

**Transcript: News Take Episode 103: Kim Bui, Arizona Republic/AZCentral.com**

16:03:20 Hi everyone, welcome. I'm David Chavern, president and CEO of the news media Alliance and this is episode three of news take for those joining us for the first time news take or conversations, sometimes, pretty walking conversations, designed to offer unique

16:03:37 perspectives and insights around all of the innovation taking place in the news media industry and there's a lot of it, and how different organizations are employing new ideas and perspectives.

16:03:49 We're going to try to get in the weeds, a little bit with people who are changing the news industry, particularly those that are helping making better news products, and his perspectives aren't always heard and and all the other debates about the industry

16:04:03 and today I am super excited to welcome Kim Bui to the show. Kim is a digital journalist who has focused her career on leading breaking news initiatives and conceiving new storytelling forms for digital print and broadcast companies catering catering

16:04:20 national and global audiences, currently the Director of Product and audience innovation at the Arizona Republic. She also co writes the columns sincerely leaders of color, focused on helping journalism, become more supportive of journalists of color.

16:04:37 Prior to the Arizona Republic she was editor at large for now this news focusing on original social reporting and breaking news, and was deputy managing editor for reportedly digital media startup specializing in social journalism cam Welcome to show

16:04:53 thank you so much for being here.

16:04:56 Happy to be here, David, thank you for inviting me.

16:04:58 Well, let's just start with a background like, tell us a little bit about your background and how you ended up in the news business and how he ended up with this position at the Arizona Republic.

16:05:10 Sure, I'm like any good agent I was supposed to be a doctor, that's gonna work out so well.

16:05:17 But I've always loved to to write I, I often tell people that I think most reporters and journalists come at it from one direction or another either their reporters first and they asked a lot of annoying questions or their writers first and they love

16:05:32 prose. I was a writer first.

16:05:34 So I didn't do so well on organic chemistry ended up in journalism, walked into the student newspaper at Iowa State University, and I ended up on a lawyer after organic chemistry so

16:05:50 organic chemistry really ruins people.

16:05:55 Yeah, so I started off as a reporter I had a very meandering career, probably will continue to have a very meandering career of just following what really interests me.

16:06:05 I took me from reporting to social media to web production over into social media reporting which was sort of new at the time.

16:06:14 And then sidetracked into video I did a little radio and then came back to local news which is my true my true love. I think that's fantastic. And the in, tell us a little bit about your specific role the Arizona Republic, like, what is what gets encompassed

16:06:33 in, in your, you know, your areas of responsibility and activity.

16:06:43 It's, it's a little bit of a lot. The audience innovation part is pretty easy.

16:06:46 It's the social video photo teams.

16:06:50 And then I also manage criminal justice and breaking news, and that is because I feel like the our audiences, we first get to know them through breaking news and criminal justice coverage.

16:07:06 It is a really good place to innovate because the stories are in a sense semi wrote.

16:07:13 Like you kind of know what's going to happen and there's sort of a set way of doing things and so there's a lot of leeway and how you do those things, and how you report those stories, the product side is a personal interest of mine and that really is

16:07:28 the how. I love looking at how we can tell better stories how we can integrate better with our audiences lives, listen to them become more useful, and really get away from the pedestal style journalism that that's ended up with us, not being trusted by

16:07:50 the majority of people.

16:07:53 Yeah, it's so interesting, there's so much rich stuff in there.

16:07:57 Let's start with the product parts, because there is a.

16:08:02 I talked about this a lot I engage with people on it, in terms of that news products and really that the still huge amounts of innovation that has to happen in news products, right, and you have had this emergent set of discussions about better product

16:08:18 thinking when it comes to news and journalism, you know product focus of product development focus.

16:08:25 What does that mean from your perspective in particular, how does a product, the focus or product development. Focus differ from what we were doing before or had been doing.

16:08:37 Yeah, I product.

16:08:41 The term product, you know comes from the more like tech sphere. And in terms of like what are the products that we that face our audience and being able to project manage and translate those ideas, and make sure that things move forward.

16:08:58 The way I think product manifests in journalism as a slightly different but in many ways the same.

16:09:07 I'm a founding member of the news product Alliance and we like to call people product thinkers, so you don't need a certificate in product management to be a good product person.

