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News team embraces generative journalism

Journalists at Axiom News are excited to be leaders of “generative journalism,” a term the team coined during a recent newsroom meeting.

Axiom News is an online company that reports for organization websites. After weeks of discussion in the Peterborough, Ontario newsroom the team decided to coin the phrase generative journalism July 11.

The word generative often refers to the ability to produce, and when paired with culture means to encourage new ideas. Generative fits with journalism when it is considered in the context of creating something new through asking probing questions and seeking to share forward-thinking knowledge.

“Can you use the journalistic art to create new ideas and cultivate new ideas? The answer is yes. It starts with strength-finding question sets,” says Peter Pula, Axiom News executive editor.

“Journalism can be used for a productive means,” says Axiom journalist Deron Hamel. “Rather than just reporting on what’s going on you can actually do something ... I can help make a difference.”

Hamel, who started working at Axiom in March after experience working in a variety of newsrooms, says he enjoys working in an environment where he is free to share his ideas.

“Generative journalism gives you a new outlook on writing as well as an outlook on life itself,” he says, “to write and hopefully make a difference.”

Because Axiom aims to aid organizations achieve their goals through storying their achievements, developing ideas and question sets is different than mainstream reporting, says journalist Jason Thompson.

Thompson, who also joined the Axiom news team in March, says collaboration in the newsroom makes it a different culture than other places of work.

“Collaboration is definitely a boon here when it comes to writing stories,” says Thompson.

Through discussions in the newsroom journalists may find they are better able to structure and focus their stories, says Thompson.

“My analytical thought or my critical thinking has become a lot better in regards to the questions that we ask,” says Thompson.

Before the news team agreed to use the term generative journalism, they discussed other terms such as citizen journalism, civic journalism and organic journalism. But it was generative journalism that reigned champion, says Thompson.

“That really showed that people here are committed to the idea and we believe it is the best one to go forward with,” says Thompson. “I think for now, it serves our purposes very well.”