

MY MODEL, COLLECTIVE CONSCIOUSNESS

LESSONS FROM THE PAST, ON THE PRESENT, AND FOR THE FUTURE

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Social Media Post: My model, 'Collective Consciousness,' prioritizes the responsibilities established in the past, tools of the present, and preparing for the future. By combining these three elements, I believe that my journalistic entity is well-equipped for the present and into the future. #CollectiveConsciousness #Journalism #MyModel #Past #Present #Future #Responsibility #Approach #Adaptation #Foundation #Tools #Preparation

Over the past semester, our weekly conversations with guest speakers have provided me with around fifteen takeaways that I believe to be paramount to establish a solid foundation for a successful modern journalism model. By removing unnecessary or repeated details, I have turned those fifteen takeaways into nine fundamentals for my proposed model, 'Collective Consciousness,' that are necessary to not only survive but thrive in the present digital age. Breaking down my idea for Collective Consciousness, I believe that the media company should concentrate online. A social media presence would be extremely important, but its main output would be through a dedicated mobile app and desktop website. Its focus would be on its local community, so if it was based in Worcester, central Massachusetts residents would be its core audience, never expanding beyond New England at its largest size. Due to this, I see it as being a more ambitious version of The 016 or a smaller scale MassLive. Its main draw would be its use and spotlighting of individual reporters using them as personalities that reappear for different

stories or topics. In this way, Collective Consciousness would be seen as a talent or management agency for journalists, taking in both rising and established reporters and capitalizing on their own audiences. Additionally, the company would take on young student interns to be trained by these seasoned industry veterans, cutting the cost of labor through academic credits. Each reporter would be expected to produce written stories with supporting pictures, audio podcasts, and full videos to meet any audience consumption need. Collective Consciousness would be for-profit, utilizing ads on the app and website, livestreams only available to subscribers, donations, sponsorships, and collaborations to produce revenue. Also, as we will see, my main inspirations for this model are Anne Brennan, Jeremy Gilbert, and Mark Henderson, as my takeaways from our conversations support learning from the past, taking advantage of the present, and looking towards the future of journalism.

As I have mentioned, the first pillar of my model involves utilizing the core responsibilities of journalism that has defined its past. I believe that emphasizing journalism's role as a public service rather than a commercial enterprise is essential to its growth, as reporting the news should be seen as a duty taken on by reporters for the betterment of their communities. As Manisha Sinha explored in our conversation with her, holding power accountable is central to this concept. Protected by the First Amendment, journalists are allowed to investigate scandals and expose lies that those in power would rather keep hidden. Similarly, John Osborn and Lisa Aciukewicz of the Harvard Press insisted that journalism be used as a defense for democracy, with small-scale journalism being an essential form of informed civic participation. Without it, news deserts form, which we have learned leads to disconnected communities more likely to vote in favor of national issues rather than for local interests. Finally, reporters Susan Spencer and Noah Bombard noted the importance of ethically framing narratives. Our conversation with

them explored how reporters have a responsibility to use neutral and accurate language to avoid manipulating public perception. Additionally, the use of reporting based on solutions rather than problems prevents communities from being viewed solely through the lens of their negative aspects. These three takeaways from Sinha, Osborn and Aciukewicz, and Spencer and Bombard are a solid foundation for Collective Consciousness, grounding my model in truth, community, and morality.

My next pillar for my model of journalism focuses on its approach, using the tools of the present to be effective as possible. While my first pillar defined my model's purpose, this explores how its execution has been transformed by modern technology and how to best use all that it offers. Modern newsrooms operate within a digital ecosystem where efficiency and proficiency are essential. As Anne Brennan of MassLive described in our conversation, modern journalists should use the power of artificial intelligence and automation to get a headstart of responsibilities. Talking about how AI can find trends, write first drafts, and perform menial tasks, Brennan explained how this kind of automation can play a significant role in journalistic workflows, allowing reporters to focus more on interpretation and storytelling while reducing time spent on repetitive chores. Following this idea, Brennan also noted how reporters must be jacks-of-all-trades in their job. By not only writing stories, reporters that also take photos, record videos, and produce podcasts meet the different needs of their audiences and the ways that they may consume their news. Most recently, Jeremy Gilbert, the Knight Chair of Digital Media Strategy for Northwestern University, highlighted the benefits of newsrooms acting as talent agencies. Through the featuring of individuals who build their own following through amassed online audiences and previously established credibility, a media company doesn't have to rely solely on their institutional brand. These three takeaways all play into the larger idea of using the

tools of the present to their fullest extent, defining Collective Consciousness's approach as consistently in line with the time in which it resides.

The third pillar of my model then explores adaptation, using my previous pillars of both the past and present to prepare for the future. To remain viable, journalism must constantly adopt new structures to evolve along with the conditions and challenges that it faces. As Mark Henderson of The 016 mentioned in our conversation, reclaiming local distribution is key to success in the future. Similar to Osborn and Aciukewicz's point of defending democracy from news deserts, Henderson implores that media companies focus on the needs of their communities, abandoning social media platforms that highlight negative emotions and sideline small businesses in favor of using self-started independent channels. This also falls in line with Spencer and Bombard's concept of focusing on solutions rather than problems, emphasizing the positive aspects of a community to retain a local following. Osborn and Aciukewicz also note the importance of integrating education into a journalistic model. This would allow local papers to overcome staffing and resource limitations by utilizing student interns, providing practical training for the next generation of journalists while also expanding community coverage. Finally, my last takeaway encapsulates all of the previous concepts of my model, placing the utmost importance on the human condition. By humanizing a journalistic entity, success would be achieved. This would prioritize reporting on actual community members over reactive, fragmented, and negative news stories, allowing the media company to be seen as an equal member of the community. Through all of these takeaways, Collective Consciousness would be well-equipped for the future that it will soon enter, prepared for whatever may change in the coming times.

As I have explored, my model proposes a hybrid framework that balances the responsibilities that are the foundation of the past, an approach that uses the tools of the present, and a focus on adaptation that prepares journalistic entities for the ways of the future. By grounding itself in responsibility, my model reinforces journalism's obligation to ethical reporting. Through its approach, it leverages modern tools to enhance efficiency. Finally, through adaptation, it establishes a sustainable framework capable of evolving alongside structural shifts. The result is a system that prioritizes both credibility and relevance, recognizing that neither can exist without the other. As traditional institutions face numerous challenges such as declining public trust, shrinking resources, and competition from individual social media personalities, a restructured approach is needed now more than ever. In practice, Collective Consciousness would function as a digitally native, locally focused media platform that integrates investigative reporting with multimedia storytelling and community engagement. Its success would be measured not solely by economic metrics, but by its ability to inform, connect, and empower its audience. By way of conversations with professional journalists, I believe that my model is entirely effective going forward, as I offer a path forward that balances innovation with integrity, ensuring that the field remains both impactful and sustainable in the years to come.