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## **Crafting New Possibilities for Journalism in an Interactive World**

Media makers convene around shared commitments to journalism at Hub Seattle

[Mike Fancher](#) knew from the 10th grade on that he wanted to be a journalist. That is when he initially read the first journalist's creed written by Walter Williams in 1914. He knew at that moment there was something central about journalism as a public trust.

The referenced media source is missing and needs to be re-embedded.

*Mike Fancher*

As a retired journalist and former executive editor of the *Seattle Times*, Mike is now involved in emerging movements in the field. He will join [Axiom News](#) founder and CEO Peter Pula, [Journalism that Matters](#) co-founder [Peggy Holman](#) and a plethora of other media makers for a series of conversations beginning at The Hub Seattle tomorrow.

"I'm personally most looking forward to having people that don't know each other, but share some common commitment, meet each other and explore possibilities," says Mike.

The guest list includes a spectrum of professionals working in both emerging journalism and traditional media, with the goal of forming new connections around the interest of co-creating the news ecology.

“The spirit of Journalism that Matters is that when you bring together people that wouldn’t otherwise have had a chance or reason to talk to each other, new possibilities emerge,” Mike says.

He sits on the board of directors for Journalism that Matters, an evolving collaboration of individuals supporting the pioneers who are shaping the emerging news and information ecosystem. It is with this spirit of openness to possibility that Mike is re-imagining the ethics of journalism, while grounding it in the central purpose of the craft.

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*Peggy Holman*

“I’ve taken for granted that the fundamental purpose of journalism is to give people the information they need to be free and self-governing. That’s been part of the mission but it needs to be more expansive,” he explains.

“We need a new journalistic ethic for an interactive age and I call that public trust through public engagement. The early generations of journalists saw ethics in terms of their profession but they couldn’t anticipate how that would change in a more interactive world.”

It is no secret that such openness to change in the field of journalism has been met with many reservations. Mike has witnessed many journalists being “eaten alive” by the economic shifts affecting previously established business models for journalism.

“The biggest challenge I see is one about the culture of journalism — of people feeling very embattled and there’s a lot of resistance within traditional news organizations to this sense of giving up the control we’ve had about the quality and flow of information for a century. Even the people who are more open to the new possibilities in an organizational context find it hard to see beyond the boundaries of their workplace. That breeds a certain level of resistance where it’s perceived that the outcome would be a lessening of the quality of journalism. That’s really loyalty to great values and principals of journalism,” Mike says.

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*Peter Pula*

“Once people get in conversations and realize what they have in common is shared values, then this could be a very good thing,” he adds. “That gap is an important one to narrow down and of course the opportunity for doing that is the greatest opportunity we have.”

Mike draws several insights from his 2008-2009 fellowship with the Reynolds Journalism Institute at the University of Missouri. During this time he read a book about what happens to a professional when his or her career falls into crisis. The authors of *Good Work*, Howard E. Gardner, Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi and William Damon, conclude that such professionals need to focus on three things: the mission of their profession, its standards, and their identity — what propels and sustains them to be involved in their work.

According to Mike, the mission of journalism needs to expand beyond providing accurate information to helping people find it themselves, to share it and act on it. The standards of journalism require growth around how ethics are understood so that they include public engagement and trust building. And in order to face the new context in which journalists are found, they need to revisit their own identity-forming moments like Mike’s in the 10th grade.

“I believe in the profession of journalism and that journalism is a public trust. And for me personally, it is that belief that is the sustaining commitment and a desire to reconsider that belief in the modern circumstance.”

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Submitted by Susan Sulc (not verified) on Fri, 07/05/2013 - 15:03

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## **Journalism vs Public Relations**

How refreshing to read about people with a passion for a mission that transcends their individual self interests. I recently read another superficial article on Yahoo News that was probably written by a young, inexperienced 'content writer' to 'fill' the column of their 'news' section. The article was about jobs that are no longer desirable because there is no 'market' or that pay badly for certain skills. One of the top five bad career choices stated in the article was 'investigative journalism'. Since newspapers or news outlets no longer have the money to pay for investigative journalists, it was the opinion of the writer, that going into 'public relations' was a far better choice. In other words, find a job crafting the vision of some corporate or government agency to create persuasive, or propagandist crap for the masses in order make money. So the article went on in a shallow and immature tone to expound upon the benefits of making money at a soulless job rather than pursuing a challenging career with passion. How sad.

Thank you Axiom for pursuing the passion of news with meaning and sharing a life of contribution.

Susan M. Sulc

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