



Looming Shifts in the Landscape: Interview Summaries

Insights from remarkable people inside
and outside the independent media field

by **Peter Leyden**

To make any major strategic move, independent media organizations or practitioners need to know the context they are operating within, the broad landscape around them. In the decade ahead, that landscape may shift in significant ways. Some of these shifts may be abrupt upheavals; others may be more incremental, but prove to have an equally profound impact over time.

We interviewed an array of remarkable people in a wide variety of fields who could give insight into what may happen to the independent media landscape in the next 10 years. The interviews were largely open-ended and built off the participant's own expertise, though we kept asking them to draw out the potential impact of their insights on what we called motion media—today's television and film—and on the new forms it might take in the next decade.

Over the course of the interviews, we saw a consistent preoccupation with five major areas that are ripe for big change. The first is **technology**, including both the digital tools for creating media and the infrastructure for delivering it. The second is the broader **media** world itself—what's happening in the commercial sector and with the creation of new forms of media. The third concerns **politics** broadly defined, including social and cultural trends that may manifest themselves in politics. The fourth is the inexorable shift toward a more **global** context to which everyone will need to adapt. And the final one focuses on changes stemming from the differences between **generations**, particularly with the arrival of the Millennial generation, just now coming out of college.

Rather than present full transcripts of each of the interviews, we have taken the best passages from each and sorted them into the five sections suggested above. We hope that these passages, presented here in the words of the interviewee, will help stimulate your thinking about the changes in store for the field of independent media in the coming years. Feel free to use them—as individual passages or as a set—to provoke strategic conversations within your organization too.

The Interviewees

John Anner

Executive director of the East Meets West Foundation; former executive director and current board member of the Independent Press Association, a nonprofit that supports independent publications committed to social justice and a free press

John Battelle

Cofounder of Wired magazine and founder and publisher of The Industry Standard and TheStandard.com; Business 2.0 columnist; author of the forthcoming book *The Search*, about Google and search engines

Wes Boyd

Cofounder of MoveOn.org; longtime technology entrepreneur; cofounder of Berkeley Systems, known for its screensavers and computer games

Sandeep Casi

Researcher on the interactive media team of FX Palo Alto Laboratory, for Fuji Xerox Ltd.; formerly worked for George Lucas's Industrial Light and Magic

Sandy Close

Executive director of the Bay Area Institute/Pacific News Service; founder of YO! (Youth Outlook), a collaboration between writers and young people, and New California Media, a network of ethnic news organizations; 1995 recipient of a MacArthur Foundation "genius award" for her work in communications

Brad deGraf

Founder of the Media Venture Collective and director of the Animation Archive for the Internet Archive; investment analyst for digital media for the International Finance Corporation (a venture subsidiary of the World Bank); a leader in computer animation in the entertainment industry

Daniel Erasmus

Cofounder and director of the Digital Thinking Network, a European strategic consulting firm in Amsterdam; a fellow of the Rotterdam School of Management, where he teaches MBA courses on scenarios and Internet strategy

James Fallows

National correspondent for the Atlantic Monthly; author of *Breaking the News: How the Media Undermine American Democracy*; former speechwriter for President Carter; former editor-in-chief of *U.S. News & World Report*

Richard Florida

Author of *The Rise of the Creative Class: How It's Transforming Work, Leisure, Community, and Everyday Life*; professor of regional economic development at Carnegie Mellon University

Rob Glaser

Founder, chairman, and CEO of Real Networks, a pioneering company in audio and video streaming over the Web; former vice president of multimedia systems for Microsoft; funder of independent media through the Glaser Progress Foundation

Ted Halstead

Founder and president of the New America Foundation, a Washington think tank not aligned with either party and geared to discovering next generation thinkers; coauthor of *The Radical Center: The Future of American Politics*

J.C. Herz

Design consultant; author of *Joystick Nation: How Videogames Ate Our Quarters, Won Our Hearts, and Rewired Our Minds*

Joel Hyatt

CEO of INdTV, a news and information channel aimed at 18 to 34 year-olds founded with Al Gore; founder of Hyatt Legal Services; former finance chair of the Democratic National Committee during Al Gore's presidential bid

Henry Jenkins

Director of the comparative media studies program at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology; co-director of MIT's Media in Transition series

Brewster Kahle

Director and cofounder of the Internet Archive, the largest publicly accessible, privately funded digital archive in the world; inventor of the Internet's first publishing system, WAIS (Wide Area Information Server), which was sold to America Online in 1995; cofounder of Alexa Internet, sold to Amazon.com in 1999

Celinda Lake

President/CEO of Lake, Snell, Perry, and Associates, a national public opinion, research, and strategy firm; senior adviser to dozens of Democratic incumbents and challengers at all levels of the electoral process, and to democratic parties in several Eastern European countries and South Africa

Tim O'Reilly

Founder and president of O'Reilly & Associates, thought by many to be the best computer book publisher in the world

Walter Parkes

Director of motion pictures for DreamWorks SKG, and head of its live-action division; producer of *Gladiator* (Academy Award for Best Picture 2000), *Men in Black*, and *Minority Report*, among many other films

Howard Rheingold

Author of *Smart Mobs: The Next Social Revolution*, *Transforming Cultures and Communities in the Age of Instant Access*

Ravi Sundarum

Media scholar in India and co-director of Sarai, a program of media in the city in New Delhi; fellow, the Center for the Study of Developing Societies

Orville Schell

Dean of the U.C. Berkeley Graduate School of Journalism and an expert on China; author of 11 books, most recently *Virtual Tibet: Searching for Shangri-La from the Himalayas to Hollywood*

Clay Shirky

Consultant, teacher, and writer on the social, cultural, and economic effects of Internet technologies; adjunct professor with NYU's interactive telecommunications graduate program

William Strauss

Coauthor of *Millennials Rising: The Next Great Generation*; *Generations: A History of America's Future*; and *The 13th Generation*

Technology

New Communication Technologies and Tools

There are two major themes coming out of the conversations around technology. One theme is about the looming shift to a high-bandwidth Internet distribution system: how it might happen, what critical uncertainties are still not resolved, and the ultimate implications. The other equally powerful technology shift is to low-cost, high-quality tools for making motion media. In other words, the digital video revolution, which is seen on a par with the previous desktop publishing revolution that significantly changed the magazine and text publishing world.

Tim O'Reilly

The digital revolution again, this time in video

Just like desktop publishing and the Web, in successive waves, gave people the ability to produce documents, we're now at a point with the democratization of the tools to produce rich media—films and the like. We now have whole feature films shot with consumer-grade digital cameras. This means there will be a lot more supply. The structure where you get funding and then produce something—there will still be some of that. But it will be replaced by things that get produced and get discovered from the bottom up, in the same way that somebody could start a new blog or website and have it be discovered. That will be particularly true in the frothy early stages of the digital video revolution.

The ascent of new players and the creation of super nodes through file sharing

File sharing networks are just one example of a new kind of distribution network. If you look at the history of new distribution networks, in the beginning it's a wide-open playing field and everyone is relatively equal. Fairly quickly the market differentiates. Some people become leaders, and then it increasingly looks like old marketplaces. The fear that peer-to-peer technology will remove the fundamental structure of markets is just wrong.

The Web was a new kind of distribution network. The Web is completely peer-to-peer, but a small number of websites—Google, Yahoo—wield enormous power. They emerged in only a half-dozen years. With the sharing of files through file trading networks, the same thing is going to happen. You will see certain kinds of nodes become super nodes that are the equivalent of publishers. So the real question is not, “Will publishing and the role of being an aggregator or distributor go away?” The question is, “Who will have those roles and what will they look like?”

The emergence of new online distribution channels for movies

There will be new distribution channels. We're still in the early stages, but we will get to a point where we will get a marketplace for online video content. High bandwidth Internet is not a distribution channel. That's like saying our highway system is a distribution channel. It is at the level of physical infrastructure. A distribution channel is someone who has aggregated a bunch of customers in a particular market. A retail bookstore is a distribution channel; iTunes is a distribution channel. I think there will be the equivalent of iTunes for movies.

The free marketplace for online video will be replaced by a paid one

Free networks are almost always replaced by paid ones. That's because the free cooperative networks don't work all that well; people are glad to pay once there is something at a reasonable price. A good example from recent history is Internet access. Those of us who were around in the early days of the Internet know how much it was a do-it-yourself thing; you had to do it with chewing gum and bailing

wire. As soon as the first ISPs came out and for \$19 a month you could connect to the best network on the planet, bang: nobody did it themselves anymore. The ISPs took over from the do-it-yourselfers in the space of a year. Look at Napster or Kazaa, with all kinds of unreliable data and mis-titled songs. Right now you say, "It's better than nothing." But it's not better than paying a reasonable price and getting what you want with guaranteed quality. The whole online music scene is a matter of the mix of availability and price. When you get that right, the free networks are marginalized. There's always piracy on the margins that is analogous to shoplifting. But I am confident that we will have a fully paid music marketplace within two years. And we'll probably go through a similar file sharing period with video because the commercial service is not ready. So people will nibble around the edges. There will be opportunities, like there were for a video store distribution network, for providers of branded, well-known content to get it out there on those networks.

Alternative distribution: Cheap storage iPods carrying 1,000 films within five years

I don't know how fast broadband will happen, but I'd be really surprised if it weren't faster than people expect. Bandwidth is still definitely a limiting resource. But I don't think most non-technical people realize just how fast some of the technology is advancing. Because it's not just bandwidth—it's storage. A good example: I was at IBM Research about a year ago, and these guys made the point that within about five years storage would be cheap enough and small enough that you could record in video every minute of your life and carry it around with you in your pocket. A device the size of a iPod could store continuous video of your life. So start imagining that world. Maybe bandwidth isn't the service. Maybe you stick your iPod device into a socket in a store and they fill it up with 1,000 videos that you'll pay for when you use them. Then all that needs to be transmitted over the wires is which one you're watching. There are a lot of ways content could get distributed.

Huge opportunities loom; new forms of compensation are coming

The overall trend is that the tools for making film are becoming cheap and ubiquitous. There are a lot of film hackers, if you will, pushing the envelope, whether it's doing special effects on a laptop that used to cost millions in a studio or doing the whole shooting match. We're also seeing a lot of innovation in distribution, which I think will be driven more by cheap storage than cheap bandwidth. Ultimately, the opportunity is to figure out a way to leverage a media landscape where there is a lot more content. That means much more need for arbiters who can figure out what's worthwhile and find creative ways to figure out how to get compensated for it. I don't know what that new form of compensation will look like, but I have absolute confidence that there will be an answer. If you look at past media, a commercial ecology always emerges. Always. So there are huge opportunities. The fact is, nobody ever says to you as an individual or a business that you get to keep doing what you did yesterday and still get the same results; you have to think about how to reframe what you do.

Brewster Kahle

The parallel between today's video migration to the Web and the early 1990s in print

The broad-stroke analysis is this: there is a transition that happened to the print news and periodicals folks in the early 1990s, and we'll see that happen now in the audio-visual world. That transition occurred when everybody went online; you had to be online or you weren't a player. People did experiments to get their feet wet. They would spend \$50,000 to \$100,000 with an organization to try to get something online. Then often they rolled it in-house.

There are now 15 million different Web servers on the Internet and 50 million different websites. Thousands of new news sources are doing new and interesting things. People have brought together ideas from many points of view to form a richer environment. Now what has happened, as the Pew Internet & American Life Project surveys show, is that kids use the Internet as their information

resource of first resort 80 percent of the time and resort *only* to the Internet for information 40 percent of time. I bet both of those percentages are too low. If it's not on the Internet, it doesn't exist.

That's what we see coming with TV and film. It will start with the independents. Then the majors will dip their toes and a few will get wet. The BBC looks like one of the first to go; they are saying that they're going to put their full archives online, in a creative archive, which is different from a read-only archive because you can build on it.

So we're at the equivalent of 1993. We don't have a browser yet that works in video; "Netscape" has not come out yet. Back then we had all of these really cruddy proprietary systems like Reuters and Lexis-Nexis. I think that is where we are today in the video context with RealVideo. Soon there will be video browsers and video searchers, and then you will get 50,000 video collections on the Net.

Getting films off the Web for free actually helps a commercial film archive

We put the Pralinger Film Archives online a few years ago. We have 2,000 digitized films now. We wanted to see whether the original archives were either helped or hurt by making their best films available for free, to be downloaded in high resolution, for reuse. The answer is: they're helped. We paid for the digitization through a grant. They became more well known. Most people use it off the website, but some say they want to use it off the original archive. So here's a commercial archive, working with a nonprofit archive, and everybody's happy.

The costs of digitizing all video and film is negligible and dropping

We've been able to bring down the cost of digitization of videotape and films by doing research in-house and spinning off companies. It's now \$15 per output hour for tape. You could have an hour-long tape, digitized, hosted on the Internet archive, with scant meta-data. That's cheap. If you have film, it's probably in the \$100 to \$150 range per output hour. We work with the television archives, which archives 20 channels, 24 hours a day, DVD quality, from worldwide sources. But those have no public access. Only one week is publicly available: the week of Sept. 11. But think about the idea of digitizing one year. One channel year is only 10 terabytes. A terabyte costs about \$2,000. That's \$20,000 in capital costs, the hardware, per channel year.

Independent motion media can break the logjam and get their work online

Right now the Internet is starved for video, and the question is why. I think it's the perceived cost. The perceived market is a few people in Hollywood. Independent media can break the long jam. The Internet Archive is here to help make it cost them nothing. If they can pay something, or we could go with them to their funder, then great. But we don't need that to start. We can get hundreds of thousands of hours of their video up, usable, multiple formats, high res, low res, catalogued, captioned. We can get these materials online very, very, very, inexpensively.

