

10TH ANNUAL INTERACTIVE NEWSPAPERS CONFERENCE

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ATLANTA, GEORGIA

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Announcer: Next, we have Howard Finberg, of Central Newspapers. Laptop,laptop shuffle real quick. You're probably the only person here who's not warmer than he was at home, so...

Howard:

Technology really works. Let me do one more thing.

Good afternoon. And I promise I will not say the words, or the phrase "X n melt" once. Well maybe once. I just did.

I'm going to sort of do a little, "And now for something completely different" change of pace, which is to talk about how you can use some of this technology, and where Central Newspapers sees its vision of technology. So, I'm going to show you things that I hope you'll say, "Hey, that's cook." But I'm not going to talk about the underlying code, but how we use technology.

So, goals for today's presentation. I mean, we've gone through training. So, we've always got to have a goal for a meeting, is to, we want to discuss our technology strategy and show some of our new and interesting applications across CNI's web properties.

But I thought I should give you a little visual update as to what I see as our technical strategy, or what, well, you can see for yourself. (Obviously a slide presentation being shown).

Sort of to just wake you up, see if you're there. That is where I think we were in the industry several years ago. It was all technology; technology was cool, so that's what we focused on. We think our strategy is a little more simple than that. We want to leverage technology; we don't care where it comes from, what it is. We want to take advantage of our digit assets. Everything that we own now is digital. And we want to move away from the signal purpose strategy is, which has been discussed, to previous presenters, we firmly believe in this. We have a phrase that says, "Author once, publish many." Which is something we developed in our search for a new pagination system five or six years ago, and we settled on a product developed by CCI Europe, which runs on a database. And that has sort of been the backbone of our strategy going forward and is carried into our web operations.

So, leveraging our technology; building on our client's servers, strategy, infrastructure, rewire the building, make sure that everybody can talk to everybody else, put in the physical connections for communication. Too often I have found that a lot of news rooms don't have the physical connection between departments to communicate, other than by voice, in person, let alone by, they have desperate e-mail systems that don't allow shared databases of information. I think that's fundamental to any change that you want to do to leverage technology. And we firmly believe in database publishing as a strategy. And we have our CCI Print System in place and operating for the last 3-4 years, and we are now working with a company called Future Tense to use their web publishing strategy. And the work flow looks something like this. If we start with the editing system, we go out to a publishing system, although right now they're really the same physical system. But we're looking at them as separate engines. Go to a print product, you can go to a fax product. We're going to install Future Tense product, or it's being installed even as we speak, which is going to drive our web offerings out of the same content database. Everything links back to a single content database. And then eventually, whatever product, Pom Pilot, Wireless, whatever, this is our sort of vision to taking advantage of some of the technologies that we see coming down the road.

There's another reason we think it's important to use a single content database, whatever you call it, whatever engine is driving it, that's a human system issue. Is that, unless you have a way to manage training and the issues around people using new systems, it's going to be increasingly difficult to install and use these technologies to their first advantage. So, if you can build them on the same system, and build it on standard platform, you're going to be much more successful.

We want to develop, and we've been having some conversations, they really started last year, around the idea of front end tools. And I don't mean front end in regards to writing stories. I mean before the story is written. And we believe things like metatags need to be put in by the reporter, the assigning editor. A key word can be put in by the copy desk. We think there are ways to do it with easy-to-use drop down menus, things like that, some prepopulated fields. Basically, when you sign on to the system, if you're a Sports reporter and you're assigned a beat, you generally write about that beat. So, if you cover auto racing, we can prepopulate some of the information into metatags, and so we're one step ahead. What we do is we force a validation that's saying "Yes, I am writing this kind of story," or "No, I am not."

This is not rocket science technology. This technology, the key is, thinking about where you want to go and how you want to use it in the future. That raises the question of cultural issues. And some of you who know me know that I speak a lot about cultural issues of technology. I don't program. I don't write code. Pearl is something I give to my wife on her anniversary. But what I do know is that technology has an impact on organizations; and we have to be proactive and manage that impact.

My philosophy about technology is that in and of itself technology does nothing. Technology, once installed, changes everything. Sort of like the organic or ecology theory of technology. You can take a butterfly out of the Rain Forest, but once you do that, you won't get any monsoons over Texas, so to speak. You always get monsoons over Texas.