16:09:17 You just have to be someone that thinks in terms of product and thinking in terms of product is really just putting the users need first and trying to figure out how we how the platforms that we already have in that, that we could expand into can best

16:09:38 serve those users. It is, it is really it it does encompass as much of a journalism as it does the tech side, and the business side, but people tend to think of it as like a business side a tech side thing because a lot of the solutions end up being tech

16:09:55 or business solutions, because there are a lot of the places were buried behind him.

16:10:00 I think we're very good at telling stories I don't think that's going to change I hope, hopefully, and we have done a lot of really good thinking on that as an industry.

16:10:10 But we kind of forgot along the way, who were telling stories for. And that is what a true product thinker thinks about a lot of product people these days that are in newsrooms come from an audience background.

16:10:23 And that's because we, as audience folks are so honed in on what we think as journalists that this is what they want. However, it is not because journalists are not regular news consumers.

16:10:40 And this is what the audience that we are actually approaching looks at and how we can find new audiences and the kind of experimental design that's involved with that, it's, it's honestly a lot of fun if you're kind of the kind of person who likes to

16:10:54 lab tinker with things. I think that's what product is it's really just tinkering with the recipe and ingredients that we have on hand.

16:11:04 Yeah.

16:11:07 editorialized for a second i've you know the industry historically if you went way back was actually very innovative in on the product side week, we kind of lost that along the way for variety of reasons.

16:11:19 And, and now we're in this moment of really just being recipients of other people's tactical decisions right and I have a long term plan to really get us going.

16:11:31 Get the water flowing the opposite direction a little bit you know us having our own views and perspectives about what's the right technological solutions between us and our consumers, but I was editorialize it you know one of the things is part of how

16:11:47 I think about this is that the industry is in this moment where. On the plus side, a lot of publishers particularly local publishers have had much better experience with digital subscriptions and they expected.

16:12:04 Okay. Man, you saw over, 2020 and 2021, driving a lot of digital subscriptions and we're like, Whoa, that's cool man, like I didn't, I didn't know that good to happen, or they were skeptical that it could happen.

16:12:17 So the good experience but if you look at penetration into a addressable market. Even the people killing it are at very low single digits penetration into whatever they think their addressable market is right i mean you have metros with a couple of million

16:12:37 people in the metro area and they may be really happy have gotten 100,000 Digital subscribers or something so there's a there's a huge Delta that on the one hands and opportunity.

16:12:46 Whoa. Yeah, we can really grow but on the other hand hat forces you to think, What are really the changes. A lot of it has to be product right the product, what are the, the changes and how we deliver and connect with consumers that are really going to

16:13:02 help us move that penetration up. Is that part of how you think about this.

16:13:07 Yeah, it is because what if you think about digital let's talk about digital subscriptions in particular, digital subscriptions, is a departure from paper subscriptions which we newspapers have relied on for a really long time and I talked to, and I get

16:13:24 emails from both our print and digital subscribers who don't really understand what their subscription gets them.

16:13:31 And that is a.

16:13:34 That is a result of us not being very good at delineating our product and showing what the product is, you know, I think someone on our team I just told them that, you know, USA Today network has a crossword app and then like we have that, yes, we have,

16:13:53 have, um, because we've been we've been following for so long. At the point. And I don't know exactly when this happened, but the point in which the chasm really started to show itself Let's guess like 2008 or so where we realize we had really screwed

16:14:08 up with our audiences and they just didn't care about us any longer, and had gone to social media, Netflix wherever, all these other places for information.

16:14:19 Since then we've been playing catch up. And even on the product side, you know, we look at you see all these articles about people only want one subscription and why would they pay for the Arizona republicans that are paying for Netflix and Netflix just

16:14:32 up their prices, and you don't get as much with your paper subscription, that a lot of that is somewhat like landing between product and market of making sure we're the things that we have decided to do with the stories that we tell our clear concise

16:14:51 and appeal to the right people, but also that we tell them you know, things were not entirely good at, and those audiences that we stand to gain from from Digital subscriptions are usually new younger younger audiences and by young me like under 45 so

16:15:16 demographics,

16:15:21 little skewed our business.

16:15:24 A little skewed and we look at penetration numbers ever look at penetration numbers about every month, and, you know, we I have targeted certain zip codes where we had zero penetration, like nobody in this zip code so subscribe to the Arizona Republic

16:15:39 print or digital.

16:15:41 And if you start looking at the demographics of those using research tools available which are pretty easy.

16:15:47 You realize that a lot of those are young, communities of color.

16:15:54 Probably college educated, but really just, if you ask them where they get their information from not even news but information from, they'll say friends and family.