A standing offer: unlimited storage and bandwidth forever for open media

We have made an open offer, that if things are under the Creative Commons license, if people are going to make things available for free, it shouldn't cost you. Our offer is unlimited storage, unlimited bandwidth, forever, for free, for everyone.

The new search engines for motion media will be you and the bloggers

You will find what you want in online film and video based on other people having found it. They will publish deep links into movies. It's already happened in the news and image world. When you search Google images, it uses other people's links and the words around the image. They don't interpret the image. Instead, you use the rest of the Net. Once knowledge has an address, once video material has an address, then people can build on it, and it's the building on it that adds value.

The closed route: the proprietary alternative of digital rights management

The other approach is for organizations to put their material on their own websites, with their own proprietary standards that nobody can ever talk to or integrate with. Make it a little island, protected

with digital rights management from Microsoft, and have people standing around with guns at the door. Or you could do what *The New York Times* did. They made their stuff freely available, and allowed people to link into their pages and “email this article to your friends.” And they found a business model around that.

Clay Shirky

Among young people digital video is gaining fast on digital audio on the Internet

The digital video thing is such an incredibly profound freak-out right now. Audio is leading slightly, but not by much anymore. The ability to create moderately good-sounding audio and distribute it easily is slightly ahead of the ability to make enjoyable video and distribute it. There’s the sense that [Apple’s software] Garageband is better than iMovie.

Very often when people set out to show that video productions are going to be costly and it’s always going to have to be managed by a large organization, what they mean is video all created and edited by professionals. And what they forget is that people who are 20-something have lived their entire lives saturated in video. Video itself, existing video, is raw material. Remix culture says, “Let’s take the existing pieces of video, keep the soundtrack, but change the surface.”

BitTorrent software will do for video-streaming what Napster did for music

Look at the software program BitTorrent, which says it can do for streaming what Napster did for flat files, and can make it cheap to distribute video over the Web. Video-streaming right now is quite expensive. What BitTorrent recognizes is that those people who are getting the video downstream also have, almost by definition, unused upstream bandwidth. What BitTorrent does on a local computer is fork the stream. As the video stream is coming in, it just takes that same byte count and sends it back upstream so that somebody else can get it. So it becomes like a waterfall or a daisy chain across the Internet.

BitTorrent is the missing piece. Everybody treats hosting costs as being a high barrier to getting into the video and moving-image game, but it’s not. Everyone was waiting for the right architectural solution and Bram Cohen has come along and provided, if not the ultimate solution, enough of a sketch that we know it can now be done.

The past slow bandwidth problems are essentially solved

Bandwidth problems? That’s like people talking about computers being too slow in 1995. It is already a solved problem. Worries about high-speed Internet? They’re over. Cable provided the competition that made the telcos get off their asses. I hate to say anything good about the cable industry, but that was the one good function they served. Every year we graduate a new crop of college seniors who’ve had T1 in their homes and in their dorm rooms. They graduate into the real world and say, “What do you mean, dial up?” So both supply and demand are increasing. The real story is that high bandwidth is coming everywhere where someone is willing to pay \$40 a month for it.

Video over the Internet is good enough to create an initial market

There are really no technological impediments to acceptable quality video in the home for situations where the content is more important than the form. No one is going to watch *The Matrix* streamed to a little bitty window. But people will watch the news; they’ll watch sports, the weather, and porn. And those things will then essentially fill in the infrastructure that’s needed for higher-quality material to be distributed. The infrastructure is coming. Part of the problem in understanding what’s going on with the infrastructure is that nobody understands the tradeoffs that consumers are going to make.

Every audio magazine that even looked at the Internet in 1999 or 2000 wrote off the MP3 file format. “Oh, it doesn’t sound as good as listening to these things on my \$30,000 speakers with my high-end

CD player. No one's going to adopt it." But they didn't understand that what the MP3 enabled was a service model that included a bundle of other features like free on-demand access to all the world's music. And that plus crappy quality turned out to be a bargain that users signed up for in droves.

I guarantee you that video people will tell you that until the experience is high-end, color TV good, they don't think it's going to take off. And, in fact, the users will tell them that if they get better control and better content—they get to make their own content, mix things, time-shift things—they're willing to take a hit in pure video quality in order to get those other services. The videophiles will not believe you when you tell them that, but it's true.

Making an example of Paris Hilton

It is absolutely taken for granted that every male under the age of 30 has seen the Paris Hilton sex video. It was never aired on a broadcast outlet even one time. It's the first time we can point to something that is simultaneously culturally ubiquitous and absolutely free of any taint of broadcast. When people understand that the distribution of that video was completely successful, they might get a glimmer of the technological changes that are coming.

Rob Glaser

High bandwidth will spread to 60 million PCs and then TV within 10 years

There are three screens, right? There's the phone, the television, and the PC. Today one of those screens is in something like 20 million households in the United States and is reliably connected to enough bandwidth and Internet architecture that you can get motion video on it with high quality. We're just starting to see the impact of that. It's a screen that, generally speaking, is a one-on-one screen, not a social screen. But within the next five or 10 years the number of households will go from 20 million to 60 million and the connection to the broadband pipe will extend seamlessly to the television. And that's when the full impact on video will kick in.

Now, remember, this is happening in a context in which most affluent households in the United States have massive amounts of choice already. So you're not going to play the role that cable played on top of broadcast. This is a world where there are already 200 choices of continuous linear streams, and someone who has digital cable can already get a great selection of video-on-demand.

Joel Hyatt

The Internet will compete with TV in 10 to 15 years

Video over the Web is one thing. Television over the Web, full-motion video, 60-minute programming that goes out not to 12 or 17 people but hundreds of thousands of people—that's not going to be possible for many years to come. Video snippets distributed to a few people is one thing. Full-motion video of length to lots of people, on anybody's wildest expectations, is probably 10 to 15 years away. The Internet is not going to displace television in any foreseeable timeline.

Daniel Erasmus

Internet vs. Web; the P2P network is enormous

The Internet is not the World Wide Web. The Web is a specific layer of technology sitting on top of the Internet. Therefore the Internet is a transportation protocol. The Web seems like the Internet because it meshes all the media underneath it. But the Web is not well suited for a range of things. One

could see within this next decade more and more of a disconnect between what we see as the Web and other kinds of things that will emerge sitting alongside it, or possibly on top of it.

One of the things we see now is peer-to-peer networks, which isn't the Web but is still running on the Internet. If we start to contrast the two, it gets to be quite scary. At any one moment of time, if one looks at the size and scope of Kazaa, or one of these networks, they have in the range of 5 million people online. The amount of data stored on the P2P network at that moment, which is any given moment, is 5 petabytes. Archive.org, which archives the publicly available sites on the Web on a monthly basis, judges that to be 40 terabytes in size. Therefore, we are talking about a P2P network sitting alongside the traditional host-serving structure which is a 100 times—two orders of magnitude greater—than the data that is available on the traditional network. Of course, there are challenges to P2P—robustness, legal challenges, long delays. But we had those at the beginning of the Internet as well.

This is a massive blind spot. In scenario terms, it's important to consider a video Web emerging within a decade—in other words, a Web that serves video content to televisions, not computers. It's on the Internet but it's not the World Wide Web and it serves video content in a very different way.

Sandeep Casi

The next generation Internet will deliver 1 gigabit throughput

Some technologies related to this field are just on the horizon right now. There is something called Internet2, which is a gigabit Internet, point to point. All the universities in the United States already have it; it's a matter of time before the business community can pay for it. To me, the people who would want to get onto this backbone would be television and archive people. When KQED makes a documentary, they need to get footage, and they could get a direct connection to an archiver through Internet2. It doesn't cost too much; it depends on how close you are to a university. It's a gigabit per second throughput, and it's point to point, too. So if you have a desktop here and I have a desktop back in my office and we both were on Internet 2, it's 1 gigabit between you and me. It's not a shared line like T1s. It's a switched network like a phone but using digital packets. So you could transfer live video. MPEG-2, which is what all the broadcasters use today on the Internet, streams data at only 6 megabits per second.

The coming promise of the MPEG-4 video standard for televisions to cellphones

All current video and TV people deliver content on the Internet through MPEG-2, which is the standard today. But there is something called MPEG-4, and it is far superior. The compression is much smaller, and the quality is much better. MPEG-4 adds interactivity, so anything with interactive TV is going to be in MPEG-4. There are eight or nine companies that hold patents for MPEG-4, including Microsoft, IBM, and Apple. But they still have not figured out how to deal with the licensing, so it is still extremely expensive. The reason they are not getting it together is that Microsoft does not want this format out there. It wants Windows Media format. Apple QuickTime supports MPEG-4; it has adopted it as the standard going forward. That's where Steve Jobs has staked his bet. Also, MPEG-2 does not scale to different size devices, while MPEG-4 is ubiquitous. You can use it in televisions all the way down to cellphones. All the cellphones in Japan are MPEG-4. We now can do videoconferencing on cellphones in Japan.

The next generation of new media will be on mobile phones

I think the next generation of new media is going to phones. MPEG-4 makes this easy. It's not like you have to invent a new compression format; it's already there and it runs on these devices. With PCs, the hardware is always ahead of the software. With small devices, it's the other way around: the software is ahead of the hardware. We have to ramp up the hardware—better displays, more memory,

better processing power—as well as backend services. Right now, telecom operators don't have the bandwidth on the backend. The uploads of video from cellphones are weak not because of the connection, but because of the backend of the telecom companies. With video they have to catch up. The video downloads are fine.

Only now do people believe the video Internet is possible

We're at the stage where some people are beginning to believe that a video Internet is possible. If you had spoken to them four years ago when the bubble burst, they would not have believed it. The people who survived that bubble crash are the people who are trying to reinvent themselves and figure out how this could happen. What came out of the Web era was Amazon and eBay. I think we are waiting for companies in the video arena to break out and create a compelling business case. We already know there is a lot of video out there. It's only a matter of time until someone comes along and takes advantage of this.

The video bottleneck on the Internet that MPEG-4 could solve

It all comes down to bandwidth. With audio, that's solved. But with transferring video it's still a problem. It's not that we don't have the technology to mix the video on our PC. But after you mix your video, how do you get it across to others? That's the bottleneck at this time. MPEG-4 would solve it, if it were accessible to the common person for a reasonable price.

John Battelle

All the 1990s hype about video over the Internet is becoming real

All this stuff that we have been talking about forever about video over the Internet, it was all kind of hand-waving: "this is possible because the technology will make it possible." But it's now actually happening. It's real. Not only because the technology makes it possible, but because the markets are moving there. The most important piece of the equation is the ad buyers, and the ad buyers are starting to wake up to it.

The time sink of watching video makes video blogs difficult

Not only are video blogs slow, but they are shit. You really have to love video. It takes a lot of commitment to get to the point of knowing whether any video is worth watching. It takes minutes. With text, it takes seconds, or microseconds. The headline, then boom: it's for me or not for me.

Video is hard to search for

The guys at Google decided not to do video. They thought, I don't know what's good and what's not good. With text, I can analyze link structures to determine if the Web has determined whether this is a good site or not so I can rank it accordingly. Right now, there is no ecology that's readable around video. There probably will be. But video is a kind of investment of attention that people don't give easily enough.

Brad deGraf

The spread of TiVo and the creation of cheap virtual channels

TiVo changes everything. This is where it really gets interesting. I like the idea of virtual channels, like an Asian virtual channel. So you subscribe to the Asian virtual channel, and your TiVo is out there looking for any middle-of-the-night spectrum that this Asian virtual channel bought to air something. You wake up in the morning and you have that program on your hard drive and can watch it at your leisure. For diaspora communities, this development is huge. If you were a Pakistani immigrant, what do you have to watch today? There is so much spectrum on all these channels—Lifetime, Oxygen.

These are off the air from 3am to 6am, and a lot are off at 1am. You can buy a half hour on Discovery after hours for \$5,000.

Howard Rheingold

Ubiquitous broadband

Whatever else happens, there is no doubt that broadband will be ubiquitous. So that is an assumption. Keep in mind the big picture that the Internet is just beginning. The growth of the Internet is barely 10 years old. Wireless is about two years old. Broadband is just starting to take off. So this is very early.

Media

The Fate of Motion Media: Today's Television and Film

There are two seemingly paradoxical shifts occurring in the general media world right now. One is that commercial media is consolidating ownership, particularly when viewed in any one particular industry, such as broadcast television or cable. But taken as a whole, media is burgeoning and opportunities for people to get their work viewed, if only through the Internet, are increasing. Motion media is beginning to experience a bottom-up, participatory trend. How that plays out in the coming decade is one of many critical issues discussed below.

Tim O'Reilly

Piracy is a form of progressive taxation

If you look at media that is farther down the curve than video (though it's even true with video), there is far more product than people who want to consume it. There is a lot of hand-wringing in the music and the movie space right now about piracy, but a far more fundamental problem for anyone producing content is finding someone who wants to see it. There are hundreds of thousands of books published each year, yet only a few thousand really have significant sales. A lot of people want to produce movies; the competition to get seen is pretty significant. The democratization of the tools of filmmaking and media creation is going to accelerate that problem. Piracy of digital property is really a nonstarter. At best it's a form of progressive taxation. If you are really well known you are going to lose some value to piracy, but the fact is it's another vector by which things will get known. There are more opportunities for the great number of content creators than there are dangers for the very small numbers of very successful ones.

Technology helps blur the distinction between passionate amateurs and professionals

If you look at the Web as the most recent example of a media marketplace that was driven by technological change, there were a lot of people who started out doing things just for the love of it and then realized that they could, in fact, make a living at it. You don't necessarily have a clear differentiation between those making a living at it and not.