All right. That's about all I want to talk about in terms of technology; but you'll see some reason why I wanted to introduce this early on. You'll see some of these philosophies in the examples I want to show you about what I want to do at CNI.

We sort of work on two different levels: We want stick applications; obviously we want people to come back and use us a lot. We're very concerned about repeat visits and how long people spend on our web sites, because we think that's going to be a differentiator in the future, at least I do. And that if you can show viewership in the same way that broadcast shows viewership, i.e. I'm getting 15 minute viewership, that's probably going to be as significant as the number of people who have come and hit your pages. You can inflate the page view numbers by delivering a lot of pages, basically by forcing people to drill further and further down to get the information they really want. Eventually, once they get it, do they leave, or do they go someplace else? How pleasant is the user experience? In broadcast they look at demographics. I think we need to start developing new methodologies on how to use technology to track what people are doing. And some of our applications will be very frank, are commercial. We're in the business of making money. Lots of it. Because we're afraid that our other big money maker business, called Classifieds, is going away. No, we do not believe that Classified is going to reduce. We think that, and we operate on the principal, that Classifieds is going away. And so, with that fear in mind, we're looking for alternative revenue streams; and I think it is the duty of everyone in our operation to look and think that way, even if they're technical content driven, marketing sales, whatever. We need to understand that we're trying to build the raft as it's raining.

So I want to show you a couple of sites from our *Indiana Star News* on-line, which is Indiana's game and work avenue. We have a company called West Tech, which does job fairs, and they also have a very interesting interactive web site called Virtual Job Fair. And we'll show you two applications and how they're using technology. I'll give you these URL's as we go along, by the way.

I'll talk about a company we just bought a year ago, called Home Fair, and a company that they just bought about three months ago, called the National School Reporting Service. And finally, with our Arizona Central, *The Arizona Republic*, Phoenix newspaper site, and the three different ways that we're using technology and trying to attract customers.

Starnews.com is a destination site for Indianapolis news information. They have a couple of different, interesting applications. Indiana's game is built on a big niche market, which is basketball. I mean, in Indiana, you live, sleep, breathe basketball. And it's very deep and rich in its content. And I like the way, since I have nothing to do with any of these sites on an operational basis, I get to look at them from my perspective of what I like and why I like them. I like the idea of how they've aggregated all of basketball and look at this as a niche totally. I like the idea that they've got lots of content and organized nicely, and they have the usual inner activity with things like "Ask the Expert." But most of all I like this, which is the Local Alliance. Where, using simple web technology, they have allowed the *News Sentiniel* in Ft. Wayne, to become a virtual partner. So that when you click on Basketball on the Sports page of, or Indiana's game on the Sports page of the *News Sentiniel*, you go right back to a co-brand inside of Indiana's game. But that's not hard technology. But I think that's pretty cool. We all compete for time and attention.

I bet you there are three or four cities out there that could find companion cities that they could link to; and in the end, both would be stronger. Both would provide the customer with more and better applications. So I think cobranding is a success for everybody. So, I consider that philosophy cool.

We also have an employment site, called Work Avenue, that is employed not only in Indianapolis, Phoenix, Minneapolis, Orange County. This was developed by PATH-IT, Partners Affiliated for Exploring Technology, which is an information and technology sharing group that was formed four years ago. This is the only development work we did, and after that we took the oath of

never wanting to do sort of development again. But it turned out to be a very interesting opportunity to look at local employment and how to leverage technology to serve the needs of our local customers. We know that the national customers are out there, fighting for those dollars. The question for us is: How can we use technology to get them to stay with us longer and provide services?"

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. . . and it is a local decision, and not everybody wants their ads aggregated up on a monster board or whatever. In addition, my feeling, as the web is getting more mainstream, that the highly technical and highly Internet savvy job offerings will become less of a whole. Service level jobs, and other jobs like that, clerical and lower level management, will go to the web as well; and those tend to be very locally driven. So we need to have local solutions.

Work Avenue looks something like this: When you come on, you're asked for a password, user I.D., and to upload a resume. It's a solution for the employer, because they get a company profile. In addition, they get information about the company, but also, we link out of that to their specific ads on Work Avenue, as well as linked to their own site, if they have an internal site, regarding employment. And a lot of the players are starting to do that as well.