16:16:03 And they are probably the arbiter of information for their circle of friends and family. So they're the ones that people go to are like, Hey, I don't know where to get a K and 95 mass, you probably know David like you're, you're in with the cool kids

16:16:17 you know what you know what's going on.

16:16:20 know what the show what's going on. And we can't reach we haven't reached those people. And that is really the challenge ahead.

16:16:26 Yeah, it's it's so interesting. I also met we can talk about. Sorry, how we evolved his face a lot. I think there was also a whole period where it was a real lack of self confidence in the industry.

16:16:41 You know, just, let's take a bunch of bad advice from people outside the industry and impose it on ourselves and, and I get that you know people are like, yeah, this internet thing.

16:16:51 Wow. Yeah, I get that there are moments where you feel like you're not well situated. But I also, I think most people are well over this is a primarily digital industry.

16:17:05 We have these other products that we sell but at this point I think we deserve some self confidence to be able to say oh what works for us right and not just somebody swooping in saying, This is what you should do.

16:17:21 And you know, getting back to those moments when we can really do that and develop it. And it's also always been interesting to me that, you know, local publishers have always been a core source of information that flowed to people through other places,

16:17:38 you know, notably TV you know there's a whole thing where, you know, you get a lot of commentators said well the audience's moved to TV news in the 50s.

16:17:49 Well, yeah, they did but it was still our stuff.

16:17:54 We're actually, we're actually still creating, most of the content that got distributed to this other way. And we're, you know for what's happening in Phoenix are, you know, you're still this stuff, a lot of times, right.

16:18:09 So, anyway, I'm digressing too much But getting back to the in terms of audience engagement, particularly with younger audiences and and products, you know, what have you been excited about in terms of like highly engaging products newsletters text

16:18:31 I mean what kind of experiments you're running What are you excited about.

16:18:36 Well, I love experiments so there's a dozen and a half I could tell you about but I think what is really interesting to me of late is really starting to define what community centered journalism means.

16:18:52 We spend a lot of time figuring out like What does audience engagement, even me.

16:18:56 And for a while that was just like tweet your stories, and then we moved on to sort of like, oh well ask the people on the Twitter for some interesting things that will put into the story and we've evolved since, since then and now we're looking at these

16:19:11 other platforms and other ways of figuring out what community center journalism means and shedding a little bit of the ego but not losing our confidence in terms of, they have to come to us for, they have to come to our platforms for the news like we

16:19:26 got to go where they are.

16:19:29 And I think that is what text newsletters, listening sessions all of those that's what that's about.

16:19:37 Going to where people are and making sure that we facilitate conversations, they're like, I don't think we are here to fix anything.

16:19:48 But we are here to give people the information to fix that help will help empower them to fix their lives and to live better richer lives.

16:19:59 So I, one thing that I find really fascinating as we run this text line, which has gone from everything to be like once a week, attacked or two every day at text for coronavirus information.

16:20:11 And it's crazy basic coronavirus information. It is just the stuff that I copy paste from our article where we distill and do like some light analysis on the state coronavirus numbers.

16:20:25 Copy paste those into a text and text, those out to people.

16:20:31 What I noticed happen is those people forward that text to their family members. There are several people who run Facebook neighborhood Facebook groups and or posted on next door.

16:20:42 Because it is just quicker it's there they don't have to go to the Arizona Republic. Look for the story that we put it in copy paste it over themselves they can just do it quickly.

16:20:52 And it's in, you know, maybe less than 500 characters. So I think that's, that's interesting.

16:20:59 newsletters, I wouldn't call it new. But the fact that we are being personal with them, probably.

16:21:11 Tell me about that. And, you know, personalization newsletter Tell me about that. The sub stack application.

16:21:17 I think it is.

16:21:18 Sometimes the news industry suffer so a little bit of like shiny things syndrome.

16:21:24 you know, I've always found newsletters that were like okay this really works it really converts.

16:21:30 And then the people who did best at newsletters were the ones who let a reporter, a editor, really show their voice because if you think about email in general what you use email for is like, I can email my grandma my grandma emails me back.

16:21:45 And it's a conversation. Yeah, what we were doing before was like here's 17 links.

16:21:51 That's not a conversation. And I think that is why, you know, the idea, the concept of a sudden stack, or writer driven newsletter one because it feels like they're writing to you.

16:22:06 That's why texting is so popular, It feels like I am texting individually.

16:22:11 These 3000 people that have signed up for this, they feel like they know me.

