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Know More

Denise Lockwood - Founder

"\ "There seems to be a need in the community for background and just basics of even how taxes are figured and what makes a budget. Really kind of having collective resources that if I'm a community member and I'm trying to find out why health care costs more here in Southwestern Wisconsin than in the entire nation, and why that is, I want to know from a collective standpoint information from different, primary sources. \ "



Lockwood in phone conversation with Bill Densmore and Matt Thompson on October 13, 2008"

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About

Submitted by Bill Densmore on 11/02/2008

Denise Lockwood is like thousands of U.S. daily newspaper reporters -- she fell victim to staff reductions. But she's not giving up reporting -- she's pursuing her passion online.

Lockwood, an award-winning education and general-assignment reporter, is looking for advice on how to start a non-profit online news and community site for

southeastern Wisconsin. She wants to focus on providing the context and background that dailies are being forced by economics to abandon.

One idea Lockwood is pursuing -- what do we mean by "participatory democracy?" She worries that it isn't enough to just vote anymore, that citizens "need to show up" at public meetings.

On Oct. 13, 2008, Lockwood talked by phone with Bill Densmore of the Media Giraffe Project and Matt Thompson, a 2008-2009 Donald W. Reynolds Journalism Institute fellow at the Missouri School of Journalism. You can listen to the full audio stream by clicking on the "Listen" link below Lockwood's photo. See below for text excerpts of the discussion.

INTERVIEW EXCERPTS

DENISE LOCKWOOD: I want to start an online news magazine that would really focus on investigative stuff, intense, local pieces.

I can't tell you how many times I've been at a board meeting ... there's nobody there. It used to be, and now I'm gone. The community is really missing out on some very important issues, and that breaks my heart.

...I'm trying to figure out if there's anyone else who is doing this, what challenges they face, what success they have, what resources they use -- how they funded it is a big question. How they are funded is a question. I'm interested in non-profit journalism....

... So my thinking is to find out if people have used video, and primary sources, but also kind of using some of those websites as collective places that knowledge can be drawn from so that communities can tap into those resources on an ongoing basis. So that tomorrow's newspaper just doesn't disappear, you still have an archive or a log that's coming back and forth that has that issue, that background that we all have to have to make intelligent decisions.

...There seems to be a need in the community for background and just basics of even how taxes are figured and what makes a budget. Really kind of having collective resources that if I'm a community member and I'm trying to find out why health care costs more here in Southwestern Wisconsin than in the entire nation, and why that is, I want to know from a collective standpoint information from different, primary

sources. so you're not only getting perspective but also the background and the issues that are being discussed in the community. But not having it go away because a new day's news has been established. But really trying to pool resources.

MATT THOMPSON: News sites ... should not just be concatenations of recent news that fade from relevance a few hours later, they should actually be living archives that are updated over time and relevant indefinitely.

LOCKWOOD: There are so many issues that have ongoing story lines. And what do newspapers do well, they interpret, they give context, and now we are abandoning that for the daily news, the crime of the moment, the breaking idea.

...The medium is really unlimited with websites, so why not use it, and really kind of have that different layers of knowledge. I'm working with the Poynter Institute to work on storyboarding -- telling the story from the point of view of a patient, or a hospital administrator, or a doctor or the state Medicaid director. You can look at an organization as a whole -- how does it work.

MATT THOMPSON (blogging at newsless.org) -- Many of us who have been working in news, who have been working in online news, are coming to the same sorts of conclusions about what the shape of news should be online. A few of us have taken that step of articulating exactly what this looks like. We're beginning this process of evolution and in the first few tries at this we're definitely going to get some things wrong, we may fail to garner an audience with some initial stabs at it but I really want to capture some of the initial ideas.

LOCKWOOD: These communities are really losing that collective knowledge base because we're just not doing it. Two thirds of our taxes in Racine county go to the school district, I can't tell you how many times I've been at other school districts that no one is there at the annual meeting where they're actually setting the lvy or the mill rate -- and that's two thirds of the tax bill. And these school districts are really struggling and if people knew the ideas behind the dollars and the purposes behind these programs, and they could really have a wonderful discussion of how important are these things to us.

MATT THOMPSON: A lot of it is how we pitch those stories. Right now we pitch them to folks who've been paying attention . . . and we sort of leave out those folks who might be really interested in this stuff if we gave them an avenue to get into it, a gateway to get in.

LOCKWOOD: You've got public television and you've got public radio -- why not publicly funded newspapers?

READ MORE:

In this [June 10, 2009 post](#), Lockwood lays out her vision for the site Know More:
\"Every week I'll post a notice calling for story ideas and photos. Remember, I'm a one woman shop, so I need to be selective in the stories that I write. I will accept photos and brief announcements, but please keep them short – 100 words or less. Breaking news will always take precedence over event based stories. I'll also be writing one feature story a week and update my website at least every few days.\"

After being laid off from the Kenosha News and before starting her own site, Lockwood wrote for the Examiner websites. Here you can watch a [video of Lockwood talking about her job search and attempt to recast her career](#):

\"A few weeks ago I told my fiance that I didn't want to leave journalism and he said, 'honey, journalism has already left you.\"

[Lockwood's profile on linked in.](#)

Links

- [Audio](#)
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Media Giraffe Profile Archive | ID: 475

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