

MEDIA GIRAFFE Project

*Innovation for democracy;
Standing above the crowd*

<http://www.mediagiraffe.org>

Journalism Program
108 Bartlett Hall
University of Massachusetts
Amherst MA 01003
(413) 577-4370
mediagiraffe@journ.umass.edu



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A MESSAGE TO THOUGHT LEADERS IN MEDIA, POLITICS, EDUCATION, AND TECHNOLOGY:

Journalism and democracy are facing exciting crossroads. We'd like you and the organizations you care about to help figure out which directions make sense – and benefit as a result. Don't fret about the future, be part of understanding and creating it -- as a participant and co-convenor of a unique, multi-disciplinary summit June 29-July 1, 2006.

The [Media Giraffe Project](#) is a non-profit, non-partisan research effort. We are finding and spotlighting above-the-crowd individuals making innovative, sustainable use of media (old and new) to foster participatory democracy and community. They use fresh, effective tools and approaches that empower and inform citizens.

We need your membership's attendance at "[Democracy and Independence: Sharing News and Politics in a Connected World](#)" set for June 29-July 1, 2006, at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. It's a combination roundtable summit and think tank, workshop and conference. We're bringing together our prospective giraffes with thought leaders, innovators and doers in media, politics, education and technology.

These reporters, editors, bloggers, teachers, political strategists and Internet technologists don't normally meet at the same time and place. So when they do, we expect some exciting cross-disciplinary ideas to hatch. **Our summit goal is to unite individuals in media, politics, education and technology in charting a future for journalism that sustains participatory democracy and community.** By scheduling between semesters (and incidentally days before the 230th anniversary of our nation's Declaration of Independence) we can handle up to 1,000 participants on a wired-and-WiFi campus normally full of 23,000 students.

And we mean participants — actively sharing ideas and best practices among all attendees at the summit — and at outdoor, cultural and recreational venues in rural, summer New England. No lectures, preaching by marquis names . . . this event is intended to bubble up new ideas and new leadership — and provide benefits for co-sponsoring groups. Together, we will:

- Spotlight emerging business models and “above-the-crowd” leaders
- Bridge the gap between new and traditional media
- Examine the impact of new-media technologies on journalism and the “public sphere”
- Suggest and recommend changes in the financing and practice of journalism
- Create new networks of media innovators that bridge traditional carriers among journalism, education, politics and technology
- Push for outcomes in the form of fresh ideas and discussions of sustainability.

HOW YOU AND YOUR GROUP CAN HELP

- 1) INVITE YOUR MEMBERS — Please extend to your membership our invitation to this collaborative summit. Point them to: <http://www.mediagiraffe.org/invite>
- 2) GET WITH THE PROGRAM — Offer a speaker, discussion leader, workshop or other event for inclusion. We'll provide rooms and scheduling as appropriate. Review the latest program at: <http://www.mediagiraffe.org/program>
- 3) ADD TO THE MIX — Prepare white papers, audio, video, posts or other materials and add to our collaborative wiki, opening by April 1 at: <http://www.mediagiraffe.org/wiki>

HOW YOUR GROUP CAN BENEFIT

- 1) OBTAIN FREE REGISTRATIONS — For every four online registrants who put your group's discount code in the comments box, we will give your group one complementary registration to use as you wish.
- 2) PIGGYBACK A MEETING — Groups who register five or more participants may request at no charge a meeting room and audio-visual services for either Wednesday or Saturday afternoon, June 28 or July 1. Email conference@mediagiraffe.org for details.
- 3) GAIN RECOGNITION — By urging your members to attend, we will list you as a collaborating sponsor and assign you a registration discount code.

HOW YOU CAN BENEFIT BY REFERRALS

- 1) For every four attendees who register online and put your name in the bottom-of-form comments box, we will rebate \$25 to you post-conference.


WHAT YOU SHOULD DO NOW

To join this unique, important, challenging – and fun – effort, please email conference@mediagiraffe.org immediately and tell us to add your group as a collaborator. Then email, call, mail and cajole your members to come join us. Point them to:

<http://www.mediagiraffe.org/invite>
<http://www.mediagiraffe.org/program>

Thanks for helping rethink journalism and democracy and we'll see you June 29. We welcome your suggestions, by email or phone.

Best regards,



Prof. Norman Sims, Ph.D.
Principal Investigator, 413-545-5929
sims@journ.umass.edu



Bill Densmore
Director/Editor, 413-458-8001
densmore@journ.umass.edu