

Innovators to watch

Many new and established media companies are experimenting with ideas to take advantage of the new media landscape. *The Big Thaw* could only include a few of the innovators worth watching. Please add other organizations and individuals at <http://themediaconsortium.com/thebigthaw>.

Advertising

- **Adify** is a build-your-own vertical ad network platform, which powers SustainLane & Ad Progress Network. (www.adify.com)
- **DoubleClick Network Builder** is DoubleClick's new platform for vertical ad networks. (www.doubleclick.com/products/networkbuilder)

Augmented reality browsers

- **Acrossair** is an iPhone app that retrieves information based on your surroundings using the phone's video camera. (www.acrossair.com)
- **Nokia's MARA** (Mobile Augmented Reality Applications) (research.nokia.com/research/projects/mara/index.html)
- **SixthSense**, by MIT's Pranav Mistry, "By using a camera and a tiny projector mounted on a hat, 'SixthSense' sees what you see and visually augments any surfaces or objects you are interacting with. 'SixthSense' projects information to any surface, walls, and the objects around us." (www.pranavmistry.com/projects/sixthsense)
- **Wikitude** draws from Wikipedia entries based on users' location and displays it on Android and iPhone's camera view. (www.wikitude.org)

Blogs & news aggregators

- **AlterNet** (www.alternet.org)
- **Boing Boing** (boingboing.net)
- **Daily Kos** (www.dailykos.com)
- **FiveThirtyEight.com** is a political blog by Nate Silver, who balances polling data with pollsters' track record among other factors. (fivethirtyeight.com)
- **Global Voices** (globalvoicesonline.org)
- **The Huffington Post** (www.huffingtonpost.com)
- **Talking Points Memo** (www.talkingpointsmemo.com)
- **Townhall.com** is a conservative aggregator. The site is more multi-platform than most progressive news sites. (townhall.com)

Constituency management

- **Care2** is a web community that helps members take action around social issues. It's a good way to collect emails for new constituents through opt-in petitions. (www.care2.com)
- **Convio** is a constituent relationship management system (eCRM) that synchronizes communication touch points and membership status across internal databases and external platforms such as Facebook. (www.convio.com)

Crowd sourcing, citizen journalism & pro-am models

- **Citizen Global Studio** is a startup "online collaborative studio that brings individual content creators and mainstream producers together to create broadcast-quality media of any kind." (citizensglobalstudio.com)
- **Help Me Investigate** (helpmeininvestigate.com)
- **Minnesota Star Tribune** published the Coleman/Franken ballots for readers to examine. (senaterecount.startribune.com)
- **NewAssignment.Net** links professional journalists and amateur contributors. It partnered with The Huffington Post to start OffTheBus. (newassignment.net)
- **The UpTake** is a citizen journalism venture that uses low-cost technology, including live broadcasts from mobile phone cameras. (www.theuptake.org)
- **Ushahidi** "Crowdsources crisis information" in Kenya. The platform takes in reports from field via mobile devices. Reports are collated into web-based platform/presentation and certain info is sent back via mobile. (www.ushahidi.com)

Hyper-local

- **Bay Area News Project.** Warren Hellman, a San Francisco investment banker, is partnering with KQED and the University of California, Berkeley, to start a nonprofit to fill the gap in local news due to newspaper cutbacks. (www.bayareanewsproject.org)
- **Everyblock** is "a news feed for your block" (www.everyblock.com)

- **National Public Radio's local affiliates.** Vivian Schiller, CEO of NPR wants to work with member stations “so that as local newspapers die away we can step into the breach to make sure that there is not a vacuum there.” Her experience leading NYTimes.com will help NPR innovate.
- **NewsMixer.us**, from the Cedar Rapids Gazette, uses an open-source platform and Facebook Connect to engage users in Eastern Iowa in conversations about the news (newsmixer.us)
- **Patch** plans to support small teams of journalists to produce hyper-local news in communities. Tim Armstrong, Google's President of Advertising for North America and Latin America, is underwriting the effort. (www.patch.com)

Location-based mobile

- **Google Latitude** lets you broadcast your location to your friends. (www.google.com/latitude)
- **Loopt** is similar to Latitude, yet predates it. (www.loopt.com)

Measurement

- **Microsoft's “engagement mapping”** measures the *return on investment* based on how all interactions with marketing efforts lead users to take action. (advertising.microsoft.com/engagement-mapping)
- **Quantcast** (www.quantcast.com)

Micro-blogging & micro-volunteering

- **The Extraordinaries** recruits volunteers to do simple tasks on mobile devices (www.theextraordinaries.org)
- **Twitter** “has a tiger by the tail” according to Battelle. See Micro-blogging, p25. (twitter.com)