16:22:17 I told them I got sick, they were like, I hope you feel better.

16:22:21 It was, it's really cute. They remembering that we were people at the end of the day, that we're not this, you know,

16:22:31 kind of, great giant thing on a pedestal that like know, Dean Danes to give information out every once in a while, but that we are humans that are trying to live our best lives too, and we just happen to be very good at getting answers.

16:22:47 That's so fascinating you know the, you know, one of the interesting and compelling things about a podcast is, if you do it right, which is really hard by the way most people don't do it right.

16:23:01 Isn't it tremendously as they say, intimate experience right you're, you're in your own had usually with your buds on with somebody. And you're right there with their voice, and the people who do really well.

16:23:12 You really do feel there, and incense and it's really interesting to think about how you can create other products that give some sense of directness to people right yeah that they can be really attached, that's super interesting I am.

16:23:30 I'm also, you know, there are whole categories of

16:23:37 of areas where news, newspapers have kind of gotten out of the business take weather for example, okay where it was just up in the corner, do I take an umbrella today are going to take an umbrella today.

16:23:49 And I've seen people see this moment. One of the things about moments of disruption is that everything gets scrambled and yeah you get a lot of things aren't great but also opportunities, and like at the Washington Post as the capital weather gang where

16:24:02 these people who send emails every day by the way it's written out and they go on Twitter and they engage with the public. And it turns out there, a lot of people who want to talk about the weather.

16:24:13 And it's, again, to your point, it's reaching them where they are, you know, not being constrained by traditional topic areas, and really engaging with the public that really, really works.

16:24:28 Let me before I get off that the, you know, what are you, what have you been looking at at other formats, audio, you know, video, and the rest. You know that.

16:24:48 I also have this working thesis about, you know, the people were in those spaces, local broadcast TV local radio.

16:24:50 They're being disrupted too. And now you don't need a license to get into that business.

16:24:56 You know, should that be an opportunity for us, how are you thinking about that how you're approaching that oh yeah I think having spent a small amount of time at an NPR member station I really think I, I was disappointed that public radio, radio and

16:25:15 TV did not see the opportunity they had in front of them, because it does feel like Steve Inskeep is talking to me.

16:25:25 You know he feels like my friend, like Nina Totenberg is telling that story for me and that's that is just the feeling you have always gotten from NPR and they couldn't.

16:25:35 It took a very long time I think they're getting there now, figuring out how to translate that to the internet.

16:25:42 Because the internet somehow is this big hub. That was scary, even though it's pretty simple. it's just a different set of tubes.

16:25:51 Yeah.

16:25:53 Can I can I tell you a bizarre experience. I was actually interviewed by Stephen sscape one time after listening to him for like 20 years and sitting across and hearing that voice come out it was, it was startling I was like I've heard you my whole life.

16:26:07 Anyway, go on.

16:26:10 No, I really, I really enjoyed it. Like I have been like being on the radio is kind of scary because it feels like I'm gonna be in someone's ear.

16:26:20 And that's the same way I would sit with TV right like sure no one my age.

16:26:26 No one approaching 40 is probably looking at, or watching the 10pm, you know, news broadcast anymore. However, they're probably watching the live stream when there's a car chase in LA.

16:26:39 And some TV stations have figured out how to capitalize on some things but not, not everything. So I think, audio, video is a place where there's still.

16:26:49 We're still figuring it out, and and, but in the way in the sense is not even just journalism but just media in general, I mean if you look at someone like the you know the audio chat room apps that have come up in the past year and then, not necessarily

16:27:05 fail but kind of faded. We're just trying to figure out how do we how do we do that, especially in a in the pandemic. And I think that that's really what through everything for a loop of, and where you can see actually see a lot of success and ingenuity

16:27:21 where we were thrown like the set of circumstances you knew not know does not exist. Yeah. So try, try something different. And we have. And I think there are some things that have succeeded, but I also think a lot of people have taken a step back from

16:27:40 what they consider news, the quote unquote news or information.

16:27:46 Because they are overwhelmed, sad, and they feel like we are not treating the larger story in a humane way.



16:27:57 Oh, interesting. Could you talk a little more about that and in terms of.

16:28:03 Is that a partially a pandemic thing is it partially that political world religions, and, and then how do you another, I mean there's a lot interesting what you said but how then do you adapt in terms of reporting on stuff but then we have to react to

16:28:20 where our audiences in the moment, with that difficult space. Does that make sense yeah no no it does I think it is a pandemic you know we're all stuck at home for however many months and felt really disconnected and we're seeking connection in some way.

