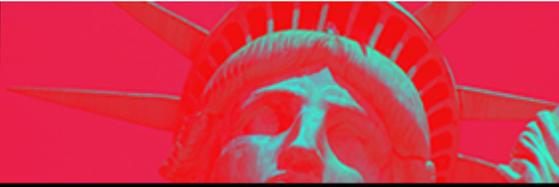


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Good Riddance To The Mainstream Media? Not Quite Yet

By Amanda Ernst on Oct 28, 2009 03:30 PM

The New York Times' **David Carr** stole the show at last night's Intelligence Squared debate on the merits of the mainstream media, when he pulled out a print out of fellow debater **Michael Wolff's** Web site **Newser** all full of holes. Carr had cut out every story on Newser that came from the main stream media to prove his point: new media couldn't exist without venerable mainstream pubs like the *Times*.

Ultimately, Carr's side -- debating against the proposition "Good Riddance to the Main Stream Media" -- won the night, with 68 percent of the audience agreeing that we should not, in fact, say good riddance to the MSM. But Carr and his mainstream-representing colleagues, **Phil Bronstein** from the *San Francisco Chronicle* and the *Nation's* **Katrina Vanden Heuvel**, may have just lucked out. Their argument for maintaining the mainstream media seemed to simply boil down to the fact that there are some good things about it that need to be preserved, and new media is taking the best and claiming it for itself. Also, without the mainstream media, where would the debaters all work?



Arguing for the proposition were supposed new media barons, although they all have true MSM roots and, in some cases, still work for the mainstream press. Joining *Vanity Fair* columnist Wolff was *Politico* executive editor **Jim Vandehei** and **John Hockenberry**, the co-host of public radio show "The Takeaway." They started out strong, arguing that new media was the future for the mainstream media and pointing out that digital media has allowed for more gender, racial and ideological diversity in the press.



But they got caught on the monetization of the medium. Both sides agreed that good journalism, foreign reporting and freedom of the press should be preserved, but none could provide a way to fund the future of the industry. The recent loss of ad revenues and circulation and massive layoffs have shown us that even the traditional media doesn't have a clue.

"The best journalists are the ones who don't do it for the money," Hockenberry said, in defense of the poor schlubs upon whose back the new media has been founded. But if no one is paying anyone anything, how can any media -- new or old -- survive?





The team for the proposition



Celebrating the win

(Photos by Chris Vultaggio)