Micropayments

- **The Information Valet Project** is an initiative of the Reynolds Journalism Institute at the Missouri School of Journalism. (informationvalet.wordpress.com)
- **Intuit**, the maker of QuickBooks software for small businesses, is announcing a new service called Intuit GoPayment, that will put credit-card processing technology into most cell phones. (mobilepayment.intuit.com)
- **Journalism Online** (www.journalismonline.com)
- **PayChoice** has created a Vendor Relationship Management (the reciprocal of Customer Relationship Management system) that enables micropayments across a wide array of news sites (cyber.law.harvard.edu/projectvrm/PayChoice)
- **Spot.us**, community-funded reporting. (spot.us)

Multisensory web

- **Defense Sciences Office (DSO)** of the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency's (DARPA) focuses on “mining ‘far side’ science.” DSO is working on a way to make multi-sensory data converge in real time. (www.darpa.mil/dso/thrusts/index.htm)
- **Distributed sampling:** “The pulse is shared, quite literally, using efforts like Stanford University's ‘quake catcher’ network, in which seismic activity is measured by tapping into the sensors commonly found in consumer laptops.” (qcn.stanford.edu)

Nonprofits & philanthropy

- **Knight News Challenge** awards as much as \$5 million a year for innovative ideas that develop platforms, tools and services to inform and transform community news, conversations, and information distribution and visualization. See their winners to get ideas. (www.newschallenge.org)
- **“L3C”** (Low-profit Limited Liability Company) is a new type of LLC structure that better suits a mix of commercial and non-commercial revenue.
- **Network for Good** is an online fundraising service for nonprofits. (www.networkforgood.org)

Organizational structure & new journalists

- **Co-op efforts** like Puerto Rico's *Daily Sun* (bit.ly/p6o9M)
- **Federated Media Publishing** is blending old & new producer models (www.federatedmedia.net)

Platform convergence

- **Boxee** pulls together multiple sources of Internet video in an easy to use interface that has caused many users to cancel their cable subscriptions: “On a laptop or connected to an HDTV, Boxee gives you a true entertainment experience to enjoy your movies, TV shows, music and photos, as well as streaming content from websites like Netflix, CBS, Comedy Central, Last.fm, and Flickr.” (www.boxee.tv)
- **Google Voice** gives a user one number for all his or her phones. (www.google.com/voice)
- **Google Wave** is new a cross-platform way to communicate and collaborate, which is the way email would have been designed if it were invented today. (wave.google.com)
- **O'Reilly Media**, a computer books publisher in the loosest sense, “spreads the knowledge of innovators through its books, online services, magazines, research, and conferences.” Tim O'Reilly has been a leading advocate of the open source movement and Web 2.0. (oreilly.com)

Print's big players

- **Economist** (www.economist.com)
- **Guardian**, UK (www.guardian.co.uk)
- **New York Times** (nytimes.com)
- **Wall Street Journal** (www.wallstreetjournal.com)
- **Washington Post** (www.washingtonpost.com)

Rapid programming

The following tools can help achieve “rapid, low-cost innovation” (Vol. 2, p18)

- **AJAX** is used to create client-side interactive web applications and helps drive user experience and engagement. (www.ajax.org)
- **CakePHP** (cakephp.org)
- **CodeIgniter** (PHP) (codeigniter.com)
- **Django** (Python) (www.djangoproject.com)
- **Microsoft PSP.net** (psp.net)
- **Symfony** (PHP) (www.symfony-project.org)

Online identity

- **OpenID** allows users to use a single online identity and password to sign into multiple websites. With one billion user accounts on 50,000 websites, OpenID is helping decentralize the online media landscape. (openid.net)

Research

- **Berkman Center for Internet & Society** “We’re trying to do empirical research to see how information is moving through the blogosphere and into mainstream media,” says Weinberger. (cyber.law.harvard.edu)
- **Neiman Journalism Lab** (www.neimanlab.org)
- **New America Foundation** is a policy institute focused on the changing conditions and problems of our 21st Century information-age economy. (www.newamerica.net)
- **OpenNet Initiative** “investigates, exposes and analyzes Internet filtering and surveillance practices in a credible and non-partisan fashion.” (www.opennet.net)
- **The Pew Research Center's Project for Excellence in Journalism** (www.journalism.org)
- **The Pew Research Center for the People & the Press** (people-press.org)
- **Steven Pinker**, a linguist/neuroscientist and author of *The Language Instinct*, researches how people communicate with each other and with themselves.