16:28:39 But then on top of that we had had just had a what feels like never ending cycle of political polarization which I hate using that term but that's what it is.

16:28:50 And, you know, it information has become weaponized in the past few years.

16:28:58 And there's too much of it. So there's there's too much information you there's too many places you get information from everything from my Alexa, to my computer to my phone all things coming at me every day.

16:29:12 But then on top of that, the. I don't know how to assess that information anymore. And it's being used against me.

16:29:22 Talk about that.

16:29:24 I mean I can, if you have an anti Vax are in your life.

16:29:29 That's what it is you know like it.

16:29:42 Everybody, pretty much tells us. Yeah, you probably come across one of them and that is, is a good example of weaponized information, which is not a new thing. If you look at like the history of the Cold War and journalism back then all of this information

16:29:47 If you look at like the history of the Cold War and journalism back then all of this information being weaponized for good, bad reasons intentionally unintentionally doesn't really matter, and how you get above that and through to people when they're

16:30:03 The more you can connect to people and make it feel like you do care.

16:30:22 and you do, you are here to help them.

16:30:26 And that, I think that is really the way to get to get through to somebody.

16:30:32 Yeah. And then, from a local publisher perspective how do you switch from being a contributor to their problem to being the person they trust or the entity they trust to help you walk through it, right, help you

16:30:50 tease out the information that's important.

16:30:55 And also kind of arm you for that. Crazy anti Vax debate over dinner or something right.

16:31:04 That's really powerful. It does. It also does relate to something particular about how do you think about younger audiences I'll use the term Gen Z although I don't know how relevant these categories are to more but you know we've done some research it's

16:31:25 kind of interesting that you people come with these assumptions that are now a little old right information wants to be free people won't pay for information.

16:31:34 What we found is that that really was evocative of people who grew up in a period of internet information.

16:31:45 But then, younger generation Gen Z in particular have gotten more used to the idea that you pay for Netflix you pay for other side right.

16:31:53 And I think a big part of is you have to put your passwords in everywhere, even if he took them from your parents or something like that. So, I don't know how were you thinking about, you know, the young adult audience for your content and how it might

16:32:09 be different than.

16:32:25 Then, older audiences and how you meet them where they are and help them solve some of these bigger information challenges that they have.

16:32:22 Yeah. Um, what what's interesting is, so I have a two nephews one who's 18 2016, and I regularly every time I see them every Christmas I'm like, So show me you're showing how you're doing things.

16:32:39 And,

16:32:39 yes, of course they are. They do things very differently from even me.

16:32:45 And it took me forever to understand what Tick Tock was and how to utilize it now I love it, but it's taking us.

16:32:55 And we tend to one to bucket, other generations was like, Oh, they care less or they care in a different way, which I don't think it's necessarily true.

16:33:19 So, when I was 18, I don't remember reading the newspaper every day.

16:33:19 Um, but I also didn't, you know, Twitter didn't exist, and I got, I don't even remember where I got my news at that point before I even got into journalism just like random internet websites sometimes RSS feeds, baby.

16:33:34 And I think that's probably the same for an 18 year old now it's like they're getting information from whatever pipe is the coolest right now but they're, they're not really at the point in their lives where they need news to be useful.

16:33:52 With the exception, I would say we have like people who are like really active in some sort of politics or some sort of cause, which I think that that is a difference between generations lately this kind of ebbs and flows with how deeply politically motivated

16:34:06 they are or not.

16:34:08 But then you start getting into your 20s and you start finding information more useful. And I think that is sort of the key of making sure they know who we are, when they're 18, we don't, they don't have to love us they just have to know who we are, that

16:34:24 we exist.

16:34:31 You're basically trusted, they may not just yet but that.

16:34:42 So something as simple as that. And then, when they're ready for that to be able to to be useful, and thoughtful and all of the things that we need to be, which is not I mean not dissimilar.

16:34:59 I don't think my information needs are terribly dissimilar from a boomers like my straight information needs, how I would like to consume them probably a little different, you know, my, my parents.

16:35:11 However, my parents have really gotten into YouTube in the past two years. I don't even use YouTube.

16:35:16 So it doesn't I don't think it's a generational young versus old thing, as much as it is a, we have to find a way to continually be useful, and have impact in people's lives.

16:35:33 And then at some point, hopefully when they're ready to pay and not use their parents Netflix, then they will pay for us. Yeah, and it's so particularly interesting at the local level you know there.