The music and movie industries will move to the Internet

Ultimately, I think the recording industry and movie industry will get religion. Remember, the movie industry tried to stop videotape. But I'm not that worried about it. If commercially produced content gets locked up, there will be a lot more room for non-commercial content. That non-commercial content will eventually become commercial. When the big media companies didn't get the Web and tried to make too much money too fast because they were trying to preserve their old margins and their old businesses, new players emerged. So who owns the Web today? Upstarts like Yahoo! and Google. All companies who try to hold back the tide actually depress their own possibilities for the future while somebody else figures out the poll position.

The benefits of being a first mover on the Net

Anytime there is a new media and new channels, it's a time of opportunity. There's a rare opportunity in the early stages of a market when there is not that much product, and that is to be first. There's a wonderful book called *The 22 Immutable Laws of Marketing*, by Al Ries and Jack Trout. The first law

is: “It’s better to be first than it is to be better.” The second law is: “If you can’t be first in a category, then set up a category that you can be first in.” Who was the first person to fly solo over the Atlantic? Everyone knows that. Do you know the second? You have no idea. Do you know the third? I bet you do. The first woman, Amelia Earhart.

We’re going to have a race in this area on the Net. There is a really great opportunity in the early stages of a market—the first three or four years, when it’s still a phenomenon—to do these things. Do you think the first full-length documentary available for free on the Net for downloading is not going to get some attention? There’s going to be a lot of opportunity for visibility just because you are first in the new medium. And even after that there are going to be a lot of opportunities, just as there are in the rise of any distribution channel.

J.C. Herz

Independent media can’t ignore computer games

In the independent media context, you have to look at games. Games have one of the most fertile producer/consumer ecologies of any media. When a game comes out, there’s not just the game but an editing tool that allows people to create new scenarios, new maps. You can modify the game itself, even overhaul the game. Really hip products have been made because people have modified the engine. This is done by fans, who may be in teams distributed across different countries. The game companies don’t view this as a threat. It actually builds their business if they make a game and let other people make new content for it. It extends the life of the product.

The exploding new scene of independent media versus the imploding old one

There’s more independent media now than there ever has been. It’s exploding. Look at music, look at independent film. The cost of making a film has come down probably two orders of magnitude over the last five years. People are making films on their iBooks, cameras are cheap, storage is cheap. Look at what happened with the MoveOn.org contest, “Bush in 30 Seconds.” Thousands of people putting together 30-second commercials. There’s a very big disconnect between people who are doing independent media projects in the “just do it” frame of mind and people who are in their 40s watching foundation or government funding dry up. For someone who’s looking for foundation or government financing, it looks like the sky is falling. But I think you have to look at the sum of everything that is going on and ask, Well, if all this other stuff is going on, and it’s so vibrant, then why do we find it so difficult? And that should lead to a kind of self examination. Are we really going forward, or do we just want what we are already doing to go forward?

Media outlets are multiplying, not consolidating

I don’t buy the arguments that five major media companies own everything. I think that’s a specious argument if you want to get your work out there. There used to be just three television networks, period. Now there are more than you can count. They are not owned by a zillion companies, but they aren’t owned by three companies either. And if you want to cut a 20-minute film and put it on the Internet, there’s no reason why you could not do that.

The new arbiter of culturally relevant independent media

Who are the people who anoint the culturally relevant independent media producer? Traditionally, that was certain independent record labels, and really incredibly hardworking companies who knocked themselves out to distribute independent films at art house theaters. But now, is it Google?

Clay Shirky

Truly alternative media means a change in the way media is controlled

We're living in a golden age of alternative media, but most of the people talking about alternative media don't see it because the left has always confused media with force. The idea is that when you are a media outlet, you have the ability to push your agenda outward onto other people—that media is push-based and that it is designed to disseminate ideology from the center to the edge. It's an idea with a long and noble prominence. It appeared in the *Communist Manifesto*, and Marx and Engels specifically called for centralization and control of communications in the hands of the state. For a long time, certainly throughout the twentieth century, that particular lens on media was really quite good and valuable because most of the media we had was center to edge only. It had very, very high cost of entry and very high economies of scale. And so we tended to get large and national media.

I don't think that anybody who says they want alternative media is really serious about it. Alternative media means not just a passing of control from one political faction to another, but a change in the way media is controlled. What people who want alternative media really want is alternative media moguls.

Consolidation, or the explosive profusion of possibility?

The left is desperate to portray media as a game of centralized manipulation and control—so desperate that although they are living in an age when observably the freak-out in the media landscape is a explosive profusion of possibility, they continue drawing these little charts and graphs about media consolidation. And, of course, the charts and graphs get bigger every year, which kind of undermines the point. In fact, the media isn't contracting; it's expanding. There used to be three television networks and now there are 500. There's no one in this country who is exposed to fewer media outlets than they used to be.

You can't fool me. I lived through the '70s. There was no Spanish language television whatsoever. There was no Vietnamese language television. There's been no contraction. The consolidation that's going on is a desperate attempt to shore up competition from novel abundance, principally from cable and the Internet. The only place where there's actual contraction is when you pick particular slices of media and consider them in isolation. So the radio spectrum is collapsing, for example, or newspapers are collapsing. Well, that's because there is owned scarcity in those environments. But when you look at media as a whole, it's a freak-out.

I mean the category of weblogs alone, just to take this microcosm, is this incredibly profound shift to non-scarce, edge-oriented amateur production. Which, on some level, if you're talking about populism, should be exactly what you want. And it's not just the Internet. It's low-power radio. It's public access cable. It's really anything where there is no more scarcity and there are lowered barriers to amateur production.

The scary proposition: True structural independence is independence from scarcity

The real deep independence, structural independence, is independence from scarcity. It's not about alternate sources of funding to buy your way into a scarce system. Real independence is: I don't have to say "Boo!" to anybody before starting to air my views. And we have all kinds of models open—low-power radio, IP-based things like weblogs. We're starting to see the growth of viral SMS media, as with the defeat of Aznar in Spain or with the defeat of Estrada in the Philippines. But to advocate for those characteristics is to opt out of a system where you hope to get additional leverage by being one of the scarce few.

I think one of the reasons "independent" media outlets obsess about fundraising is that they know that if they concentrate instead on independence from scarcity—lowering costs and lowering barriers to entry—they're essentially creating a competitive rather than a locked-in world. If you scratch away the very thin layer of populist rhetoric, you could take a lot of what the independent media channels say

and you could hear it coming out of Barry Diller's mouth. They both want a larger piece of a finite pie. Nobody who's bought into the current system, where people are trying to find an alternate way of getting at the existing scarcity, is really committed to abundance, even though that's much more in keeping with the democratic ideals of the U.S.

Rather than saying, "I deserve to get my hands on the megaphone from time to time and then I'm going to speak on behalf of the people," distribute the megaphone! Everyone in the current landscape is deep-down committed to scarcity. If you put questions to them that suggest that the way to get out of funding cuts is to lower costs and increase broad participation rather than find alternate sources of funding, the blood will drain from their faces as they contemplate a world in which they haven't got the kind of leverage they really want.

Rob Glaser

The Internet amplifies ideas, it doesn't enable all voices

The notion that the Internet is a fundamentally democratizing force in society, one that allows voices that are ignored to get out there, does not have the impact that people thought. If you look at the Internet and say, "Hey, we've knocked down the barriers to distribution, therefore all is altered, and, deus ex machine, voices will emerge." That doesn't happen. But when there is a legitimate meme that really resonates with people, the Internet does have a very powerful way to amplify and propagate it, and create spontaneous collective organization around it. So it's kind of a tale of two cities. As often happens with these technologies, it doesn't work in the obvious way you think it works, but it can work in other ways, more powerfully.

Beyond movie trailers: the 10 minute film teaser on the Internet

Take a movie like *The Fog of War*. I think the right way to market a movie like that would not be with a conventional trailer. A trailer that is a minute or two long can only tease you to go see a movie in a theater. If you have a hour-and-a-half documentary, what you really want to do is make a five or 10 minute cut that tells one chapter of the story or tells the synopsis, then make it available for free on the Internet. That would probably get more people to see the documentary; it would have many cascading propagating effects.

What you are doing is creating something with social currency instead of something that's a promotional tool only. You say, "Here's the deal: anybody can watch this and anybody can forward this to their friends. And we'll make it easy for you; we'll host it. All you have to do is point to the link or burn it on a DVD. And if you want the whole enchilada, we will have ways for you to get the whole thing." You want to generate much more sampling and casual experiences that people can share, and create structures so communities can develop around content.

The implications of wireless IP flowing everywhere

I think the most dramatic implication of IP flowing everywhere will be two things. First, when there are live events or activities, it will give the sense that you are there. We're already seeing it with reality shows and the proverbial OJ chase scene. I think there will be many more things like that. If someone with a camcorder is out there when there's a protest in the community, and the local TV news does not deem it newsworthy but it's visually compelling, then that will clearly have an outlet to get out and get propagated. If something dramatic is going on with a visual element to it, it will start getting out there not necessarily in proportion to its social relevance, but in proportion to its audio/visual appeal. Second, if people can figure out how to wrap community and community context around material, there will be the ability to drive those communities and interactive services. That's the video alternative to the Dean campaign.

The new challenge of the filmmaker: online organizing to reach audiences

I think independent work will get out there, but the need to do community organizing around the content will be important. So, figuring out what the communities of interest are that care about your great documentary of famine in Africa. You have to come up with a way to find the people who care about that and become social missionaries to get the word out that your documentary has created the definitive experience. Connecting with meetup.com services, or websites that are communities of interest, will be an important element of that. The Web will let people do grassroots organizing around this in a way that was not possible or economical before. The challenge to the filmmaker won't just be to get the money to get the film made: it will be tapping into those communities. There will be, in theory, many more paths to get that material out, but it will heavily rely on organizing skills to get through the noise of this already very cacophonous society that will only get more cacophonous as the range of media choices grows.

The enduring value of knowing how to tell compelling stories in motion media

Most people can use a digital camera to capture a still of the situation. That does not make them Diane Arbus, but they can create a snapshot that will resonate with their friends who were at the wedding. But most people can't make a movie, or a song, or an album that has resonance, because they don't have the artistic skill required to make a narrative that's compelling or a song that's compelling. So the notion that everybody will make compelling documentaries is no more true than the notion that everybody was going to make compelling music and post it on MP3.com and build a base around it. But I do think that people who know how to tell a compelling story, and do have a story to tell, be it fiction or nonfiction, will have all kinds of ways to generate a community around their work with the Internet.

John Battelle

The economics of video-streaming don't make sense

One of the biggest problems with video on the Web has been the widespread presumption that it is a premium model—that the only way video will work on the Web is if you pay for it through the consumer. Because the blockage is bandwidth. If someone Slashdotted your little independent film site and 40,000 people hit your 15-minute trailer, you'd get a bill from your ISP for half a million bucks. That's the big problem. The economics of streaming don't make sense, as we understand it, because they are not the economics of text. I think that broad model is going to attenuate over time, as what was once scarce becomes much more available and priced down. We're already seeing bandwidth getting priced down, and that will continue. But what you need is a catalyst to drive a different economic model into the market.

Microsoft leading the way toward a free model for streaming video

Microsoft is going big into the market for streaming video on a free model supported by television advertising, which on first blush is counterintuitive. Everyone says television ads on the Web are a stupid idea, but they're not. It's not a stupid idea. In fact, it's a pretty good idea. You don't want a 30-second spot, but a 15-second spot? A 5-second spot? A link to a 3-minute infomercial on a new car? All sorts of new forms of television advertising can be created once you become presumptive. Number one, you know who your customer is. Number two, you know the context of why a customer is making a request for the advertising. And number three, you can tie it into a paid search engine. All the technology is there now. The paid text search technology shows how paid video search would work.

The cut, paste, link culture of text on the Internet needs to migrate to video

I think the commentary around video that is in the public domain is going to be extremely rich. But there's a major problem with this, which is that all the content guys won't allow their video to become

digital objects. The whole psychotic sue-the-bastard approach of the content industry is insanely stupid. When Jon Stewart does a great riff on Dick Cheney for 30 seconds, why can't I mark it, cut it, paste it, and send it to you? Because it's illegal! It's illegal to circumvent the copyright protection of the TiVo box to do that. And because of that you haven't seen a video culture that has sprung up like the text culture took to the Internet. That's all we do all day: cut, paste, and send links to each other. What builds the Internet is that cultural grammar and interchange and discussion and commentary and critique. I think it's inevitable that this will happen in video, but we aren't there yet.

Howard Rheingold

The huge opportunity of online distribution of media is threatened by enclosure

Maybe I shouldn't tell them the even worse news that their biggest opportunity, which is online distribution of digital media, is threatened by enclosure: There's digital rights management, broadcast flag, trusted computing, extension of copyright, the political regulation of spectrum as a scarce resource based on the technologies of the 1920s, not because that is the best way to use the spectrum, but because the incumbent license holders wield political influence. Those are all part of turning us into passive consumers whose only choice is which of 500 channels to tune into, not active users, like the people who shaped the PC and Internet revolutions and the Web. The ship is sinking and you need to do something about that. They need to get actively involved in this battle and it depends almost 100 percent on who is elected president.

