspressnw.com/>

Art Thiel and Steve Rudman were franchise players as sports columnists for the Seattle Post-Intelligencer. Now they have teamed up again to co-found one of the area’s newest websites, Sportspress Northwest, “where insight is our focus and content is king.” Their “about” page says:

We co-founded Sportspress Northwest Inc., and assembled a staff of savvy, credentialed journalists, in the belief that there are decent livings to be made on the web providing quality commentary, reporting and research for a large, local market of sports passionates. Yes, it’s a niche appeal, but with more than 50 years of combined journalism experience between us, we know this place has the capital, advertisers, sponsors and consumers to help experienced local journalists sustain a new effort at entrepreneurial journalism for a popular subject.

The SunBreak <http://thesunbreak.com>

The SunBreak is an online magazine that bills itself as a “conversation with Seattle.” It was launched in September 2009 and says of itself:

“We’re here to talk with everyone from politicians, chefs, and athletes, to artists, filmmakers, musicians, scientists, and neighborhood activists. Think of us as a little ray of sun shining

through that infamous Seattle chill — a group of friendly people who won't keep quiet and mind our own business. We encourage like-minded Curious Georges to post to the site, but if you'd rather just sit back and read, we won't judge. Thanks for stopping in!"

TechFlash < <http://www.techflash.com/>>

Tech Flash is an online news site dedicated to covering the technology industry in the Pacific Northwest. It is a product of the Puget Sound Business Journal, but it was the brainchild of two Post-Intelligencer business reporters. Founders John Cook, executive editor, and Todd Bishop, managing editor, made the leap to online-only in October 2008, even before the P-I did in March 2009.

Cook, whose Twitter handle is @johnhcook, said in an e-mail, "High quality content built around an engaged community seems to be working pretty well for us. We are in a unique situation where our audience is desired by advertisers and they are early adopters of new media. Our community of readers is strong, and we work hard to engage with them and provide them high quality content on a daily basis."

TechFlash holds The Flashies, an annual Newsmakers Awards program that recognizes achievements in 15 categories, including newcomer of the year, "do-gooder" of the year and tech move/hire of the year. <<http://www.techflash.com/seattle/2010/12/and-the-flashie-goes-to.html>>

(Update: Cook and Bishop left TechFlash in March 2011 to form their own site, Geekwire. <<http://www.geekwire.com/>>

Washington News Council < <http://wanewscouncil.org/> >

WNC describes itself as "an independent, nonprofit, statewide organization whose members share a common belief that fair, accurate and balanced news media are vital to our democracy." It was founded in 1998. John Hamer, its president and executive director, has been at the helm since its inception. He is a former associate editorial-page editor at the Seattle Times and previously associate editor with Congressional Quarterly/Editorial Research reports in Washington, D.C.

The WNC's early emphasis was on vetting complaints against media organizations concerning inaccurate or unfair stories, along the model of the now-defunct Minnesota News Council. In recent years it has developed a broad range of projects to emphasize quality, integrity and public

engagement with journalism through an interactive website with online community discussion, an active blog, a live Twitter feed and Facebook/LinkedIn pages.

The WNC funds journalism scholarships through donations and some proceeds from an annual Gridiron West Dinner.

In January 2011, it announced successfully matching a Gates Foundation challenge grant of \$100,000. < <http://wanewscouncil.org/2011/01/19/woo-hoo-we-met-the-gates-foundation-challenge/> > The WNC was named organization of the year by the Municipal League of King County. <http://wanewscouncil.org/2011/01/27/wnc-named-organization-of-the-year-by-municipal-league/>

Among the News Council's projects in the Online Media Guide, which has a database of more than 800 websites. <<http://wanewscouncil.org/?s=online+media+guide>>

Another WNC project is the TAO of Journalism pledge and seal, a means to encourage news outlets, bloggers, hyperlocal news sites, freelancers, newsletters and civic groups. to emphasize Transparency, Accountability and Openness. <<http://taoofjournalism.org/pledge.cfm>>

West Seattle Blog < <http://westseattleblog.com/>>

Founded in 2005 by the wife and husband team of Tracy Record and Patrick Sand, the West Seattle Blog is easily one of the most watched, talked about and celebrated hyperlocal news sites in the country. It epitomizes the idea of "regular people" working amazing hard to cover everything that moves in their community.

Record, who handles content, was a pioneer in digital news at the Walt Disney Internet Group and KOMO-TV. She quit her job as news director at KCPQ-TV to work more than full time for WSB. Patrick, who handles sales, has been in ad sales for more than 25 years and was also a pioneer in Internet advertising. They list their content collaborators as EVERYONE in West Seattle.

Xconomy <<http://www.xconomy.com/seattle/>>

Seattle is one of five cities with Xconomy websites. The site was launched in 2008 and its "about" page says:

“Xconomy is dedicated to providing business and technology leaders with timely, insightful, close-to-the-scene information about the local personalities, companies, and technological trends that best exemplify today’s high-tech economy.

“Our goal is to become the authoritative voice on the exponential economy, the realm of business and innovation characterized by exponential technological growth and responsible for an increasing share of productivity and overall economic growth.

“We plan to deliver this valuable content through a unique global network of localized blogs, events, conferences and other initiatives designed to better connect people and ideas.”

Part of its business model is hosting Xconomist Forums.