16:35:47 There's this broader internet phenomenon of sort of nationalization of attention right that, you know, the you knows if you're online somebody in Anchorage wants to talk to somebody Atlanta, so they talked about what they have in common, which is could

16:36:03 be national political it could be celebrity it could be right, but there's a more long term movement away from local attention, which would have been different than say my parents generation, you know my for my parents generation Nixon would have been

16:36:18 way down the news funnel, right, it would have been a lot of local and national political would have been way down. And then there were events, of course, Trump was just kerosene on the fire about nationalization of attention.

16:36:35 But interestingly, because of covert, and because of racial justice challenges and debates.

16:36:45 You know, we had we've had this moment where I think to some degree, the telescope's been spun around.

16:36:51 And then all sudden people care, who the, what their Mayor had to say when a lot of people had no idea who their mayor was before, right is like, Yeah, can we are you are you are you sensing that with audiences and then I guess one of the challenges is

16:37:05 how do we how do we hang on to that, as you know, evolves.

16:37:11 Yeah, I think I would blame us with journalism writ large for the nationalization.

16:37:20 I think we sort of made made that for ourselves in, like, you know, letting places like not throw BuzzFeed on the bus but letting places like BuzzFeed be like oh that they're the ones leading the conversation about what is new and interesting to young

16:37:37 people about what why we didn't have to let that be that way.

16:37:43 And that was at the point where I think a lot of local news organizations are struggling with how do we make money.

16:37:53 And how do we gain trust, and just sat on that question for probably far too long, you know like we talked about it, of course like news people we talked about it for what feels like 20 years, but we didn't really do anything about it when the answer

16:38:07 is generally something much more simple than we make it out to be. of like, you should just go talk to your neighbors.

16:38:17 You know, I did a bunch of research on empathy as a trait in newsrooms, and nobody used the term men but everybody uses it now in terms of like you want an empathetic reporter.

16:38:43 But, you know, the questions I got all the time after that we're like, Well how do you employ empathy, just go out and be empathetic to the person next door to you.

16:38:44 You probably don't need a college course on it. Right.

16:38:49 You just be caring real human being and understand that you can do that and be a journalist at the same time. So at some point in time, people thought that they could not people.

16:39:01 You know, when I was doing my research people said, oh no I'm, I would never employ empathy that's, that's, you know, taking away from my objectivity I'm, like, how is that even possible, but that I think people are confusing thing, it was sympathy.

16:39:16 Same way of how they're looking at real world now looking at local stuff again.

16:39:37 People were always looking for information locally.

16:39:30 And I think I remember when I first moved to LA, I could not get any information about anything in LA so I ended up going to LA just back when there was an optimist publication and independently run for the, the utility of the day which is what's happening

16:39:48 this weekend.

16:39:53 What is that we're building down the street. Who is that guy. Yeah.

16:40:13 street.

16:40:13 And we're good at it, and nobody else is going to do it right, it's not like there's, it's not like BuzzFeed is going to come into the.

16:40:23 And you know, do that right, we have, you have the opportunity sitting there you have the skill set.

16:40:28 It's really thinking, I guess too much earlier point, thinking constantly and deeply about your audience, like, you have to be in a moment where you are thinking, wow, somebody driving down the street was really intrigued by that crazy new building.

16:40:45 What is that, right, but you have to be really obsessed about thinking about the audience and not just not just to some ephemeral sense like I'm writing something important so obviously there's an audience for it, but like, what are, where are people

16:41:01 in that moment today. Right. Yeah, where are people actually actually looking, I, I do think, you know, access local is launching in a bunch of different cities including benefits city of Phoenix.

16:41:17 And then, of course, when that was announced I had like a minor moment of panic like, oh god, they're going to come on citizen in a second. They're writing a newsletter that's probably going to include news from us.

16:41:28 Oh definitely.

16:41:28 Yeah, so we we can when we can still win at this. What are they doing that we are not.

16:41:37 And that's really the question, like all these places that are winning that are not necessarily hyper local like locally based. They're probably doing something that we are not BuzzFeed to go back to BuzzFeed what they were doing was making stories digestible

16:41:51 in an era when we were making snowfall like long beautiful scrolling stories that no one could load on their phones.

16:42:01 So, I think, really, it's just a simple question of like I and I returned to this a lot in my newsroom totally sick of hearing me ask it like, how is this useful.