Computers solve the three key costs in media: production, distribution, and marketing

If you are making scenarios, there are two very different worlds, one of abundance of the means of production and distribution, and one in which the equipment is controlled and the channels are controlled, and not everyone has access to many-to-many multimedia distribution. Assume the abundance scenario: Why would you even need the present structure of the recording industry, the motion picture industry? There are three obstacles in media involving costs: the cost of production, the cost distribution, and advertising. Napster solves the distribution. Digital video and audio tools if not solve then dramatically lower the cost of high-quality production. And for advertising, collaborative filtering works fine with music and would with video: "People who like this and that would like this third thing that they didn't know about." So collaborative filtering, peer-to-peer digital distribution, and good studio-quality production tools all work better than the current structure. The only thing missing is permission to use the Internet.

Independent media organizations are venture capitalists

If I were a PBS or NPR in the future, I would be like a venture capitalist. People don't need your studio, or your channel. But if you could give them something to live on, and encouragement, and access to people who could give them advice, that would be helpful.

James Fallows

The erosion of differences between the news biz and other business over 25 years

To me, the big change in the last 25 years has been the erosion of the differences between the news business and any other normal business. This has come from a confluence of forces—partly regulatory changes, partly allowing conglomeration, partly the diversity of outlets. The result is both better and worse for independent media. It's better in that there actually are a wider range of outlets for independent material than there used to be—blogs, websites, digital cable channels, streamed video, etc.; 25 years ago, if you could not get it on the big networks or PBS you essentially had zero chance for nationwide distribution. The worse part is that the removal of the encouragement, protection, and

subsidies for mainstream news coverage has made that more massified. When you have products delivered to a market as large and variegated as the American market, the high end is very high, the range is quite extensive, the low end is extremely low, and the mass is pretty junky. That is the irreversible trend of the news media. This means that, in a way, independent producers have a wider range of potential markets now, and independent-minded consumers can more easily get what they want. But the force they are working against in the mainstream is more vulgar and more infotainment.

Market-driven news will lead to more European-style partisan media

I think an outcome of this market-driven news is going to be a more openly and honestly partisan media than was the case 20 years ago. As part of the regulation and control of the media, there was an attempt at least to have the pose of objectivity. The success of Fox news, in a market-driven way, has shown that a more partisan approach is where we are going. It will be more of a European model. This has the possible drawback that it's one more sign of a more polarized populace: people even have different sources of news. But it may be that they already have different sources of news anyway.

Murdoch's insight: liberal entertainment, conservative news

Murdoch is much more a businessman than a politician. What he has seen as a businessman is that in entertainment, liberalism sells, and in news, right-wing-ism sells. And so his entertainment properties are more left-wing than right-wing, and his news properties are the reverse. Think of *The Simpsons*, a show he's particularly proud of. The nuclear industry views *The Simpsons* as their worst enemy; Homer Simpson is the symbol of why you don't want to build nuclear plants. And it's always making fun of religion. The Fox Network is the first one that religious conservatives would close down if they could. Murdoch's entertainment properties are at least as much a boon for the left as his news operations are for the right. The only thing in common between them is that they both are profitable.

With stratification of American life, a growing audience for high-end independent news

In keeping with the general stratification of everything in American life, I think the audience for this kind of critical, independent output will grow in absolute terms even as it remains small in relative terms in the U.S. population. If the shift in the U.S. population is to an income distribution that is more polarized, an education distribution that is more polarized, and politics that are more polarized—and I think all these things are true—then you have a growing audience for the kind of news we are talking about: sophisticated, well-educated, critical of the powers that be.

Walter Parkes

The difficult path for documentaries compared to the money of Hollywood

I started in the movie business by making an independent film, a documentary called *The California Reich*. We raised money, it was sold to PBS, and we took it to every festival. It struck me afterward that it was harder to get a serious documentary financed than it was to go and set up a development deal as a no-name writer in Hollywood. In other words, the voracious appetite of Hollywood would rather take a chance on someone with a good idea and throw \$50,000 or \$75,000 their way. That was easier than getting \$50,000 or \$75,000 from some other funding group to make your next documentary.

The serious documentary world is being usurped by quick versions on broadcast

There's normally very little linkage between independent and commercial media. The people making independent films are feeling particularly beleaguered because not only is the funding not available, but a lot of what used to be the world of documentary is being covered in a less profound way by network television. When you have a couple of *60 Minutes* and a couple of *Primetimes*.... Serious American documentary is being threatened by the fact that a version of the documentary is another

way to provide cheap programming for burgeoning cable systems and for a television world that is voracious in its appetite.

The migration of talent from independent to mainstream film

Where the crossover happens in independent film is connected to the voraciousness of Hollywood's appetite. The last 10 to 15 years, in some ways, has been one of the healthiest times in Hollywood; there has been a more steady influx of talent and films from the independent world into the mainstream Hollywood world than in any period since the early 1970s. I think that has to do with the existence of Sundance and Miramax, but it also has to do with the economics of the feature film business. The film business right now is not self-sustaining. The costs of making and marketing films and the participation that one needs from top-end stars makes it almost impossible to be profitable in the film business alone. Oddly enough, that makes us look outside our own backyard for talent. Sundance and Miramax became a conduit for independent film to be represented to us, for us to be exposed to it. Year after year, new filmmakers make fantastic films, starting back with Quentin Tarantino on through Robert Rodriguez. There is just terrific talent that migrates from independent film into mainstream film. This happens for two reasons: they have the talent, and you are not inheriting a director who is \$5 million to \$10 million against 5-10 percent of the gross.

The movie business needs to go either for huge epics or lower-cost films

The average cost of a Hollywood movie has gotten up to about \$55 million, plus maybe \$25 million in marketing costs. That's a humungous investment just for your average picture. From the studio point of view, that means you want to stay out of the middle: the ordinary idea, with ordinary talent, that has been inflated because of the economics of the film business. What one is interested in are either enormous ideas, like *Harry Potter*, or the low end, in which your investment is not so great but if the movie hits, it's actually profitable. That was the case with *American Beauty* and *The Ring*.

The burgeoning costs of marketing movies

Nowadays, if I put out 30-second spots to get your attention for my movie, you have to see that message more times for it to make an impression. Why? Because there are a million other movies and not just network television but cable and video games all vying for the attention of the consumer. And there are more movies. On virtually any given weekend, there are from two to seven releases that you are competing against. You have to pump much more money into the marketing of your movies just to be heard above the noise. About three years ago, we did an assessment at DreamWorks. If I remember correctly, we saw that the average marketing cost per film was \$10 million more than what had been allowed for in the business plan.

Marketing niche films

With *The Ring*, we employed a lot of interesting marketing techniques that were more likely to go after the sorts of people who would see that movie. We bought 30-second spots between 1am and 5am where we would put a cut-down version of *The Ring* video with no IDs. You would just be watching TV and see this imagery. No IDs, just "The Ring." We figured the people watching strange cable channels late at night would be the tipping point opinion leaders for this kind of movie. We also handed out about 25,000 videotapes of the movie itself and left them at college bookstores, not marked, months before the movie opened. You want in some way to allow the audience to sample your product. Give them a positive but somewhat accurate representation of what the movie is so they can choose to go to it.

The importance of word of mouth in marketing movies

We screened *The Ring* 900 times because word of mouth is so important right now. There is a sense in the audience of being ripped off by advertising because there are so many messages thrown their way, so many quotations from nonexistent critics. It's all such a complete hustle, as perceived by much of the audience, that nothing takes the place of word of mouth, of someone you know saying, "I saw this

movie and it was fantastic.” Mobile and digital technology makes that word of mouth happen more quickly than ever before.

Daniel Erasmus

Television ambience and spread of wireless computing

If you look at how people watch television, there is a steady and unabated move toward television ambience. There’s been a long-held position, especially from the big media guys, that you would never have television and computers in the same room—that lean-forward and lean-back media are fundamentally opposed. What we’re increasingly seeing is people who have television as an ambient presence alongside their computer. I notice this from my own viewing behavior. I never watch television without having the computer open. And it’s not just me; people with broadband and WiFi access typically do it. They have a level of interactivity with the computer and the TV serves as an ambient presence; with a movie or a special program, the concentration shifts to the TV.

As people put more and more televised content on the Web, they are doing it all wrong. They are offering these very short little sections that you have to interactively manage. But what television is becoming in relation to the computer is an ambience. And that ambience is much more like radio than it is like old television. Back in the days of McLuhan, television was in front, a social thing, and radio was behind. Now computing is in front, and television is behind. Television becomes the room, or televised content via the Web becomes the room, and the computing and interactivity stays in front.

The digital video recorder and the future of more than 700 channels

The television system that we know today will be unrecognizable by the end of this. At the moment, television is able to engage people some of the time; people like a little here and there. So what happens is the mechanism of adding another channel and another channel and another channel to keep attracting people. Direct TV offers 700 channels. At what point does this system crash? At what point does your remote control become an impossible device to manage 700 channels? The technology in the wings is digital video recorders, which point to exactly that frustration. The churn in this paid television market is something like 10 percent. The churn goes down to zero the moment they give people a digital video recorder.

Time-shifted television gives independents a real shot at primetime

If you look at people with TiVo devices, something like 70 percent of the television they watch is time-shifted. It’s a massive change in viewing habits. So what is primetime? What is *not* primetime? That has significant implications for independent media. For a long time, they have argued that what they produce is primetime content. But because of the powerful interests in the distribution chain, they end up in less than exciting positions in the scheduling—therefore, nobody watches them. What this offers them is the possibility of a primetime audience based upon the quality and compellingness of what they create. So it’s very good news for them, but it ups the game significantly. It creates a certain transparent market.

The creation of virtual channels tailored to your tastes

For the moment, media is organized in terms of channels. The DVRs, or the PVRs, depending on what you call them, do some recording based on personal preferences that you’ve set and some assumptions on what you’ve set. What I see is a certain space emerge where part of the PVR’s functionality is to tag interesting recordings. So you could have virtual channels emerge alongside these 700 channels, and they’re really the PVR trying to offer you content that may be of interest. You could skip it, and with simple neural networks it could learn what you are interested in and what you aren’t. And so you have a viewing behavior that isn’t very different at all from today’s viewing behavior, because people don’t

have to remember what to record. It becomes an appliance where you have virtual channels created there on the spot.

The challenge to advertising won't kill it this time either

These PVRs certainly present huge challenges to advertising as we know it. People have heralded the death of advertising I don't know how many times in the last 20 years, and it hasn't happened. Advertising is filled with the smartest, most creative, most innovative people money can buy. The advertisers will figure it out. But advertising will change massively.

Independents have everything to gain from innovative distribution over the Internet

Something like 3 to 5 percent of the CD cost ends up with the artists. It is a massively inefficient distribution system. Why should any consumer pay for that? What would happen if you were shipping beans from point A to point B, and 95 or 98 percent of the cost of the beans at point B went to shipping them, when another channel exists that could ship them for free. The analogy is as simple as that. The artists' rights issue is a smokescreen.

For the independent media, the Internet opens massively different distribution channels. More and more, the possibility for independent media to release their material in more intelligent ways is phenomenal. The entrenched commercial guys are grappling with the problems of free content, etc. They have everything to lose from innovative distribution models. But the independent guys have everything to gain from innovative distribution models. The smartest thing they can do is experiment because they have different content and they can crack this puzzle. The big guys are not going to risk this. They are going to be late.

John Anner

The analogy to the independent press breaking through on corporate distribution

In 1997, I told all these publishers of progressive magazines that they had to do something about distribution. Independent bookstores have been declining significantly in absolute numbers, but the number of bookstores with actual magazine racks is significantly smaller than that. Last year there were 3,200 independent bookstores left in the country, and only 1,450 had magazine racks. So the ecosystem in which these magazines thrived was being chopped down in a similar fashion to the Brazilian rain forest.

We have got to figure out how to crack the top echelons of the bookstore chains like Borders and Barnes & Noble. If we can't get in there, we're dead, even though these chains only distribute about 20 percent of magazines—60 percent of magazines sold in America are sold in supermarkets. If we can't get in the more elite bookstore chains, we are going to sail off a very narrow ledge. We'll have 1 percent of the total market divided among 400 progressive periodicals.

My insight was, if I could get the retailer to tell the distributor to carry our magazines, then the distributor thinks: "Ok, as long as this meets our bottom line." So for a year and a half I worked on Barnes & Noble, and finally got through to a vice president. Not only did they work with us, but over time they treated the Independent Press Association (IPA) as a big national publisher. And they gave us a better deal, exempting us from certain fees.

I have not yet found a single corporation that did not have people with an ideology close enough that you could find common ground to get them to go out of their way to help you. Barnes & Noble donated almost \$350,000 for the promotion of the IPA every year. They gave us free racks in all their superstores, and they let us pick the magazines that went in. All we had to do was meet all their very rigid delivery deadlines. Because we had built the capacity to do that, we could guarantee them that

the magazine would get there on time and in the specified quantities, and at the exact locations, and so on. And after that, they were fine.

The key is not producing your work but distributing it

The cost of production has dropped phenomenally; it's the cost of distribution that has risen exponentially. I cannot tell you how many times, at the IPA, I would get this phone call: "I just published this great magazine and I've got 15,000 copies in my living room. Now what do I do?" You can easily scrape together \$5,000 dollars and produce a magazine with your friends, but then you're stuck. What do you do with this thing?

One of the few differences between nonprofits and for-profits is a tolerance for risk

I don't see any significant distinction between a nonprofit and a for-profit, especially in this media category. They both deserve to be treated as businesses. The distinction is more a matter of organizational culture and ideology than functional aspects of a business. Most nonprofit managers are so conservative it isn't even funny. They are so risk averse. They have such a hard time correctly evaluating their own assets and their own market position that it's very hard to work with them. You show them a new market opportunity, and they're like: "Can't do that, that's scary." The for-profits are much more risk tolerant.

