

Building a trusted future for news

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- **Good morning.** I'm honored to be here in Jakarta at this important event celebrating the value of press freedom.

- **My father's job was to keep the presses running at the Providence Journal, a newspaper in the state of Rhode Island.**
 - I'd visit him as a toddler and was **quickly addicted to the smell of the ink and paper, enthralled with the noisy rhythm of the presses.**
 - Newspapers found their way into my blood well before I was able to read one.
 - When I was 16 I wrote high school sports stories and also worked as a flyboy, grabbing and stacking papers as fast as they flowed from the presses.

- **It triggered a life-long fascination** with the means of publishing, from printing presses and satellite networks to broadcast teletext and the Internet.
- **From my father-in-law I learned a different lesson, about the fragility of free expression, though his experience with the politics of fear in the 1950's.** His name was Dalton Trumbo. A Hollywood screenwriter who wrote Roman Holiday, Exodus, Spartacus, and dozens of others.
 - In 1947 he was called before the US Congress and asked the following question: “Are you now or have you ever been a member of the Communist Party?” He refused to answer based on First Amendment principles, asserting the government had no right to question his political beliefs, whatever they might be.
 - He was found guilty of contempt of Congress. The Supreme Court, to the frustration of many, upheld the conviction. He spent a year in prison, and for the next 15 prolific years he was blacklisted, writing under assumed names for small amounts of money.
 - For me, it’s a lifelong reminder of how easily a government’s constitutional principles of free expression can crumble -- even in an apparently “advanced” democracy.
 - By the way, it was Dalton Trumbo who penned the phrase “I am Spartacus” that has evolved into a meme for unified efforts against life-defining challenges.

- From Google's earliest days 19 years ago, our mission has been to **organize the world's information and make it universally accessible and useful.**
- The **World Wide Web** has become an extraordinary resource, providing access to information beyond imagination. **That could only happen with free speech** — in fact the Internet can easily be seen as **the fullest realization of the concept of free expression.**
- **The Web has grown from 25,000 websites in 1995 to 1 billion today.** It serves 3 billion users globally. 39% of our population. That means 61% of the world is unserved, a huge share of that opportunity being in Asia:
 - **Indonesia** represents the **third highest number of internet users following China and India.** The percentage of Internet use is higher than the global average, with just over half the population -- [133 out of 264 million.](#)
 - Nearly all future growth will be mobile. **By the end of 2016 there were 2.5 billion smartphones in use.** Within three years we expect to see 6 billion.
 - **Yes, more smartphones are activated each day than babies are born.** That growth is not about users shifting focus from desktop or laptop computers. These new users **never had any form of computing device.** Nearly 20% of Internet users are mobile only.
 - **Smartphone use in Asia Pacific surpasses the rest of world combined.** ([June 2016](#)). This region is a fulcrum for new media paradigms that will shape our information societies.

- **Today, media dominates our lives.** We twitch with stolen glances at the devices at hand. Indeed, it seems the youngest generations were born with smartphones **growing out of** their hands. (Maybe it's a KickStarter project).
- A recent Trends Report from Mary Meeker noted that huge swaths of users check their devices about 150 times a day! It's not just millennials -- though millennials do spend 9 hours a day in front of screens! Maybe, just maybe, **that's why fewer babies are born.**
- More news and information is consumed than ever before. But the Internet didn't just increase the volume of media. **It also changed our relationship with media.** We are not just consumers. We are producers. Indeed, we all have the ability to be journalists and publishers -- whether they or we think of it as "journalism" or not.
- Media is no longer just a part of our lives. **It has become the very fabric of our lives.** Most of us manage many of our relationships entirely in the virtual world. I personally have far more relationships in the online world than in the real world. I'm not unique.
 - **We don't just consume media, we live within the media.**
- Again, **the open Internet is the fullness of free expression brought to life.** Anyone can express themselves to the entire world or the world that matters to them. But belief in free speech comes with accepting **there will be expression that each and every one of us will, in our own way, find deeply uncomfortable.**
- **The open Internet challenges us.** It generates a cacophony of voices and a fragmentation of audiences. It challenges our institutions who

will want to go back in time to a "golden age" they remember which may or may not have been so golden.

- **It challenges our politics.** It challenges our understanding of the economics of information. **It challenges our understanding of who we are and how we perceive each other.**

Let's talk about fake news -- to the extent the term has any real meaning anymore.

