



The Civics and Media Project

Workshop 1
Report back

What we did

- Gathered evidence and information so that we have common ground for discussion
- Examined what we know about the state and trends of civics and media
- Attempted to establish what the story is telling
- Identified gaps in our knowledge
- Attempted to set up key messages for Workshop 2

Who we did it with

Partner Agencies

- Victoria University
- University of Auckland
- NZOnAir
- McGuinness Institute
- Royal Society
- Ministry for Culture and Heritage

Knowledge, statistics & research agencies

- Statistics New Zealand
- Ministry of Education
- University specialists

Scene Setters

- John Burrows - civics
- Paul Thompson / Marcus Stickley - radio
- Gavin Ellis - print
- Peter Thompson – media ecology
- Karl Lofgren - direct democracy
- Peter Griffin – digital and media literacy

Why we did it

As outlined in the Workshop 1 Discussion Paper:

- News and information assist citizens and communities to participate, coordinate activities, solve problems
- News and information are fuel to the engine of a well-functioning, prosperous society
- New Zealand is a successful society - so worth keeping that status
- Each generation faces new challenges
- Major forces at work:
 - social
 - technological
 - demographic
 - media markets in flux

What we learnt

- Strong governance and institutions
- Accuracy and trust is a real issue in atomised world where anyone can produce and distribute ‘news’
- Relatively good civics knowledge but declining participation and distributional problems
- Migration means some new New Zealanders may not have strong traditions of trust and engagement
- Not everyone has the literacy needed to participate
- Open question as to whether education system (broadly defined) should do some things differently
- Fallacy that young people don’t participate – they do less traditionally and on issues important to them
- Disrupted media markets have led to cost-cutting and significantly reduced editorial resources
- Some good responses to the disrupted markets

What we learnt

- No one actor - media, government or citizen - is solely responsible for 'fixing' things
- Some unanswered questions:
 - how to lift participation
 - whether newer forms of participation are effective
 - activating the demand side - people need to 'want it' to some degree
 - optimising critical thinking skills as the way into literacy and civics education
 - workable business models for news media that allow for:
 - quality reporting
 - time to investigate
 - in-depth journalism