Nonprofits are better credit risks than businesses because they are in for the long haul

Nonprofits are infinitely better credit risks than for-profits, because they are used to doing whatever it takes to survive. They are in it for the long haul, and they will figure out a way to pay you back. A business figures, "Well, it's not working, we're outta here."

Henry Jenkins

Great potential, but where's the explosion?

Three years ago, I was gung ho on DV and digital distribution on the Web. But it did not have the impact on filmmaking that many people expected. There is some interesting work, but very little has broken out. After *Blair Witch Project*, people thought that was the future, but there's been more resistance than expected. More people are making independent films than ever before, and there's more in distribution than ever before. But the expectations of what happens when you turn lots of people loose with cameras hasn't happened.

There's all this potential. So why aren't we seeing an explosion of alternative media? The big success story coming out of digital video is *South Park*. That's not what one would have expected four years ago.

We did a whole conference on digital cinema five years ago. We really believed that was going to be an important space. But it's pretty static right now. Many of the initial people who tried to enter that space, dotcoms generally, crashed and burned. Only a few of those companies are left. That doesn't mean it's the wrong direction. It means that what people thought would happen didn't happen instantly. But that was true across the board. People were making wild claims about what was going to happen on the Internet and then not taking the time to build it, as though there was an aura of inevitability around digital media. It takes time for the rest of the country to catch up to the technology of Silicon Valley and MIT. On good days I look at the promise, and on bad days I look at the failed delivery so far. I'm not sure if I'm an optimist or a pessimist. But I'm seeing a problem and an opportunity at the same time.

Tapping into weblogs for publicity

I think blogging is really key. It's kind of a grassroots aggregate power to make things visible. No one blog is going to make that much of a difference. It's the accumulated mass of blogs that can move

traffic in decisive ways. So tap the blogging communities. Understanding how to use blogging to publicize your work is key at the present time.

The great paradox: tighter consolidation of media and lower barriers to entry

We've got to keep in mind two realities. One is the reality where corporate control of media and consolidation of media is tighter than it's ever been in our history. The other is that the barriers of entry into the marketplace are lower than they have ever been in our history. Both of those are true, yet almost no one is talking about the relationship between those two things.

Brad deGraf

The huge benefits of digital distribution and recommendation systems on the Web

One of the major beneficial effects of what we are going through right now is that reaching audiences is getting cheaper and easier, and it's going to be dramatically easier very soon. Music is a great new model. If you look at the cost of a CD, half of it is distribution—getting it to the stores and the store's take of it. The rest of it is marketing. So, really, one quarter of it is about making the music. If you realize that the distribution part is obsolete, and that everything should be digital over the Web anyway, there goes 50 percent of the cost. What better way to connect me with the music that I like than having my friends, and their friends, and people I don't even know but who have tastes like mine, recommending to me. I'd much rather have that and have a much higher likelihood of finding good stuff than listen to advertising. Recommendation systems and the collective intelligence that the Web enables make it so much easier to hone in on the things that are relevant to you.

The always-on aspect of digital film distribution versus the one shot deal

The Internet Archive will host anyone's digital film for free. By posting it there, your audience can get it anytime they want it—as opposed to someone happening to be watching KQED the one time they show your documentary. If you are a documentary filmmaker you spend your life trying to get your documentary shown on the air. The show goes once and that's it. It's incredible. Having this always-on resource is going to change everything.

The holy grail of auditable advertising through TiVo and the Internet

The unsolved question really is the financial ecosystem. I think there are ways to reinvent advertising. Advertising is a bad model, and it isn't auditable. With television or magazines or billboards, it's all about shotgun delivery, putting out the most glaring thing that people can't avoid and will subconsciously affect their purchases later on. But now that you have TiVo and the Internet—those are auditable. You know when people are watching a show on TiVo. It's possible to tailor the advertising to the person too. Tuning the message to the viewer is the holy grail.

Orville Schell

The new Al Gore commercial cable channel and bottom-up digital video debates

I've been working with this new network that Al Gore and Joel Hyatt are setting up. They just purchased their cable channel, and they have new ideas for making television and the Internet part of one package. One is a debate show. You'd get people to send video of themselves over the Internet talking about why they should be in a debate on a given topic. Then people online vote on who would be the best debaters. Then you have a television debate. You start off with six debates, and you would vote for the winners online. Then the winners would go the next round on television. So you'd have this very interactive thing happening. It's definitely reality TV, except it's serious topics and ordinary people.

The PBS version of a new digital channel of 24/7 documentaries and news

I'm involved in this commission that's been set up with PBS to discuss founding a digital news channel. With the compression of the spectrum and everybody acquiring these digital channels, suddenly there's going to be a lot of room on the dial. So PBS, which doesn't have a proper newsgathering organization, doesn't have any bureaus, and is not global, is talking about setting up a digital channel that would be 24/7 documentaries and news. This is exactly what Hyatt and Al Gore want to do, but theirs is commercial.

Politics

The Changing Political, Social, and Cultural Landscape

Many in the independent media community worry about the apparent consolidation of neo-conservative, or social conservative, political power, and the effect that might have on public media funding and free expression. However, there are several possible shifts in the political landscape that might counter that development. One is that a period of innovation may be coming to the political realm, partly driven by new technology tools. This may open up some unexpected opportunities, particularly to those sectors of independent media that are more politically inclined.

Wes Boyd

“Bush in 30 Seconds”

Our premise with the “Bush in 30 Seconds” contest was that we don’t know everything; we’re not the elite who can tell everybody what’s what. It’s more like we’re connecting this vast talent and resourcefulness in America at large. It’s our job to figure out how to connect it up and draw it out.

In November, we announced the contest to come up with a 30-second television spot about President Bush. We thought we’d get a couple hundred entries. But we didn’t know what would come together. We had over 1,000 entries by mid-December. There was very little filter. Entries were submitted and then there was a two-week voting period. We wanted everybody to have a good experience when they came to the process. There’s always great stuff and there’s crap, so we made sure the best stuff rose to the top along with random pieces.

Early on we were getting something like a million views a day, and it was going up. There was this panic because of the costs. But then we stepped back for a second and said, “You know how much this would cost if we were paying the price per impression for a TV ad? It would be 100 times as much.” In the end, it cost something like \$70,000 for the bandwidth for the ads. On the Internet it costs about \$2 a gigabyte to deliver bandwidth. An average cost per impression would be 10 cents, right? So we figured it was a bargain.

Once we saw how great it was going, we took some of the top-rated ads and dug down a little bit deeper in certain categories—funniest, the best youth ad, and so on. Then we did another pass with our members and tried to encourage a pass-along to friends to get new people involved, which was successful: 100,000 new people came in through that. It was great for list-building. We now have about 2.1 million MoveOn members.

The winning ad was called “Child’s Pay.” It was about the deficit, which is weird for progressives to be talking about to begin with. We highlighted that ad and we played it in lead markets—New York, CNN—but all light buys, basically. And we tested it. The metrics said it was one of the strongest ads that we’ve created. So then we placed it in the 17 key battleground states. The happy story is that something that emerged from our base was very, very persuasive to America as a whole.

Hosting house parties across the U.S. to promote a documentary

The MoveOn advocacy organization actually seed-funded the movie *Uncovered: The Whole Truth about the Iraqi War*. We put in \$50,000 to Robert Greenwald, who did the documentary, to help with

the production budget. Once we put that in, John Podesta's Center for American Progress matched it. So they had a very slim budget to pay for production.

First we sold the documentary into the base. We sold tens of thousands. It was enough to make the film very profitable, just with one hit to the base. And then we said, "Well, people love this so much, so let's try house parties."

We continue to get the sense that people are interested in the face-to-face connection. Every time we do something that's face-to-face we get so much positive feedback about how people are meeting people in their neighborhood that they didn't know. A lot of warm and fuzzy stuff comes out of it. Plus, and this we haven't totally figured out yet, the number one thing they ask coming out of it is: "Okay, so what do we do now?" And that kind of energy is important.

We've done meetings since 1998. We have our own little meet-up tool where somebody says, "I will host," and that puts them on the list. And then other people can come in and say, "I'm looking for a party." It does a distance calculation by zip code and finds local parties. It's pretty much the pure meet-up application except that we have this notion of volunteer leaders who have more responsibility than just showing up. Meetup.com is based on having existing venues, not homes, that can host these comings-together. How many people were involved in the house parties? It was probably about 100,000 people.

To have it be more than just the occasional film that's meant to support organizing and is really integral with an organizing campaign, you'd have to have a different way for people to relate to the events. For example, book clubs happen. People read books; they get together to talk about books. It's quite possible that various entities like MoveOn could try to establish a video-of-the-month club or whatever where you do have another circuit for these alternative offerings. I don't know how that would compare to existing alternative circuits, but you could probably do the math.

Streaming audio and video: not ready for primetime and no big numbers

Air America is starting a progressive radio network. They can potentially reach millions of people and we would like to be able to highlight their offerings. They're only going to be in a few markets to begin with, although big markets with radio. I asked them about the Web serving of their content, and they said they're going to have 5,000 streams.

Well, that's sort of the way it is. We set up streaming for our "Bush in 30 Seconds" contest awards. We bought 5,000 streams and then very quickly got to the capacity that we had paid for. According to the provider we had blown away all kinds of records. And I said, "What? With 5,000 streams we've blown away all kinds of records?"

From video, people expect television-like performance, in terms of clarity and robustness. They get nowhere near that in Internet video, so it's not ready for primetime. Who knows when the threshold is going to be where people will really use it. That said, the online "Bush in 30 Seconds" ads apparently were compelling enough, and little enough, and the media was small enough, that people kept saying, "Yeah, I want to see another one."

Joel Hyatt

The media's right wing bias

There is no longer a journalism profession. It has been replaced by the news business. The news business is 100 percent owned by media conglomerates, and the media conglomerates have their own agendas that influence how the news businesses they own cover the news. It's been a horrible development from the point of view of informing the public. I think there really is a right wing bias in

the media, generally. The irony is that the conservatives have long hyped the perception that the media is all liberal. It's one of those incredible disjunctures between mythology and reality.

The public interest in keeping TV accessible

It used to be, from the advent of the printing press until 1962, the principal form of communication was the written word. Before the printing press, the written word was controlled by elites in monasteries; you would apprentice there for 20 years, then get the right to copy in Latin or some inaccessible language. There was no access to the principle means of communication. The printing press changed all that. And that led to the Reformation, to the Enlightenment. The United States was born out of that era of mass access to the principle form of communication.

1962 was the year that television surpassed newspapers as the medium from which the majority of Americans got its information. That trend has done nothing but been exacerbated. Today, only 17 percent of college students read a newspaper. The rest of them get their information from the broadcast media and the Internet. So the role of television is enormously important. But here's the difference between television as a form of communication and the written word: there is no access to it. It is like the pre-printing press monastery. There's no access to publish on that platform. It is controlled by elites, an ever consolidating number of controlling institutions, a process that continues right up until now.

So we're working on something to address that issue. It can't be compared to Fox or CNN or NBC—we're doing something unique. We are launching a cable and satellite television network that will create a whole new paradigm for the creation and distribution of information.

Howard Dean's extraordinary breakthrough in creating bottom-up fundraising

Dean's innovation with fundraising is huge. Here was a guy with zero credibility, who would have ended up with zero votes because he would have not have gotten big donors. But he used the Internet to allow ordinary people to play a serious role. He energized them to become active in the process. That is absolutely enormous, and its implications for politics are overwhelmingly positive.

James Fallows

The Internet is providing the function for the left that talk radio did for the right

If you think of the rallying means for conservative groups, certainly talk radio was the breakthrough. Before that it had been a variety of dispersed organizations—the NRA, the John Birch Society, church groups, militias. Talk radio was a way for them to transcend geographic boundaries. For some reason it did not catch on for liberals in the same way, but it may be that the Internet is providing the historic function for the left that talk radio did for the right. Theoretically, I don't understand why talk radio would have been so empowering for the right and the Internet for the left, but that seems to be the actual result so far. Why that is I don't know, but I think it's interesting.

The irreversible 25-year trend of media shifting to a pure market model

Media consolidation has been going on for 25 years, and the differential change during Bush's time is modest in that regard. The shift to a pure market model for the media started back in the Nixon era, and it has been an incremental rather than dramatic change under Bush. It's a mixed thing, too: it has some high-end good consequences, and some low-end bad consequences. But I view this as an irreversible and long-term process rather than a Bush Administration phenomenon. You could have Dennis Kucinich win and he would not be able to make much change there.

The Democratic advantage in entertainment media versus Republican in politics

Clearly in national politics the Republicans have a significant advantage now, but in the entertainment media the Democrats or the liberals have the advantage. So I don't think one side wins. In the future

the country is more like the Europe of the 1950s and '60s, more stratified by class, by taste, by politics, etc. I don't see one or the other side giving up.

Richard Florida

The need for liberal forces to heal the red/blue America divide through inclusion

When people around the world look at the United States, they look at New York City and California. They don't look at the middle of the country. Those who think that these fundamentalist, old-line traditional values are what make America great have it all wrong. The most advanced countries have rational secular values, values that support self-expression. That's what California, New York, and Massachusetts have. We have two countries: a very advanced, future-oriented country called California/Massachusetts/New York, and a country that is stuck in the nineteenth century. And they are at war. The red state forces are not going to fix this. The only way to do this is to get a group of moderate to liberal political forces to say: "We are going heal this riff by including more people."