- The phrase has become weaponized, either by bad actors who seek to disrupt our democracies or those who use it to castigate coverage they don't like from quality news organizations. It means different things to different people and cannot be defined in black and white.
- Fake news and its impact deserves close assessment. Recently researchers at the MIT Media Lab and the Berkman Center at Harvard measured the influence of 1.25M stories published between April 1, 2015 and Election Day in the United States. They concluded that fake news was NOT one of the main influencers of the election.
- Instead, they point to **hyper-partisan sites that disseminate partial truths instead of "wholly fabricated falsities"**. These are far more dangerous. They build upon the pre-established biases of readers who are eager to see them confirmed. While information societies have always faced these challenges, we now have the range of content and the methods of dissemination to enable countless silos of expression and sentiment. **Affirmation is as easily found as information.** And is so much more dangerously satisfying.

- **Democracies succeed by their ability to drive consensus between different views.** How do democracies thrive in an environment that requires **bridging gaps between different realities?**

- **At Google our goal remains the same: to organize the world's information and make it accessible and useful** -- to give our users the most relevant, useful and authoritative information in response to their queries. And we do that by analyzing a corpus of expression that changes by the second. **Fifteen percent of the queries we see each day are queries we have never seen before.**
- Since the beginning of Google, **we have worked to counter those who seek to game the system or flood search results with material that is poor quality, misleading, deceptive.** There is no single solution to eradicate these problems. It's an ongoing effort. We'll harden our defenses in what has always been an arms race between good guys and bad guys.
- **At Google, we've seen search results for important sets of queries** surfacing pages with demonstrably inaccurate or offensive information. While these are a tiny percentage of queries, about 0.25%, the results are deeply upsetting to our users and equally upsetting to us at Google. **The trust of our users is at stake.** There is nothing more important.
- **Last week we announced various improvements in search.** We've taken steps to strengthen our understanding of low quality content, and further refine our algorithms. We expanded mechanisms for user feedback and published more information about our policies and about how search works.

- **We are making progress.** Identifying bad content is a never-ending quest. As is identifying **quality content from quality sources**. These are persistent challenges we accept and pursue.
- **We realize that no one wants Google to be the arbiter of truth** -- the one institution making the call on the trustworthiness or acceptability of a given source, or the veracity of an article, a photo, a video, or any element of free expression.
- **This is why we have collaborated** with the community of journalists over the last several years on many aspects of enhancing the architecture of the news ecosystem.

- **The world has changed.** People consume information in different ways and reach opinions via different means. Their trust in institutions, both governments and the press, is low and declining.
- **We need to reinvent journalism to address the needs of a very different world in a very different media space.**
- There are many definitions of journalism. For me **journalism's mission is to provide the tools and information citizens need to be good citizens.**
- **Given that role, let's consider every facet of journalism** and explore what might be done differently.
 - **How should story forms evolve to meet new consumption patterns?** -- on mobile devices in a fast-paced media-dense world.

- **How might we build a better framework of trust?** A framework for understanding the work of journalists without requiring media literacy training or a user manual?
- **How might we take advantage of new tools and capabilities?** The potential of data journalism is vast and we're only at the beginning.
- **How might we benefit from new story types?** Interactives. Explainers. Mobile-centric infographics like those done by Pictoline in Mexico.
- **How might we evolve new journalistic models?**
- **One new model is standalone Fact Checks.** Last fall, we launched third-party Fact Checks in Google News, the result of two years of work with the evolving fact-check community.
 - **About a month ago we launched the inclusion of Fact Checks globally in Google Search, across all languages and countries.** Now, when a Google search returns a result with spurious claims we look for available fact checks and present them. Fact Checks display the publisher's summary of the questionable claim, the source of the claim, and a determination of the claim's veracity by the Fact Check publisher. As the global community grows we hope to see Fact Checks against a broad range of queries -- news, public policy, medicine.
 - **Beyond dedicated Fact Checks organizations,** many high-profile publishers in APAC, such as 'Joongang Ilbo' in Korea, are now providing Fact Checks. We are also partnering here with the First Draft coalition to build a community of news organizations to address misinformation.

- **There's more we can do.** There's more we are doing -- to ensure that news is correctly understood for its validity and trustworthiness.
- **I mentioned frameworks of trust.** How does principled fact-based journalism stand out in the cacophony of expression that is the Internet? How might we address the continued decline of public trust in journalism?
- Two and a half years ago, I had the good fortune to work with journalist and ethicist Sally Lehrman and instigate the Trust Project.
- Now more than 80 news organizations from around the world are exploring the architecture of journalism in quest of new approaches to help fact-based reporting earn the credibility it deserves, that might help readers divine fact from fiction, wisdom from spin.
- The Trust Project is asking many questions:
 - **Might journalists divulge, within a consistent framework, the impressive expertise** inside quality news organizations? That helps the reader decide why this person might know what he or she knows. That allows the reader to understand the full body of a reporter's work. That allows the reader to understand the editorial process behind that work.
 - **Might we embrace the practices of academia, and even Wikipedia,** and make better use of structured citations to show the underpinnings of a reporter's fact-based efforts.