16:42:11 Like, how can I take what you're telling me in this 10,000 word article and use it tomorrow like doesn't help me. And if it doesn't help me then why do I need to know.

16:42:24 No real immediate and providing value to readers.

16:42:37 Jim let's talk a little bit about newsrooms generally and, you know, in journalism and the evolutions that need to continue to take place, both in terms of perspective, like we were talking but diversity inclusion, you know, you know, how we organize

16:42:46 ourselves to tell these stories. And I know you co write a column I think sincerely leaders of color.

16:42:54 And I just generally let's just start generally ask your thoughts on, you know, what are some core changes that everybody has to be thinking about.

16:43:04 Where, where, wherever we made some progress, where are the many areas where we can make a lot more progress, and how do we start down those roads.

16:43:12 Yeah.

16:43:14 We were lucky enough, Emma Kroger of them and I were to be friends that happened to talk about this a lot in a moment where that became the cool thing, the shiny thing to say like oh we're doing something about DDI because we have had that 2020 Summer

16:43:31 racial justice reckoning.

16:43:34 And I had known it was coming for a while like I could hear it boiling, and it's it's interesting because I don't even think I'm like mine, my newsroom generation is leading it is probably the generation that's like slightly after mine that is demanding

16:43:51 change.

16:43:53 You know we I politely asked for change.

16:43:56 Yeah, then, you know, and when that doesn't go right you have to get less polite. Yeah, yeah, I politely asked for it and then I went into marketing and I was like okay I'm gonna go back to this fight.

16:44:07 And, and then you have a younger generation that is like no we're demanding it because you know our generation is used to demanding things, and is much more politically conscious than yours was which is, which I think is great.

16:44:21 What the newsroom's need to do.

16:44:27 I think the and the easy answer for newsrooms is always like oh we need to be more diverse we need to include more diverse voices we need to have more diverse staffers and I, Yes, hundred percent, you got to do that.

16:44:39 That's like the basic thing you have to endeavor to do, but you cannot do that without investigating yourself in what led to you, ending up in a place where you were not diverse where you were not including those voices and not thinking of it as a checkmark.

16:45:02 This is not a to do list item, you know.

16:45:13 Yeah, newsrooms, it's not something it is a process that is probably going to be ongoing for a very long time. Man, you said that. So, well, yeah, I'm gonna steal exactly what you talked about that because, you know, The song about my gut reaction when

16:45:26 Absolutely true but that also strikes me as, to your point that conclusion, why are not the conclusion but like the.

16:45:35 A than a necessary state.

16:45:38 That's obvious. So, the hard stuff is not that it's okay, how did we get where we are, but also how do we start to really address that some core sense yeah it's a, it's, it's something that kind of rolls over that the hard stuff.

16:45:54 Now I think organizations get get to the hard stuff for like, and, and, of course, a lot of progress is made so yeah Say how I don't know how do you think about starting that is it self examination is got to be the first first part of that.

16:46:13 That's part of it I know I think you're completely right David like the, the, we need to be more diverse we need more diverse more diverse voices is the outcome.

16:46:24 Right. And what we really need right now is the, how do we get to that outcome.

16:46:32 In the answer we've been looking at the we've been trying the easy answers for decades, and we're still trying them now we're like okay we'll just create a fellowship for young journalists of color, which is fine and dandy, but that does not leave us

16:46:47 with more black, brown gay transgender editors executive editors has to come, it has to be the whole, the whole thing has to be representative.

16:47:04 And I think that comes with some tough questions for the people who are in leadership right now.

16:47:08 And some, some changes in how they operate. And, you know, listening more than talking, and definitely being wrong, a lot, and evaluating how, how they act.

16:47:26 And then also trying to figure out like, Okay, what, what, what are the circumstances that will make us appealing to to that group.

16:47:38 I think this era of United unionization also come is kind of been happening in the same vein as asking for racial justice, because it is a more for many places effective way of demanding change.

16:48:01 And outlining what change needs to be needed. But again, it's all focused on the outcomes. We don't have a lot of people who are focused on like how do we do this right now and that's what sincerely leaders of color is really trying to look at we're trying

16:48:14 to ask some hard questions about.

16:48:18 We know we need to get there. Let's all agree that we need to get to that place where you know newsrooms are safe and a place safe places for journalists of color to succeed.

16:48:32 However, we need to like the we need. Step one, we're at 22 and and step one of the things we talked about are pretty. They feel so simple.

16:48:54 You know, we now, make sure that our, we have interns from

16:48:55 community colleges and. That's right. And we also make sure like it is like, You have to justify.