The historical challenge of extending the benefits of the creative economy to all

The challenge for our society today is exactly the challenge our society faced 100 years ago, when the industrial economy grew. When the industrial economy first grew, it benefited a very narrow group of robber barons and their management henchman. All the people who worked in that industrial economy were basically on starvation wages working 12- to 15-hour days. It took until we had a New Deal before people would say, "We have to extend the benefits of this economy to a much broader group of people." People look at the rise of the creative economy today and see gentrification and displacement. They don't see the real challenge, which is: How do we extend the fruits of the creative economy much further? How do artists and other creative people, or those not connected to this economy, or people in the personal service industry, benefit? We need to create an environment that supports and extends the benefits to participation in the creative economy. We are going to have to raise those wages, give people more opportunities. But we don't have this conversation in our country. I sometimes feel like a lone voice.

Independent media groups should organize the "blue collar workers" of the creative age

The independent media needs to become a way to harness this creative energy and provide opportunities. Much the way you massively expanded industrial jobs and improved pay for industrial jobs through federal highway construction and suburbanization, you would want to massively expand the number and pay of independent media jobs, or jobs that work in that media. That is exactly where we have to head as a society. This is exactly where people want to work. The local musician makes \$100 a night. The person making the local film, in addition to the person doing nails and hair—these are the blue collar jobs of the creative age.

Ted Halstead

Using games and simulation to have political points take off on the Web

If I had the time and the resources, I would create a SimCandidate. You know the SimCity games? I would create the simulated candidate, and I would make him really cool. I would use it as a tool to get out a bunch of new ideas in politics. Every time that Kerry and Bush debate, within 24 hours I would rebroadcast the debate on the Web, having inserted my person as the third person saying, "Actually, you're wrong on this, and you're wrong on that, and here's a better idea." I'd create a media phenomenon. Because what's interesting about the Web is that wild things take off.

How about using SimCity games to explore alternative policy futures?

One could do a lot more to ignite collective imaginations through multimedia interpretations of

politics, not just of the past, but of the future, giving people a sense of what could be. One of the neat things about the Sims games is that you get to create alternative futures. Well, what if you were able to create alternative futures on policy and politics? We have an exercise at the New American Foundation called the exercise in hard choices, where you can decide how to balance the budget based on different assumptions, with all the data in there.

People need an opportunity to envision a better future and see how to get there. I once had a conversation with Oliver Stone about how to take the last two reinventions of America during the period of Reconstruction or the New Deal and anticipate them as opposed to report back on them. You could do a documentary on how it happened. "First, the state of California passed the initiative to have instant runoff voting and as a result of that, an independent candidate came to the fore that everybody loved. And that person began convincing other states to follow suit and then that person became president of the United States and did x, y and z. And this person actually started talking about shared sacrifice." People want to be inspired. Do forward thinking scenarios where you are showing people where to go. Write history before it happens.

A breakthrough opportunity in cultural innovation aimed at the next generation

The next generation is waiting for something different. They'd be a very ripe audience for independent media. But you need some way to get to them. The Web offers you the ultimate leveler, right? You can compete head-on if you can create a big buzz. You can compete with the big boys. It's not about creating documentaries. It's about some new breakthrough cultural innovation that speaks to young people and makes politics really hip. Get people to think about the hip candidate.

Unexpected allies: Media concentration worries many conservatives too

Media concentration is worrying the heck out of everybody. It's worrying me. But importantly, it cuts beyond left and right. A lot of honest conservatives are worried about media concentration.

The generational warfare and very difficult politics of the next couple decades

I can give you a prediction: it is certain that politics will get much, much more difficult in decades to come because of the retirement of the Baby Boomers and the incredible strain that will put on everything. There will be generational warfare in this country. It's a sure thing. We just saw it. We just gave prescription drugs to the elderly and we have 43 million young people out of health insurance. People are going to connect the dots. What it will mean is everybody looking out for their own agenda, very little room for compromise, and a lot of anger. A very polarized country.

Fiscally, we're heading for a complete implosion. What Bush has done, combined with the coming of the baby boom generation, leads to an implosion. Short of a lot of shared sacrifice, there's no way out of this. There's no win/win. Politicians love win/wins. Real politics is about some people losing. Politics is going to get really interesting in the next few decades because of entitlement crunches and related issues. The stakes will be really high.

Howard Rheingold

The corruption of the infotainment industry thwarts technological progress

Digital rights management is all about an existing industry using political clout to protect a business model that has been made obsolete by new technology. This is something the buggy manufacturers and the telegraph makers weren't able to do because they didn't have the amount of money available to the infotainment industry. Nor had they bought the U.S. Congress and the president. We have never seen a situation where obsolete incumbents could do this.

Sandy Close

Truly independent media means free from government watchdogs

How are you independent when you are funded by government? What does independent media mean? The ownership issue is obviously an important issue, because when you have the same economic interests controlling multiple media venues, you really can't guarantee that there's going to be much diversity, let alone objectivity. For me the really difficult question is what you do when the fourth estate becomes the system that it's supposed to be watch-dogging. In the mid- to late-1970s, the media and the public sphere in this country became pretty much synonymous. The public class—the people who control the institutions that basically make up the public realm in this country—and media had become the same thing.

Media supplants lost community

In a sense, in America, you come alive when you close the door on your private life and go into the public realm and become who you are as a public persona. People call it the celebrity culture, but in essence we all want our voice heard, our lives to be visible, to have some presence. All that is understandable in a culture where everyone is an individual and there is no community. It used to be that one relied on the horizontal nexus of relationships that informed whether you would get up in the morning or kill yourself. Because the neighbor next door would notice if you did not go by and say hello, the priest would notice if you were not at mass, the corner store would notice if you hadn't come by to buy your groceries. Those things are gone right now and what matters, when everyone is an individual, when everybody is alone, is what goes on in the public realm: are you visible, because you certainly aren't visible in the community—there isn't one. So media supplants community in a way, as that reassurance that you matter as an individual. What matters is whether you are manifested in the media. That is what I have learned from working with youth and ethnic communities—the extent to which media, and more broadly speaking communications, is part of the oxygen that you have to live and breathe in order to feel like you belong in this media culture.

John Anner

The correlation between strong social movements and a set of media

Even if you can't measure it, publications are absolutely vital to reform movements and social moments of all sorts. Whatever era you pick, if you start reading the history, you will find there is a vibrant set of publications, or media in general, radio or TV programs. In the abolition era, there were publications that were absolutely vital to changing people's ideas about slavery. In the early days of the feminist movement, the very first thing they did was put out a newspaper. As John Lewis said, without the black press, the civil rights movement would have been like a bird with one wing: it never would have flown. There is a correlation between strong social movements and a set of media. Recently, these self-reporting websites have come up during the anti-globalization fight. Those are inseparably connected. Is it *The Nation* or *Mother Jones* that is in the forefront of the struggle against globalization? Absolutely not. They are reporting on what's happening, but they are not the place to turn to about what's going on. It's this network of websites that are connected and talking to each other.

William Strauss

The rise of a new kind of old-style liberal politics

You're going to see a new class politics driven by Millennials [people born 1982-present]. The Boomers will latch onto it, because there probably will be enormous arguments as they enter old age

and the issue of benefits comes up. That is, there will be enormous arguments between Boomers who have resources and Boomers who don't. And there will be moral tones in that argument.

In the case of the Millennials, there will just be the bottom-line issue of trying to provide fair outcomes for more young people. They will be the third rail of politics. They already are. It used to be you couldn't touch senior benefits, but lately you've got to be careful of children and teens, politically. Every politician has to bow to childhood and school-age kids. It wasn't that long ago that every generation had to bow to old people. It's changing.

What we see coming among Millennials is a combination of cultural conservatism and confidence in institutional reconstruction that you might, in today's parlance, call more liberal. The notion is that the community has to solve problems and pool its resources. That starts sounding like a generation that would be more comfortable with concepts of taxation and regulation. It would start with a new institutional premise, though. It wouldn't just be going back to everything as it is now.

A new blend of cultural conservatism, fiscal liberalism, and multicultural influence

The Millennial generation's gathering political point of view reminds me of the conservative Democrats of 30 years ago. Liberalism before the culture took over and defined politics in cultural terms. To Boomers, the labels of liberal and conservative really are about the culture wars. I know a lot of people, for example, who would be very strong on the liberal side of the culture wars, but they are against taxation; they're affluent.

In the case of Millennials, they look around the world and they think, Well, the rubric of choice is what's created a number of problems. They're looking for a little more of a sense of duty and community, obligation. Some of that has to do with the Latino and Asian elements of this generation that are weaving their way into the mainstream now. There's more of a sense of family and community obligation. That's something that you see more in Asian cultures and to some degree in the Latino cultures. Certainly Latino and Asian social and cultural attitudes and values and mores are one important explanation. Not the only one, but they are one important explanation of where Millennials are going.

These are second-generation immigrants, so they were raised in the United States and in their families, and now they're starting to apply that point of view in their public mindset and in the workplace. All kinds of people who work with young people, including the teenagers themselves and collegians, say that the Asian and Latino influence is really starting to take hold. It's not a matter of multicultural niches, that there's this Asian thing over there and this Latino thing over there.

It's happened again and again in the history of this country that the second generation tends to be the melting pot group. It's not that they just suddenly say, "Okay, what can I do to mirror the Caucasian culture?" It's that they bring something to the mix. We saw that with the GI generation. They started with mainly Italians, Jews, Slavs, Poles who were very much out of the mainstream, but with the crucible of World War II, they became integral, very American. So right now Italian—Frank Sinatra, pizza, spaghetti, all that—is American. The same thing is true for Jewish-Americans. They became very mainstream and it was through the second generation of immigrants from that group.

I'm convinced we're going to see this happening with Latinos and Asians in the coming two or three decades. By the time we get to this generation in midlife, being partially Korean or South Asian or Pakistani or Peruvian isn't going to amount to that much. It's not going to be as large a deal, but the flip side is Korean, South Asian, Pakistani, Peruvian mores are going to weave their way into the fabric of American society more. And that will have implications for politics, culture, family life, everything this generation does.

We're going to see the Millennials influence the culture over the next several years and really over the next three decades. This decade, they're mainly consumers of culture. Next decade, they'll consume it

and produce it and then after that, they'll be producers for those who follow. You're going to see Pokemon kinds of influences; you'll see anime and Latino elements. It's not just in the food we eat and the clothes we wear and the songs we sing: it's going to be in politics, family life, business, everything.

The new class politics: Taking on the mounting problem of wealth inequalities

The difference between people who have a lot and people who don't is a problem for a lot of Millennials. For Boomers, the difference in the treatment of gender was the problem. For Gen-X'ers the difference between race and ethnicity was the issue. These Millennial kids see a lot of people with a lot of wealth and income and vast numbers who don't. And the gaps between what shelf stockers make versus teachers versus lawyers versus CEOs and movie stars and pro athletes are way larger than they were when Boomers were children.

I could see some attraction to the notion of compressing salaries as an objection to Wall Street bonuses, CEO pay, superstar pay. There already are signs that superstars aren't connecting with these kids. Video game marketers are finding that. Stars aren't worth the money to these kids. They would rather see more people out there entertaining, doing songs people can sing really well. The idea of a hugely paid superstar is something that just doesn't work at quite the same level it did before.

When they're seniors in high school and first-year students in college, money becomes an issue. They see it sort their friends. People who seem about the same ability are separated based on money. And that's what Boomers noticed among genders; all of a sudden things started to become harder for women, and that became an issue. Money is to Millennials what gender was for Boomers and race and ethnicity was for X'ers. It's the challenge. It's going to be a lifelong challenge, and they're going to address it in the workplace. It will be kind of a new twenty-first century revival of lunch-bucket politics.

Celinda Lake

Average people don't think they have a lack of media options

People feel, with consolidation, that reducing their options is fairly problematic. When they hear about consolidation with all the radio owned by one corporation, they get worried. The problem is that they don't think of cable as a public relationship, but as a paid one. So I buy cable, it's a commercial relationship. It's not like the public airwaves. And also people don't think they have any lack of options. They think that it's all bad, in terms of quality, but in terms of options and access, they say, "What are you talking about?"

People want more educational programming from public media

What people want from the public media sector is overwhelmingly more educational programming, more children's programming. Among Hispanics, it's also diversity. People in general think that politics is very important to their community, but it's covered horribly. They have a hard time being the kind of citizens they would like. But the problem is that people, if they are honest, prefer the entertainment forum.

The mass audience does not feel unrepresented

One thing that people really do want is entertainment. We did some stuff for the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. People don't have broad critiques, but they do say they basically want entertainment. There's this assumption that there are critiques about biases, but that's not what real people think. There are some audiences who complain. Some say there is not enough anti-Bush material. And born again Christian audiences complain about TV being pro-gay. But the broad mass does not have that many critiques that my point of view is not being represented.

Global

The Larger Context for Today's Domestic Media

Globalization is no longer an abstract concept but an actual system that is inexorably remaking many if not all aspects of life in the early twenty-first century, from the world's economy to its media. Anyone thinking about the future of motion media in the United States in the coming decade must think through the global dimension as well. Here, too, there are some impending shifts on the horizon. One has to do with an increasing amount of media operations taking place in other countries with cheaper labor. Another shift may happen in how media is consumed. It's possible that the global market of approximately 1 billion English speakers may provide many opportunities for U.S.-based independent producers—particularly if an appetite increases for alternative perspectives on America. Or American interest may increase in events happening in other parts of the world as globalization draws our fates more tightly together.

Ravi Sundarum

Digital video in India

Particularly in a country like India, technology becoming cheaper means dependence on the big studios and the big funders is gone. People produce their own films now. It's very low cost. They borrow a little money, produce it on DV, edit on a Mac on Final Cut Pro, at home or maybe at a low-cost studio. They produce the film and then sell it for broadcast. There are two avenues, one is the state broadcasters, and the other is foundations, NGOs, advocacy groups that may have small media budgets. But the problem still is one of independent distribution and finding regular broadcast venues other than television. Filmmakers travel around and show their films. It's still a problem.