Along the same lines of employment, we also look at the national employment in terms of high tech, because we own this company called West Tech, and A Virtual Job Fair is their web site. It's a national high tech career solution for both, again, employee and employer; and I think you

have to think of using technology to drive both of those equations. In addition, they have developed something, I'll show you, called Career Index, which is a very different way of looking at technology landscape and the competitive landscape.

This is the BGF Home Page. Again, it gives you an opportunity to do his job search; but for the applicant, there are some rewards associated by registering and uploading a resume. In addition to getting posting your resume on-line, and this is sort of the log-in to your agent screen. You get a customized home page, which allows you to edit your resume, remove your resume, and review the results of a resume, which are the reward, which is Job Listings, and they tend to go very deep if you're looking for something like web programming, if anybody here wants to write pearl, this is the place you could probably put in a word of pearl and get 900 resumes. What I like about this is that it has a stick app called the Job Agent, and here's an e-mail message that I received after filling out my agent, which now runs automatically in the background every week, which sends me e-mail saying that for key word "Information Technology Management," which I typed in, State of Arizona, 37 job opportunities await me. So, as soon as I'm done with this presentation, I'll be in the lobby making some phone calls. (Chuckles - comment: Tough crowd).

Again, you get access to that database; and as you see, it's pretty much the same database as before. So we're leveraging the database. Again, nothing that I think is strange to anybody, but everything is built on a database, and we're leveraging that same database, where we're making it easier for the consumer, with the Sticky App.

Career Index is a very different approach to employment. And what it does, it's an aggregator of aggregators. And what we have done here is we have built a database, and technology, to go out and aggregate all sorts of search engines, and allows you, if you look at all the check boxes, which I agree are sort of hard to read, it not only allows you to check the allies, friends, and the usual suspects, but also the competition in the same space that West Tech is in. The goal here is for the consumer. This is really a consumer driven sight, so that when you do get the results, and you get

to select what search company you want to look at, or what job site, you get results back that are very deep, in the neighborhood of 300 listings, for very specific jobs. Because it goes against a number of different sites. In addition, it allows you customizing and to sort the data by where you want to work, what company do you want to work for, and go direct to e-mail or send your resume directly. This is not difficult technology to build, but my words of wisdom out of all this is that you've got to start thinking or asking about how do we use technology to further the needs of the customer.

The next slide I want to show you is Home Fair, homefair.com, which is relocation tools and services. We call this the Disneyland for movers, entertainment and information. And the president of CEO Homefair, Rich Ganly, likes to give this description of what they do: They're very much like Disneyworld or Disneyland, where they give you some entertainment and then they dump you out in the gift shop so you've got to buy something. And you feel satisfied with the whole experience, because you had a great time. Maybe you learned a little bit about the pirates in the Caribbean, but you also bought a sword. And a subsidiary site that we just bought, called the School Report, which has very deep information about schools; and that's why we put them together, is because #1 factor, when people move is, what do they do about schools? Where are the best schools? So I want to show you that.

This is the Home Fair site. Main page, upper left hand side as the school report button that you click on and you're brought here, which gives you some information that you get basically for free for the banner ad placement. But if you're willing to sign up, this is what you would get for free. It's basically a look at all the schools in a certain school district, and that's great. You can look at all those schools and sort of compare it. But if you're looking against school district, because you don't know where you're going to live or where you want to move, you get this registration form; and this is the back and the bottom part of the registration form; and what's interesting about this is what we call permission-based marketing, and using technology to help the consumer make a selection in and of themselves. You select one of, I'm showing three here, there's usually 4 or 5,

three providers of the comparison reports. These are the sponsors. We have four, five, six sponsors: Norwest Bank, The Arizona Republic, the Insurance Professor, are all sponsors of comparison reports on schools. If I want to compare two, three schools, I sign up and say, "I want..." again, this is free of charge, but I'm willing to give you something, I'm willing to give you my name and some information about when I'm moving, how many kids I have, I get permission based marketing, so I give and I get back. And the coupon you get, which gives you some information about who you can click on, and if you happen to click on *The Arizona Republic*, you get this screen here, which says, "We're going to give you a free subscription to the newspaper when you move and just sign up right now." Something like that is easily deployed, and we think is pretty cool, because it ties it all back to the print product, which we're trying to keep successful.

