

Credibility of new news: session four: conclusions

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Polis is hosting an OpenDemocracy.net/MacArthur Foundation all-day seminar on the credibility of new forms of news. There is an introductory podcast [here](#). In short, we have gathered a bunch of clever people – journos, geeks and philosophers to discuss what the advent of the Internet means. Read about the first session [here](#) and the second session [here](#) and the [third session](#) here. This is session four which was a disparate set of responses to what has gone before. So random thoughts:

“It’s the same old story of power and money”

One man (Drudge) can break a world exclusive. 20 people (DIGG) can drive millions of visits.

[Subvert and Profit](#) is a site that will get your website on to the top of aggregator lists and drive traffic towards you: is that bribery and a corruption of the principle of Internet democracy or a realistic market tactic?

[Fantasy Congress](#) – a site where you can play at politics with real political figures and real political data: is that information or entertainment?

Tolerance, if it is to be a universal value must mean more than indifference.

[Avaaz](#) is an online global advocacy network with 2 million users that seeks to cross boundaries and break narratives of the war on terror: it is a mediating voice, which seeks to build consensus on facts through a deliberative dialogue. But what is its credibility based on? A community? an ethos? is it a movement or a focus group? I am not sure but it’s not a news site but it is a networked communications medium. As Paul Hilder their campaign director put it: when you look at events from a global perspective the difference between journalist and a citizen is blurred.

Christopher Lydon from [Open Source Radio](#) then quotes Arnold Toynbee from the 1940s dreaming of a unified world. (That was odd but lovely).

[Jonathan Zittrain](#) wraps up by asking ‘what’s the problem?’ Is this a lovely ferris wheel or is something awry? It matters if vaccinations are misreported but does it matter if there are idiots shouting from an Internet Speaker’s Corner? Can new technologies enable us to reach the goals we set out without compromising on our principles? and who will build this eco-system?

Congratulations to Tony Curzon Price and MacArthur for such a stimulating and rewarding day. More information at OpenDemocracy.net

[Here’s](#) what the excellent American online journalist Christopher Lydon from [Open Source Radio](#) had to say about the event.

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