The explosion of India's media market

In India, everything happened within a period of about seven years. CDs, mass television, music, very sophisticated advertising, a big media experience, Internet, cable, mobile phones—everything came at once. So you can imagine the shock that people were confronted with. We went from two TV channels to 70, from one state phone system to 70 million mobile phones. We are the second largest music market in the world. Most of it is in the informal sector. The figures you get are only the company figures; you don't see all the secondary figures who don't report returns. About 85 percent of music sold is Indian music. It's a very dynamic local culture industry both in cinema and music. It's the second largest film industry in the world. Exports to other countries are second only to Hollywood. It goes to the diaspora in the West, and to different cultures in other parts of the world. Africa, the Middle East, parts of southeast Asia have always been in the export market. Now the U.S. and England are big export markets.

The market for English media has grown: a dozen out of 70 TV channels

The market for Western media in India is much more than it was before. For example, of our 70 channels, 10 to 12 are English channels, which include HBO, CNN, BBC, and the Star Film channels. But their share of audience would be 2 to 4 percent because of English. Unlike other countries, shows are not dubbed here. MTV is done entirely in Hindi, the local language. Actually, MTV India is better than MTV USA. It's the same company, but it's produced in Bombay. It's completely irreverent and wild—a very fresh group. It's totally what MTV was when it began in the U.S. in the 1980s.

Movies delivered to thousands of small villages

They are trying out digital projection in the smaller towns because it is much cheaper to set up. There are these two companies setting up thousands of digital projection units. They offer a loan to the guy who will set it up in the village. And then they send the media because it's much cheaper to send the hard disk or an encrypted DVD rather than sending film. Making prints of film is very expensive. I have seen the projection and it's very decent, and the sound is good. There's all this going on. The distribution is not tightly controlled by big companies like in the United States. The Indian film scene is completely chaotic. There's no big studios like the US. It's great.

No Internet bandwidth in India for video, but the market to connect homes just starting

The government has finally allowed the last mile connectivity for everybody. So the market should heat up. One of the big companies, Reliant, one of India's biggest companies, has laid 25,000 miles of cable all over India, put in \$25 billion in the inter-telecom network. It's got huge bandwidth, and it's going to start a bandwidth bidding war. So things are going to get much better in India. It will take a year or so. As of now there is no bandwidth to do video on the Web. Maybe in two years time. It's only the bandwidth that is stopping that.

Sandy Close

The last 10 years of explosive growth in ethnic and youth media

In the last 10 years there has been explosive growth in both ethnic and youth media. I can show you a national directory we've made with 2,000 listings. The average age of an ethnic media organization is somewhere between eight and 10 years. Some have been around a long time, but most are recent arrivals because the technology for reproducing your voice or photograph has gotten so cheap. If you can't print it, you can put it on the Internet; if you can't buy a radio station, you can put it on the Internet. Even television, you can do cable access TV. Our poll in April 2002 showed that a large majority of California's Asian, Hispanic, and African-American population—in other words, the new majority of the state—regularly rely on ethnic media: 84 percent frequently access ethnic media, and 54 percent rely on it as their primary everyday source of news. You're getting to the point where ethnic media is the mainstream media. And that's happened in 10 to 15 years. I think it's bigger than alternative media.

After the nonprofit era: Ethnic media as public voice of the raw grassroots

The nonprofit sphere did a great job, had a great run of things, but maybe it's time for something else. I sense a much more pragmatic, entrepreneurial sphere. The nonprofit sphere, let's face it, is colonial. I know people who are doing tremendous work but they will never get a MacArthur grant because they haven't heard the word "foundation." The NGOs and the nonprofits are the lower rung of the public realm. Ethnic media are the public voice of the raw grassroots. They are market-driven because they have to survive out of small business advertising, classifieds, subscriptions. But think about how embedded they are in the audience they reach. I see them as the public voice of the raw grassroots. It's not an either/or between nonprofits and these groups. The exciting thing would be to bring them together.

Celinda Lake

The new immigrant groups can't be lumped together and don't want to be

We are doing a lot of work with new immigrants. We just finished a series of about a dozen focus groups in different communities, everything from Iraqis in Detroit, to Pakistanis and Chinese in New

York, all kinds of different communities. The biggest thing we found is that these communities are so diverse, and you can't approach them at all from a similar perspective. There were a lot of tensions between groups, and they tended to be focused on rights for their own group rather than overall immigration rights.

Daniel Erasmus

The appetite abroad for American media critical of President Bush and the status quo

Within America, there is enormous criticism of the current political situation. In terms of the international views on America, America is defined by the public face of the president. So the whole world is not seeing this internal conflict, and the sophistication of the debate. Given the global reaction against Bush's policies, there is a massive interest in critical American content, which is not being seen at all outside of America. You can see that reflected in the success of Michael Moore. It was a hit in France.

If you look at independent media, there is an enormous opportunity on a global scale for offering different thinking about American ideals. The success of Hollywood is in its ability to export American values to the planet. I can't see any reasons why independent media, with different distribution channels, would not have the same kinds of successes. For example, there was this young journalist who made this film of Bush by following him around the primaries with a DV handcam. That film was hugely successful in Holland. All that has natural interest on a global scale. And it's good that the world sees more of America's internal criticism and sees more of the independent and other perspectives on the American experience than what is put through at the moment. People are dying for this kind of content but it is not available.

James Fallows

The global English language market – one billion people

There's the advantage of being an English language media in a time of widespread English language competence. With English language media there are potentially a billion people or more who are potential markets. In keeping with the idea that the technology allows the media to transcend geographical borders and find like-minded people anywhere, I think the global part is a huge opportunity.

Richard Florida

Creative talent is global and will migrate to more favorable conditions outside the U.S.

When Peter Jackson decided to make his movies in Wellington, New Zealand, he shifted a whole big piece of the filmmaking industry in one fell swoop. If you talk to Jackson, it really wasn't a cost issue: it was a cultural issue. It's an issue of trying to create a cluster of filmmaking capabilities outside of the United States. If the U.S. continues to go down this road, with a unilateralist foreign policy, where foreign people feel less welcome, where the U.S. is viewed in the world as less friendly, where it is restricting visas, restricting the flow of scientist and engineers, stopping stem cell research.... The big point is that this talent is global. What made Silicon Valley the center of innovation wasn't Americans—it was foreign people who came to Silicon Valley to work. Same thing with Hollywood and LA. This competition is for talent, for people. We assume the U.S. has an unvarnished advantage, but in fact it doesn't.

Walter Parkes

The huge costs of foreign piracy of Hollywood films and undercutting profitability

Many, many hundreds of millions of dollars are lost in terms of foreign revenues based on piracy from DVDs. I was shocked. Every time I go on vacation abroad I never fail to be surprised. I remember the year *Gladiator* came out. It was before the DVD has been released anywhere. We were in some bazaar in Turkey and we see in a stand, in the Turkish language, a *Gladiator* DVD being sold for the equivalent of 75 cents. That's a serious thing, particularly when as films become harder to market, virtually no films are profitable based on their U.S. theatrical release. Their value is established in that release, but the revenues that make the film profitable are actually received through its exploitation overseas and mostly in home video. The money that comes back from the U.S. theatrical run hopefully pays for the costs of the movie and advertising, so when you go out to DVD or pay or free TV you can actually start making money on the movie. If piracy takes a big bite out of those markets that are down the line, you are losing right where the potential for profit lies.

Foreign theaters and DVD reproductions are critical to a film's success

It's more likely you will break even on your U.S. and international theatrical box office and look to the non-theatrical sources of revenue such as DVD, VCR, and television for your profit. A rule of thumb is that, theatrically, about half comes from the U.S. and another half from the rest of the world. That theatrical take, both U.S. and foreign, usually makes up about half of the total of the proceeds. You will get that much again for all the various non-theatrical revenues. So the U.S. theatrical accounts for close to a quarter of what the movie makes.

Sandeep Casi

America lags behind Europe and Asia in technology adoption

For some reason everyone says America is ahead in technology and we are the first adopters. I think that's crap. Europe and Asia are much farther ahead in adopting technology. Maybe we invent technology, but people there adapt faster. Businesses here are so worried about their revenues and losing their base that they really don't experiment and take risks. Whereas in Europe and Asia they really forge ahead and do it. If you look at the Japanese markets, all their research labs are here, in the United States. Ricoh, Canon, Fuji, Sony—they all have research labs here, and mostly in the Bay Area. We develop these technologies and they end up using them. Sometimes they never get used in the United States.

Brad deGraf

Outsourcing game development and 3D animation to Asia

Outsourcing to developing countries is happening. Traditional animation has been done in Korea and Taiwan and the Philippines for 40 years. That is now being done in game development and 3D animation. Pixar won't do it for a long time, but everyone else who wants Pixar to be doing it for them will be doing it in Vietnam or India or China. And they'll do that for \$10 an hour.

Orville Schell

Global NGOs doing serious research and reporting

I taught a whole course on NGOs and foreign correspondents, and how useful they are. A lot of our students wouldn't mind working for an NGO, because many of the things NGOs do are very journalistic. Human Rights Watch is doing the work that journalists should be doing: big, fat reports on massacre, war, prison situations all around the world. Our graduate school of journalism is providing the DNA for good reporting. I send students every year to human rights work. They are impeccable in their research. It's one of the best experiences they could have.

The world needs truly global media

What the world really needs is truly, truly global media, where people don't have American flag lapel pins on. It's sort of an abomination for CNN and Fox to say they are global news outlets. They are trapped in these gravitational fields of national states. One could only welcome the outsourcing of news. The independent media really ought to go totally global and cut loose from the American umbilical cord. They would be much better received if they do that. But this is a whole area of invention that has not been addressed yet. No one has set up a media outlet that has no country.

Generations

The Next Generation of Producers and Consumers

An underappreciated but very fundamental demographic shift is underway that could have profound implications for independent media. A generation with the size and potential impact of the Baby Boomers is just coming of age. The first members of the Millennial generation, those born from 1982 to the present, are graduating from college. Millennials are very adept with the new technologies, very familiar with the new media, very open to a new politics, and more globally aware than past generations. Their generation will provide many of the new consumers, as well as producers, of the motion media that emerges in the coming 10 years. It makes sense, then, to understand how Millennials both differ from and are similar to the generations before them.

William Strauss

The counterintuitive characteristics of the Millennial generation just coming of age

Today's young people get along with adults better than Boomers or X'ers did. They have much better relationships with their parents and other adults, and they take adult guidance well. They're good followers, good soldiers, good organization builders, good team players. Some think that young people always rebel by becoming nastier and edgier and more criminal. But if that were the case, then in the 200 generations of recorded history, imagine how nasty we would all be. But every now and then you have a generation of builders, of civic deed-doers, of consolidators—you have people who move against risk.

Every 20 years or so, you have a generational warp where the next-older generation just doesn't figure out the culture of the ones that are following it; they think the followers are an extension of them. If you look at the youth culture of the early 1960s, it was Pat Boone and Annette Funicello and Frankie Avalon and beach blanket movies. Boomers went to those and they bought the albums and they wore the clothes, but it said nothing about what Boomers were going to become. Well, I think we're in that period now with the Millennials.

Millennials are moving away from risk

The Millennials are moving away from risk. Boomers pushed every aspect of the youth culture toward risk in a very boy-driven culture. Back in the early 1960s, everything headed towards risk. Crime, sex, substances, whatever you want, it was towards risk. The Millennials are backing away from that. They're having less sex in high school, and when they're having sex it's more protected. Drinking, hard drugs, cigarettes—they're going down among teenagers. And crime is way down: there has been a 75 percent cut in the violent crime rate among teenagers in the past 10 years.

You don't see many news articles about it, because it doesn't serve the interests of the culture wars to say the kids are doing well, either on the left wing or the right wing. If you're a left-wing Boomer culture warrior, it's, "Oh, my God! Kids in crisis! Give me my grant money so that I can continue my store-front 'Kids in Crisis Center.'" On the other side, you have all the moralists who keep trying to fuel their various causes by saying that kids are full of moral rot, and so they keep undermining the public schools, and talking about how families are horrible—"my family is fine, but all families are horrible" is the constant refrain.

Tipping the generational balance to females and a girl culture

Back in the first-wave Boomer years, colleges were about 56-57 percent male. If you look at yearbooks in high school in the '70s, it was mostly guys who were running things: student body government, the newspapers, clubs, everything. In the 1980s that started to shift. By the time you got to the end of Generation X and the beginning of the Millennials, it was the other way around. You go to a high school award ceremony today and it's all girls winning awards. The girls are running everything. Girls drove the breaking wave of the Millennial culture. All the boy bands and sweet bubble-gummy music—that was girl music. Today 57 percent of first-year college students are girls. And in the case of minorities, it's *way* girls. You go to an Ivy League college and it's probably going to be 4:1 girls among minority students. It's just an enormous gap. We've gone from a situation where four out of every seven college kids were guys to where four out of every seven are girls.

A tech-savvy generation that is always connected and building enmeshed communities

The fact that this generation has such tremendous capability at computing and communicating is a big deal. There can be a new movie and the first group in the theater will be already on their cellphones and using their handhelds to tell the world. Then it goes out over IM and boom, it's just out there.

These technologies will begin to be applied in political directions. The tendency of this generation is to renorm and to adhere around a group consensus. There are things going on that nobody sees except these kids. The Web communities that they have! Sometimes they're very formalized and other times they're informal, like buddy lists and things, but they get the word out there. And they adhere. And it's a powerful, powerful force for community. They're walking between classes and making cellphone calls. Their capacity to get information out to lots of people very quickly is enormous. And they don't see the PC as a way for the individual to defy the world. They see it as the tool for building community and for staying in touch with lots of people.