The last slide I'm going to visit is Arizona Central, which is the web site for *The Arizona Republic* and some of our sister publications in Phoenix. I'm going to show you *Arizona Guide*, which is an unique partnership. We are firm believers in partnering, and add-on times and new technology we're putting in for Classifieds, and this is something that is neat and cool to end.

Arizona Guide is a partnership with a state agency called The Arizona Department of Tourism, and we develop and manage this site for them. And what we have done is create a very tight, integrated model here. We recognize that tourism is one of our major industries, so we're trying to, how can we use our assets, their assets, and make it a better customer experience, regardless of whether you go in through Arizona Central or in through Arizona Guide. If you go to the bottom of this page and you click on some of these icons here, such as taking a hike, you might get this page and end up on Arizona Central, but with the Arizona Guide cobranding. We find this a very effective way of managing the consumer experience. The neat technology thing we're developing in conjunction with the state is interactivity to find information. So we've just launched a new service called the Trip Planner, where we have some sort of pre-defined, at this point, it's sort of a dozen predefined categories: ecological, Indian, scenic, categories of

information that if you're planning a trip to Arizona, you might be very much interested in Indian art, or you might be very interested in cacti, and you select that, or you can select a city; and if you do that, we'll give you back a search page. You click off a number of those little buttons and you get your trip planned for you. Ask you where you want to start. You can start anywhere in the state, and the reward is a map that I call this Map Design and Look under construction, because it sort of doesn't have the quite the quality that we want to present, and experience, but the functionality is getting there, where it will start and end your trip for you; and what we want to do then is provide even more information. We think that, again, standard technology, but it's integrating it for the customer experience that we believe will be ultimately successful and will make us successful.

A new application that was launched January of this year is something called Add-on Time. It allows on-line entry of Classified Ads. What you see is what you get, which has always been one of the big problems of on-line entry of Classified, because how do you know how many lines it's going to be? Basically, we're starting to allow the customer to manager their Classified account, both in print and on-line. You can print this ad, both in print and on-line. You go the Classified main page, place your ad, you get this screen, right now we have three classifications. We have automotive, general merchandise, and yard sales, always very popular. When you start your ad, you fill out a series of boxes and basically type in your ad. It's single screen, you scroll down, you fill it out. At the end you use a calendar to select the number of days you want the ad to run, submit your credit card, it's a secure server; it is automatically sent to our Classified system; and it runs on the days that you specify. You've paid for it by credit card. You also get your ad on-line. And you can manage your account and use your ad summary, which basically shows you when your ad's going to start, what it says, how many lines it is. We think, rather than try to prevent customers from taking their Classifieds on-line, we're going to help them; and we want to be the trusted agent that facilitates that successful transaction.

And finally, this is the ad, you can see it down in the bottom, sort of. It's hard to see, for those in

the back. It's the very last thing. And it's a three line, Classified Ad that's already to run with the start dates.

And finally, just something because it's fun and because I don't think very many people are doing this, we created this little sticky app. Actually, Dave Seaberg, one of the technology managers in *The Arizona Republic*, and Dan Honz that used to be in On-Line at the *Republic*, just sort of did this, because they both happened to like the Police Scanner. I don't know whether you've ever heard the Police Scanner, but it can be sort of interesting and very boring. What we're finding is, that people just like to come and turn it on and listen to it, and they get to hear things like (a police transmission is being broadcast, apparently right from the computer).

And if you want to know what a 101 is, we have the codes listed on another page, so you can find out exactly what a 101 is, which I think is a male, and all the codes. Not hard. We use real audio. We think it's cool. You asked for cool! Okay. We think it's cool.

I want to show you something that's under development, that we think, I'm very much interested, later, in any feedback you have. I think this goes to the bottom line of managing our own content and our own sites more effectively. This is a beta project with Waveshift. If you're not familiar with Waveshift, they started out in the community publishing business and have developed some other technology that we're very much interested in. We've used Waveshift for our Easy Neighbor's site very successfully. 700 community groups. But in the beta project, we're looking for a targeted search, again to go back to the goal of holding the customer longer on the site before you let them go off. Don't get me wrong. I don't want to keep the customer from going off. What we want to do is, we want to make them feel like, "Well, I've exhausted all my options and I'm tired and I want to go to sleep now," rather than, "Well, I can't find what I want, I'm going to Yahoo."

