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THE  
CHICAGO  
COMMUNITY  
TRUST

AND AFFILIATES

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Aug. 5, 2010

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## **New Report: Millions of Eyes Visit Chicago's Online News Sites Each Month, Majority Heading to Traditional Sites**

*Small Blogs, Aggregators Make Up Rich Online News Community but Many Survive on Piggy Bank Financing With Few Paid Staff*

CHICAGO—More than eight million people visit Chicago-area online news sites each month, according to a new report released today. While the report highlights a proliferation of online news and information sites in the Chicago area, when it comes to traffic, the sites of mainstream media clearly dominate. Six of the eight million unique cumulative visitors reported by all media outlets participating in the survey were to *Chicago Tribune*, *Sun-Times*, *Red Eye* and Chicago Now (the *Trib's* blog site).

The 2<sup>nd</sup> annual *NEW News* report, produced by Community Media Workshop and funded by the Community News Matters program of The Chicago Community Trust, surveyed 121 online news outlets about issues ranging from salaried employees to the type of content being produced.

According to the report, most of the online sites surveyed rely heavily on unpaid bloggers and reporters and piggy bank financing. More than 60 percent of sites surveyed had no more than one person working full time on the site. A similar percentage reported that no one receives health insurance from their online news outlet.

“Definitions of news are changing. The 2<sup>nd</sup> annual *NEW News* report gives us a richer picture of the Chicago area's online news ecosystem and shows us that the online news community is still growing, evolving and retooling,” said Terry Mazany, president and chief executive officer of The Chicago Community Trust. “Through our work with the John S. and James Knight Foundation's Community Information Challenge, The Chicago Community Trust is committed to examining how the rapidly changing media landscape is impacting the residents of our region. *The NEW News* report helps us understand the sources and

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availability of information in our community and whether or not it is meeting the needs of residents.”

The report contains the survey’s findings, as well as a list of 146 online sites, who either participated in the survey or were identified as online news sites in the 2009 report, that shows the diversity in size, content, format and issue area of Chicago’s online news ecosystem.

“This report shows us that right now, there is more competition for news consumer eyes and ears than ever before, but we don’t know yet how this nascent online news ecosystem will be sustained,” said Thom Clark, president, Community Media Workshop. “The roadmap for vetted, authoritative information that frames the public debate is still being charted.”

In 2009, *The NEW News* report identified almost 200 local news and information sites and ranked 60 of them. This year, the Workshop reached out to some 500 contacts, identified over 300 potential news-related URLs, and honed in on 146 online blog and news sites for this 2010 list. Results from an online survey of 121 online news sites conducted from March to May of 2010 paint a more detailed picture of the operations of online news sites.

Find additional key findings and information on the Chicago area’s online news ecosystem in our eco-friendly, online-only report *The NEW News 2010: The Second Annual Survey of the Chicago Area’s Online News Ecosystem*. <http://communitymediaworkshop.org/newnews>

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#### About The Chicago Community Trust

For 95 years, The Chicago Community Trust, our region’s community foundation, has connected the generosity of donors with community needs by making grants to organizations working to improve metropolitan Chicago. In 2009, the Trust, together with its donors, granted more than \$100 million to nonprofit organizations. From strengthening schools to assisting local art programs, from building health centers to helping lives affected by violence, the Trust continues to enhance our region. To learn more, please visit the Trust online at [www.cct.org](http://www.cct.org).

The Community News Matters program is funded by lead grants from the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation’s Knight Community Information Challenge and The Chicago Community Trust, with additional funding from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, The McCormick Foundation, The Woods Fund of Chicago and the Richard H. Driehaus Foundation. It seeks to increase the flow of truthful, accurate and insightful news and information in the region and spur development of new business models for news.

#### About Community Media Workshop

Community Media Workshop is a 20-year-old nonprofit whose mission is to diversify the voices in the news and public debates through communications coaching for some 2,000 nonprofit volunteers and staff a year, as well as sourcing and Newstips from nonprofit groups for journalists. Based at Columbia College Chicago, its home page is [www.communitymediaworkshop.org](http://www.communitymediaworkshop.org).