16:49:04 You have to be able to justify wherever you are for like, have you looked at candidates of color candidates from a diverse diverse background for for this job.

16:49:16 And, but you also have to keep them and retention is really the tricky point retention is really the thing that we struggle with. I mean, you can you can say it's a great resignation which impartial in part is, but I think it's also the so really stressful

16:49:34 hard job.

16:49:36 And then you add on top of that people dealing with really tough things at home because of the pandemic.

16:49:41 Then, Why would you do this.

16:50:06 Why would you do this job, and that that's the hardest question. How do we make this job worth doing, while also like, you know, not living in a fanciful world where we can pay, everybody more, which is not going to happen with the way

16:50:09 that news businesses revenue wise are sitting at.

16:50:09 We can't pay everybody more but what can we do to make this a place that is, you know, as exciting as it should be.

16:50:15 Yeah. And part of that probably certainly gets what you talked about before connection with the audience, and delivering real value to people and understanding that value and then appreciating it yeah i mean that's that's got to be the part of it and

16:50:30 we have to get better at that too. Right.

16:50:43 We have to, it's really powerful.

16:50:34 Give a lot one last question I got a. I have a I took some notes before and I received some notes and I was, there's this whole thing about you've done some work on something called the metals.

16:50:49 And so, yeah, could you just explain that concept, a little bit, and a because I understand that it's like jobs that didn't exist before people had to but if you could explain that straight and does it connect with these other topics.

16:51:04 Oh, it is.

16:51:07 Yeah, I guess I'm a little slightly graduated from, from a middle right now but the middle is are the people who are in some form of leadership, whether that's actually like managerial leadership, or content leadership and have felt like you just ended

16:51:26 up there.

16:51:29 And I think that is very common to a lot of people who are you know sort of at the middle manager level like, Oh, I somehow was a decent recorder and just kept getting promoted, because I need about money.

16:51:43 And now I'm an editor and I have no idea how to do this.

16:51:48 It's super common and what I'm learning as it goes all the way up to the top at the top, they'll probably say I don't have to do it.

16:51:57 And it's really a treat.

16:51:59 I it's newsrooms but also creative fields in general where the industry's have expanded so fast, and demanded more diverse younger newer leadership so fast that now you have this generation of people who have no training and feel kind of dumb to say like,

16:52:21 I actually do not know how to put together a newsroom budget or a project budget, no one taught me that it just was done. So now we have to figure it out.



16:52:31 And so that's that's what I write them and elsewhere like that, that space where it is hyper confusing and really half the time what you need two years.

16:52:41 You're not the only person that every everybody in this position feels feels this way.

16:52:47 But it's also trying to find ways for people to get training which I'm really grateful that there are lots of sort of emerging leader trainings that are happening throughout the industry from all sorts of groups and places I think that is really help

16:53:04 full.

16:53:05 a lot of middles I know now are graduating to executive leadership. And I think that's going to be a whole nother.

16:53:25 That's gonna be a whole nother thing because I, I talked to friends that are executive editors at many places and they really feel lost and unsupported.

16:53:27 And, you know, I'm the only black man in the room and I happened to be the executive editor or something like that, or I'm the only woman in leadership.

16:53:37 And so I managed a bunch of old white dudes like what do I, how do I do this.

16:53:42 These are things that we, we don't, we don't do because journalism, generally just promoted people for being good journalists, but you can be a great reporter and a terrible manager.

16:53:57 And we, we sort of forgot that.

16:54:01 Well yeah they're different arenas, you know, if we had a whole nother hour we can talk about what happens in academia, right people who are really good.

16:54:08 Academics really good teachers researchers and they get promoted to be Assistant Dean or something and then they're supposed to manage a bunch of people have never managed to anybody ever and, but in particular in this in these environments, as you just

16:54:25 Anybody ever and, but in particular in this in these environments, as you just described, retention, keeping people in the system, you know, super high effectiveness also dealing with change, we, you know, people need support they need training they need

16:54:39 to feel like the you know the that there's the organization is there for them right and that's, that's so critical and so important all these topics I could talk to you for like hours Kim.

16:54:53 Listen, thank you so much. I really really appreciate it. I love the conversation. I just very much appreciate the time and your willingness to talk to folks in the industry about what you do and we're thrilled to have you.

16:55:13 Thank you very much. Of course, it was, it was a pleasure.

16:55:09 Take care.

16:55:10 Bye.