Letting the Millennials make their mark on history

Every generation makes its mark. The GIs did it in politics and certainly as soldiers. Boomers have made a tremendous difference in lifestyles. Gen-X made a big difference in commerce. We expect that these Millennial kids will do it again in institution-building and in some civic rebirth, using technology. There will be some problems that middle-age people today think you could never fix and the Millennials will find a way to fix them. But they will do it in ways that are not necessarily going to promote the agendas of Boomers.

People who had their agendas in the 1960s and '70s—it's time to let those go. Nobody is going to complete those agendas. These kids are going to have their own take on things. And some of what they'll do will please their parents and others will not. That's always the case. There's a time where you say, "We've raised these kids; now let's see what they're going to do. They've got their own lives to lead, their own historical frame of reference."

The number one thing for people to do if they despair of their organizations down the road is to think better of youth, to think open-mindedly of youth. And to measure the youth in terms of the youths' own period of history, not in terms of what was required back when Boomers or X'ers were young. It's a very different experience to be 21 years old right now than it was to be 21 years old in 1967.

Clay Shirky

Young artists mainly concerned with getting an audience and finding distribution

When I see young artists sitting around working on their material, I see them mainly concerned with getting an audience. The independence they want is often independence from traditional distribution outlets, not independence from commercial constraints. They are less worked-up about the evils of commercial media and more worked up about the bottlenecks of the current video distribution system.

They don't have any notion that working for money is somehow polluted or horrible. What they see is that whether you're in the profit sector or the not-for-profit sector it's very hard to get your work seen. So if that's what they want to do, you make a different set of choices.

Young creators more geared to tailored niche work versus mass broadcast

People in the younger generation are more comfortable making "situated" work. They're more comfortable making work that is specifically tailored to an existing group of people. They've never existed in a world where mass media exists in the way that we understand it. *Seinfeld* was the most popular television show they've ever heard of and it only reached one person in four. Nothing even reaches one in six now and it's mostly one in eight and less. So the idea that there is a single mainstream, as characterized by three broadcast networks, is gone. And they're much more comfortable making work that is quirky but has a loyal following, rather than trying to make something that will be seen by everyone.

The younger generation likes markets, globalization, trade

These kids like markets. They think markets are good and that globalization is good. Obviously, there need to be some constraints on the system to make sure people don't get rolled over, but in my classes nobody was anti-globalization; nobody was anti-market; nobody was anti-trade. I was sort of astonished, because the college environment I grew up in was unbelievably reflexively left.

Richard Florida

Young people value creative jobs more than money

The baby boom led this very bohemian/bourgeois split life. I'm a bohemian on the weekend, and a bourgeois during the week, or I was a bohemian when I was young. The younger generation is more likely to say, "I am a creative person, the heck with that split. I can be economically successful and be quite creative and be myself." The baby boom was a big reaction to social constraint that this new generation does not have. They don't have to fight to be themselves: they already have the opportunity.

I think independent film has become like the garage band. The Baby Boomers may have done a garage band, whereas these kids are doing film projects—and their parents are encouraging them. Baby boom parents aren't saying, "Go get a job in a bank," but, "Go make your independent film and we'll help you out." It's a different environment where creativity is more valued. You probably get more status today being an independent filmmaker than working for a big bank. People laugh if you say you work for GM today. There is a status value in creativity now. Before, creative people were the wackos, the weirdoes, the people who couldn't work. Now creative people have status, even if they don't have income.

J.C. Herz

Media producers in their 20s vs. those in their 40s

It would be useful to compare the perspectives of independent media producers who are in their early 20s now with the perspectives of those in their 40s. It may be that those two perspectives are radically different. It may be that kids just out of college—making movies on their Apple laptop or music with electronic software programs and networked art projects—see a different landscape than people who came up making art installations and documentary film and independent records in the 1970s. If those two views are radically different, then you have to examine the difference; you have to question whether the shifts in the landscape are universally experienced and real, whether the shifts are just in

the question of what does it mean to be an independent media producer. Not just what is the technological shift, but what is the generational shift.

Do people age 22 and 23, who are doing independent film, music, art, and all sorts of crazy and wonderful things, view themselves as besieged in the same way that independent cultural producers in their 40s do? Do they see the same set of problems? A different set of opportunities? If they do, then it's worth investigating whether this shift that's going on is really a resource shift, or a shift in what it means to be an independent creative person.

The future is stewardship, not directorship

I think we're seeing the triumph of the dynamic attractor. Like Linus Torvald with Linux. Yes, he's a good programmer, but his real talent is the ability to steward the open source process. The fact that Linux absorbs intellectual energy from all over the place doesn't detract from Linus Torvald. This is in contrast to the idea of the artist or the auteur who has to control everything. Certainly in films, though they are highly collaborative, there is this idea that the director is the vision keeper and is ultimately responsible for all that happens. I think that's an artifact of the filmmaking process of the twentieth century.

Henry Jenkins

Digital media in dialogue with mainstream media

Alternative media wants to remain ideologically pure outside the mainstream. Those forms of purity run the risk of turning people off. Look at the blogging media: it's in dialogue with the mainstream media. That's where the generation gap falls. Those who came of age in the '70s thought they were creating an alternative that could cut them off from popular culture. Can we go it alone, create an alternative sphere that has nothing to do with pop culture? Digital media changes that. It's certainly possible to use digital media in ways to challenge old media—that was the rhetoric of the revolution. But the evidence is very different. What we saw—games and game engines to do political commentary; digital video to do spoofs; blogging to create intersections between new and old media—these are all about being in dialogue with the mainstream. There's a much more playful space and more hybrid space opening up now than in traditional alternative media.

Using computer games to create political commentary

Look at the ways that games have been used to comment on the war. People are using game engines, which are cheap, to play out different political points of view. They're taking an interface from games and applying a political commentary to it. It has a wicked sense of humor, a real irreverent style. What you see now is blogging and gaming as the dominant ways of commenting on the war, and it happened quickly because the Web allowed for it. Any stone you turn over, you see work that is commenting on popular culture.

Today's gonzo aesthetic

The line between Michael Moore and *Jackass* is a thin line. The line between trying to gross someone out in a shopping mall and confronting Charlton Heston in his house is thinner than we think. It's a gonzo aesthetic.

Some computer game makers are taking on the role of independent filmmakers

Newsgaming.com, Kuma Games, Mongrel, Onramp Arts: these are very political games groups made outside the corporate game system that do many of the same sorts of things that we expect an independent filmmaker to do, whether a documentary filmmaker or a radical fictional work. They are raising issues through media but using the distinct properties of games to engage people from a fresh perspective.

Independent games and the next wave of media artists

I think it's a growth area. We've got a generation coming of age for whom games are a more important medium than film or television. For the younger generation, games are the preferred medium. Right now our perception of games is fairly narrow. That's the challenge that something like Serious Games poses. We think of games as lightweight entertainment, as fun, as escapism. Mostly people's perception emphasizes violence, because that has been disproportionately represented in the public debate about games. But games as a medium can do much more than that. There is nothing intrinsic to the medium that prevents it from asking hard questions.

The challenge is to develop an independent games structure. There are independent games festivals going on that encourage games made outside the corporate games space; there is lots of interesting work done by amateurs; there are smaller companies moving into this space that might be thought of as filmmaking collectives. So it looks to me like the pieces are starting to fall into place. This is a medium that very much is where future generations of media artists will communicate ideas.

The magic formula of getting to teens and twenty-somethings

Getting to the twenty-somethings and teens: I think that's a generational divide that all kinds of identity politics and arts movements are struggling with right now. The work that resonates with these kids is political but playful at the same time. It's work that both poses alternatives to popular culture and is popular culture at the same time.

Young people are ripe for independent media but not its traditional aesthetics

Young people are very opposed to media concentration and very suspicious of mainstream media. They are perfect for the independent media movement—they just don't have the same aesthetic commitments of the old generation of avant garde filmmakers. I think there is a real generation gap there. Most of the arts institutions haven't caught up with that. There is a thriving independent media that these younger people are producing. I think one of the important interventions is helping train people to use the tools to produce their own media. Whether that's filmmakers, or digital artists, or what not, how about going into the schools, going to young people and helping them discover how to do this?

The back and forth dance between mainstream and grassroots media

Mass market media has the ability to put something in front of us almost to the level that we can't avoid it. But grassroots media has the power to redefine what it means, and to create a forum for discussion, debate, and critique of that product. That's why I think they are going to function in dialogue with each other for a period of time.

I often think of this in terms of two slogans from the 1960s. The first is: "The Revolution Will Not Be Televised." Narrow pipeline media is not going to take on revolutionary messages. Will the revolution now be digitized? The answer is almost certainly yes. Every group has access to those tools, and it is a space of experimentation, resistance, critique, innovations, and constant pushing and churning of new content.

The other '60s slogan was the chant in the streets of Chicago: "The Whole World Is Watching." They said that if they could get ABC, NBC, and CBS to film the police riots in Chicago, then the whole world would see it because of the power of those media. There's no place on the Web where the whole world is watching today.

These two slogans tell us something about the tension that will exist between participatory and broadcast media. Things in the mainstream will be subject to a higher level of critique than ever before, because there are these groups who are constantly resisting corporate media; it's a very complex back and forth. It's not that all avenues of innovations are shut out. And it's not that old media is going to crumple and die tomorrow and the revolution will come and all independent media artists will have access to mass markets. That's not going to happen either. It's a dialogue, or struggle,

or creative tension that's going to exist between those two spaces for the foreseeable future. It has both risk and opportunities for independent media artists and commercial media artists alike. What you have to do is figure out what the dangers are, and what the potentials are, and seize those opportunities.

Celinda Lake

Young people don't read newspapers—even online—but they still watch TV

A relatively low proportion of young people say they get all of their news online. They still rely on television for it. Young people aren't reading newspapers anymore; they don't even read them online. They rely a lot more on popular culture for information—so, “The Daily Show” more than the 6 o'clock news. Pop culture sets the agenda across the age spectrum of audiences. For them, you'd rather have a woman president on “West Wing” the TV show than a newspaper article about a woman president.

Get alternative ideas out through the pop culture not the news

If you want alternative ideas to get into the mainstream, you want to get them into the pop culture aspect of the mainstream media, not the news aspect of it. You'd much rather have it in comedy shows and sitcoms than in news shows.

Joel Hyatt

For young people, the Internet has augmented rather than replaced television

There are 250 TV channels and yet most people complain that there is nothing to watch—particularly in the nonfiction information category, and particularly among young people. What passes for news and information is not done in a format or a style that resonates for young adults. Young adults find their entertainment choices satisfied on television, but not their information needs. We see that as a big void and a big opportunity. While they do spend a lot of time online, they also spend a lot of time watching television. It's quite striking: online has augmented their television, rather than replaced it. If anything has replaced their television watching, it isn't the Internet—it's video games.

Sandeep Casi

Your future in 10 years: Kids who now juggle four media at the same time

If you look today at the older generations, to a certain extent they can only do one thing at a time. They either watch TV or read email, but kids can do three or four things at a time. They can listen to music, play video games, chat with their friends, *and* watch TV. That's your future in 10 years. So you had better be making your content compelling, or you aren't going to have a viewership. I'm 33 and I do three things: I'm coding, I'm chatting, and I'm watching TV. I'm very comfortable doing these three things at the same time. Coding takes a part of your brain, and chatting online takes a different part of your brain, and then I'm visual at the same time. If the content is not compelling it will become like music, playing in the background. No one is really taking this into account. TV is just there as a social thing. It's just images on the walls.

Orville Schell

Skilled new media journalists, but no jobs

The problem is that the smart young people—who are all digital, TV, radio, and Internet savvy—have no place to go. There are no jobs. There is no place for a documentary filmmaker to go. Literally no place. There still isn't a documentary film channel. HBO and PBS do a few, but basically you are trying to run the Ganges River through the eye of a needle. There are all of these independent filmmakers with great, great films that have never been seen on television or in a theater. They go to a few festivals and die.

These young people want to do good work. You teach them to have an ethical sense; you teach them to care about their world, their country, society, and they don't want to do the programming on Michael Jackson. It's a great frustration for them. Ironically, it's why so many of them go into documentary film. They know what they are going to get, which is precisely nothing. They are going to struggle. In Japan, there was this class of samurai back in the feudal period called Ronin, which were samurai with no master. They were "Wild West" guns for hire. That's what these kids are. They are out there hustling their little grants, but it's really tight.

Setting up a young, tech-savvy, digital video news operation covering the world

I know exactly what I'd do if you had the business plan. I'd hire 200 young people, pay them \$35,000 a year, give them cameras, set up a website, get a cable channel, and start shaking and baking. These 200 people would be from all over the world. And 75 percent of your stories might not pan out or wouldn't be shot well and it wouldn't matter. You'd have the best editors, the best producers, the best assignment people in the world. A lot of these young folks speak five languages. They're intrepid. So that's what you'd do. But how are you going to pay for it? That's what I don't know.

Walter Parkes

It still comes down to telling good stories

You have an extremely technologically adept generation who operate with great ease in a digital world. Then you ask yourself, Is that going to create a fundamental change or is it merely more and better tools to mine the same important classic issues that have confronted us ever since people have been alive? I suspect the latter. The idea that we can randomly access anything at any time, at our own speed and given our own whim, should affect the way we perceive things. And yet I think ultimately it all comes down, in our business, to stories. Stories are the most efficient way to organize information that humankind has ever come up with. In other words, there is something about story itself that is inherently organizing. And it is probably all the more important now given the amount of noise that is out there.

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