- **Can we provide better cues, more points of information to help readers make informed decisions?** To help search engines better understand and rank results? To help the myriad algorithmic systems that mold our media lives?
- None of this is easy. No one can dictate solutions. The Trust Project's architectural re-thinking will not lead to a sudden panacea. We need organic solutions which require the collaboration and acceptance of the community. It might be better to think of the Trust Project as a movement rather than a project. Join the movement.
- **Sally has managed to involve many of the world's great editors,** from Mario Calebresi at La Repubblica to David Walmsley of the Toronto Globe & Mail to Marty Baron of the Washington Post.

- **How might we take full advantage of the potential of data journalism?** Can we use it to address the distressingly wide gap between how people perceive the world around them and the reality of the communities they live in.
 - **It's not hard to understand why that gap exists.** Everyday we hear of terrorist attacks, home invasions, kidnappings, refugee flows -- all the horrific but anomalistic events that occur in our modern world.
 - **We see wall-to-wall coverage, often disproportionately so,** and nearly always amplified by social media. Our audiences translate that experience, accurately or not, into perceptions of their "normal" lives in their own communities.
 - **How can we address this? Can we build a richer foundation of data-driven knowledge** to benefit our societies as part of

journalism's efforts to provide the knowledge citizens need?
Might we find ways to close the gap between irrational fear and rational fear?

- **Can we make it far easier for data-driven nuggets of knowledge to be found, be shared**, be embedded in coverage by journalists to provide helpful context?
- **Can data visualizations (the charts, the interactive graphs) become first class media objects** so they can be more findable, as easily shared as a cat video?
- **Might we build dashboards for our communities that display key metrics, that paint a more complete picture of what matters in our communities?** School performance metrics. Cost of living indexes. Crime data. Air quality indexes.
- **Can institutions like Google work with the journalism community to enable that fabric of knowledge utilities.**
- **The Internet is not only populated with produced content -- articles, posts, videos.** There's a vast amount of public data. Raw bits of stuff waiting to be turned into knowledge. Government data. Sensor data. Leaked data. Castoff bits that we might not even think of as data. That cloud of public data will soon include some **50 billion sensing devices connected to the Internet.**
- **How can journalists use that data** to help us understand how our societies and our institutions work?

- **We live in a different world.** The digital revolution has changed how we communicate, how we engage, how we learn of the world around us, how we form opinions and beliefs.

- **The digital revolution has brought immense value ... and big challenges.** At Google, we recognize the challenges. Accepting them is intrinsic to our mission.
- Billions of people come to Google everyday. **They come in search of answers. But most questions don't have a single answer.** In those cases, we will seek to put the user on a path to a better understanding, to help the user develop their own critical thinking by providing the news, the perspectives, the background information they need to reach their own informed conclusions.
- I am optimistic about the future of news. There is so much impressive digital work being done, exploring new journalism tools and capabilities. Without question, we're in the early days of a Renaissance in journalistic and media creativity.
- **That Renaissance is critical.** New news experiences must be created. New business models developed. New media types defined. New journalism frameworks explored. All necessary to insure our citizens have the tools they need to be good citizens.
- As we move forward, we are eager to continue to collaborate, to work together, to drive experimentation and progress.
 - **That includes our Google News Lab work** around the world that trained 100,000 journalists in 2016 on the latest journalism tools and techniques. That includes expansion of our newsroom trainings in APAC. Just yesterday, we hosted a verification workshop with First Draft to train over 100 journalists, and later this week, we will train another 250 Indonesian journalists and fact-checkers from around the country.

- **That includes our work with the AMP Project**, the open-source effort to rearchitect the web for speed, improve ad models, reduce ad-blocking and grow revenue. AMP is critical to maintaining the appeal of the open web at a time when proprietary platforms (social networks, messaging apps) take a higher percentages of user attention. It is critical to the future of independent publishing that the open ecosystem of the web be healthy and sustainable.
- We must address the challenges to open expression in every way, including technical architectures.
- There is nothing more important than ensuring a robust future for the free press. Our societies, indeed our democracies, depend upon it.

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