

New Scoop Interviews Member Peter Block



Illustration: Yvonne Hollandy

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Monday, October 5, 2015 -- Sarah Arthurs

Curator's Note: *New Scoop is a Calgary-based news co-operative publishing Generative Journalism. We're thrilled to repost this interview between two of our good friends and colleagues, New Scoop co-founder Sarah Arthurs and Peter Block.*

Peter Block is the author of [Community: the Structure of Belonging](#) and one of the leading thinkers about community development. We were very excited when Peter became a member of [New Scoop](#) last winter and recently asked him why he

joined up.

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

Peter Block

New Scoop: Why did you, a citizen of Cincinnati, join a grassroots news co-op in Calgary?

Peter Block: I want to support every radical effort of citizens to reclaim their community and the common good. What any one community does in this direction is done for the sake of all. Plus, I am a friend of Axiom News and the wide network they are creating.

New Scoop: What role can Generative Journalism play in a community?

Peter Block: Journalism is in crisis. Most news is broadcasting to a shrinking audience. They think it is the internet, getting news from your friends, the 24 hour news cycle. They are wrong. It is the content that drives people away. The big question is what constitutes news. Generative Journalism's goal is to build communities, not simply report on their wounds.

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— *Peter Block*

There is a movement, in North America and around the world, that will create an alternative future; it is local, co-operative, kind to the planet, and economically revitalizing. This movement goes unreported, except when there is a conflict, like in Greece. We need a journalism that reports this movement and all the constructive things people do. All the possibilities that exist. A storytelling that honours the complexity of the world. The current news dumbs it down. Citizens are not stupid, the news and entertainment industries just treat them that way.

New Scoop: In your experience of transforming communities how has the telling of things changed history in a good way: “good things, “good telling,” “good outcome”?

Peter Block: All transformation is linguistic. Change occurs out of our speaking it into being. In the beginning was the word. When we report on the events of community: civil rights, the end of poverty, the festival of neighbors, the compassion of a neighbor, the possibility of reclaiming the wetlands... these all first took the form of a sentence. When you report on citizens coming together, that act in itself widens the circle of connected citizens. Thereby, when you report of what is working in the world, the “what is working” becomes the world in the experience of reading about it. If we only report on what is dying, then we die in the reading and the hearing.

This blog was originally posted on the [New Scoop website](#), and appears here with permission.