Search & filtering

- **digg.com** extended their content-voting system to advertisements. “Digg’s Ads Make Me Want to Click On Them. I’m not the only one,” said Hunter Clarke on theNEXTWEB.com. It has improved click-through-rates by 27 to 37 times.¹ (digg.com)
- **Newstrust.net** provides a credibility filter, online opinion and amateur journalism. Reviewers evaluate each story against core principles of journalism, such as fairness, accuracy, context and sourcing. (newstrust.net)
- **StumbleUpon** captures the value of discovery better than search. See Value of discovery, Vol. 3, p18. (stumbleupon.com)

Semantic tools & intelligent aggregators

- **CALO** (Cognitive Assistant that Learns and Organizes) led by SRI International and funded by Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) is “one of the largest artificial-intelligence projects ever [...] The goal of the project is to create cognitive software systems, that is, systems that can reason, learn from experience, be told what to do, explain what they are doing, reflect on their experience, and respond robustly to surprise.” (caloproject.sri.com)
 - **Siri** “There is already one quiet commercial spin-off from the [CALO] project. Siri Inc., based in San Jose, Calif., plans to introduce a personal assistance service in the first half of 2009. Still in ‘stealth’ mode, with a small private test version of its service, Siri has raised \$8.5 million from two venture capital firms.”² (<http://www.siri.com>)
- **Passive Social Graph.** Sandy Pentland of MIT conducts “reality mining” by collecting data of whose cell phones come near each other to create a “passive social graph data.” (See Location aware mobile, Vol. 3, p15)
- **“Silobreaker** finds people, companies, organizations, topics, places and keywords; understands how they relate to each other in the news flow, and puts them in context through graphical results in its intuitive user interface.” (<http://silobreaker.com>)
- **Wolfram Alpha**, a computational knowledge engine that computes answers—in contrast to simple search—from large datasets. (www.wolframalpha.com)

Social media & conversational media

- **Facebook Connect** offers mobility of data across networks and has recently added a crowdsourced translation feature (<http://developers.facebook.com/connect.php>)
- **Jive Software** (www.jivesoftware.com), **Pluck** (www.pluck.com) and **KickApps** (www.kickapps.com) are create-your-own social network platforms focused on enterprise customers (e.g. HBO).
- **Ning** is a create-your-own social network platform (www.ning.com) focused on consumers.
- **OpenSocial** is Google's set of social network applications (APIs) that allows friends to share their social data across networks such as MySpace, Yahoo!, Ning, orkut and Friendster. (www.opensocial.org)

Translation

- **dotSUB** "On dotSUB you can view, upload, transcribe, and translate any video into and from any language." (dotsub.com)
- **Lingua translation project**, a volunteer network of translators (from English to other languages) that focuses on Global Voices' content. (globalvoicesonline.org/lingua)
- **Meedan**, software-based translation project. "Meedan is bringing Arabic and English speakers together in conversation about world events using emerging machine-assisted translation technology." (www.meedan.net)

User interfaces

- **Apture** enables a publisher to enhance its site with a multimedia layer above its web pages. (www.apture.com)
- **Cooliris** creates a rich graphical "3D Wall" on desktop and iPhone browsers to view photos, video and news. (www.cooliris.com)
- **Zemanta** allows you to find related images as you blog (helps create links for Google search). (www.zemanta.com)

Video & television

- **Google TV Ads & Navic**, which introduced a supply-demand model for buying and selling television ads. (www.google.com/adwords/tvads) (www.navic.tv)
- **Internet Protocol Television (IPTV): Apple TV** (www.apple.com/appletv), **Roku** (www.roku.com), **Slingblox** (www.slingmedia.com) & **HAVA** (<http://www.myhava.com>) break down the conventions and gateways we have in place around accessing television content.

- **Justin.tv** is the largest live-video site online (22 million visitors/month) (www.justin.tv)
- **Ustream.tv** launched in early 2009 their new white-label, live-video service, "Watershed." (www.ustream.tv)
- **Seesmic** provides real-time video conversation. (seesmic.com)
- **TiVo** "TiVo's "Stop II Watch" rating service provides "active measurement of how viewership changes with the ability to time-shift programming." (www.tivo.com & stopwatch.tivo.com)
- **Qik.com** is the leading live video service for mobile devices.
- **ZunaVision** and **Innovid** insert Flash-based assets into video post-production, so a blank wall in a video could suddenly contain a movie poster, digitally inserted at the time of delivery. (www.zunavision.com) (www.innovid.com)

Other experiments

- **DocumentCloud**, a unified database of original source documents created by a collaboration of the *New York Times*, ProPublica, Talking Points Memo, The National Security Archive, Gotham Gazette. (documentcloud.org)
- **E ink** manufactures electronic paper displays (EPD) for the Amazon Kindle, Sony Reader and others. It produced the electronic cover in *Esquire's* September 2008 issue. (www.eink.com)
- **Microsoft Office Labs** tests concepts and published research about technology change to come (www.officelabs.com/Pages/Envisioning.aspx)
- **Google Labs** showcases what the company is planning next. (www.googlelabs.com)
- **TagSense** has developed Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) ink that can be tracked and identified without using an electronic chip. This can make the print news interactive. (www.tagsense.com)