My belief is that our current search engines don't meet any specific needs, and they require too

much technical management if you build your own search engine. So Waveshift has developed something called Search Server. It's not up and running, it's just under development; but it allows site managers, web site managers, to pick and choose external sites to search. Let me show you a problem and then see if this is the solution.

If you were looking for information about charter schools in Arizona, right now you could link to other content about charter schools, in addition to having your own content; and you could link to search engines which would search for charter schools across a wide variety of databases; but in both cases, the customer moves off your website. So, it works like this today. We do a great charter schools, and charter schools are very big in Arizona, sort of a liver turning approach to education. So we do lots of stories about charter schools, and we've got education web site and lots of links, blah blah blah, and we've got a listing of all the charter schools; and if you click on here, you might go off to another site and we've lost the customer. Now, we could frame them or whatever and make it difficult, but that's just sort of making it harder for the consumer.

Eventually, we know they'll need to get specific information about those schools, so why not help them? And that's what Search Server looks. You would get a screen like this, where you would have a dialog database, and I've typed in "Math in Tempe," which is a town where I live, and ask it to search charter schools sites for information about Math in Tempe, and I get these results back. So now I've targeted the results, and they're specific. And that's all cool and neat, but what I like about the whole concept is, I manage what sites get put in there. I become the manager of sort of this pseudo database. I can add sites, delete sites, validate what sites, in other words, rather than relying on someone else to make those recommendations, I can go back to the journalist's role, editor's role of providing guided content, content of value. And ultimately, that's really one of our core strengths. It's not web, it's not local, it's providing value in the content. And then I could look at a catalog of all my sites and then go there.

So, the CEO of Waveshift is down on the floor. His name is Andy Beale. If you think this is something you can give him some feedback on, I'm interested in it for that reason; but I thought

I'd show it to you and get your thoughts on whether you think that's cool and interesting.

So, in summary, we use our technology for interactivity, to maintain rich databases of content, to own a market, geographic markets as well as demographic markets, golfers, charter school markets, Indiana basketball fans, and make the customer experience fun and rewarding, giving them something back in return.

Thank you for your attention. If you want specific information about any of these sites, and these are the people who really deserve the credit, because they're the ones doing this on a day to day basis, Merta Pollium runs *Star News* on-line, and this is her e-mail address. Virtual Job Fair is run by Paul Bourroughs, and here's his e-mail address. Home Fair, by Rich Ganley, and here's his. Arizona Central is run by Chris Leville, and here's her e-mail address. And finally, (cartoon voice) "Hey look, buddy. I got a sandwich sitting here with my name on it; so uh, why don't you have your e-mail call my e-mail, and we'll do lunch sometime. All right? Adios. Chin-chin. Asta la Vista,..... I got to go."

And that does it for me.

Questions for Howard?

Q: ??

A: Yeah, it's dynamic. Don't ask me what the specific database is. But yeah, you can search specific things.

A: Actually, we're not. What we're doing is, the School Report people have a network of workers, part-time workers, who have validated that information. Because they found

that is the only way you're going to get up-to-date accurate information. And that is why the database is so good. Because they've been doing it, they started out as a fax product, went to a providitatorial on-line solution to Realtors, and now have taken it to the Web. We believe that valid information is really important, as opposed to: I just want to put it up when I remember to put it up.

A: Well, we've got two out of the three solved. Right now we haven't found the national employment aggregation solution that we'd really like. We're still looking; and that's part of what I have to do, as part of my daily routine, is to look at those things. Ultimately, I believe, we'll come up with a national aggregation solution; but we haven't found the one we like yet.

A: Yes. I see that you have to provide whatever the customer wants. Strategy is another way of looking at it. That you're not going to prevent the customer from doing what the customer wants to do. So, the question is: Can you get there first? Can you make it painless for the customer, because they don't want to be in that business. It goes back to when you took on, at Newspapers, when newspapers took on pre-press work for advertisers, pasting up the ad. Is that they could guarantee the quality; they could take that burden off of the advertising; and ultimately the relationship is much tighter and more successful for everybody. So, I believe we have to be able to do that, on a lot of different areas, not just employment. We're not going to be able to own the universe like we used to, locally or even nationally.