

## **Latham Talk Outline – Voter Funded Media Perspectives**

*Notes for a future talk and possible paper; draft 2010-05-29*

In addition to these notes, this talk will also reference the paper “Global Voter Media Platform”, available at [votermedia.org/publications](http://votermedia.org/publications).

### **A. Voter Funded Media at UBC 2007 - 2010**

In the past four AMS elections (January each year), besides voting for President, Vice Presidents etc, students voted to allocate \$8000 among competing media (mostly blogs) that covered the election campaigns.

I donated the \$8000 for 2007 and for 2008; the AMS paid it for 2009 and 2010.

For January 2010 I also developed a “Continuous VFM” ballot at [votermedia.org/communities/82-ubc-ams](http://votermedia.org/communities/82-ubc-ams). This is designed to enable students to vote funding to media all year round, in contrast to the “One-Time VFM” (1VFM) on the election ballot once a year. Features comparison table at [votermedia.org/ubc2010](http://votermedia.org/ubc2010).

We tested CVFM in January 2010, running it in parallel with 1VFM. I donated a \$2000 award pool. Then in March 2010, the Arts Undergrad Society funded \$1500 of CVFM for their rep elections. All these developments are chronicled at [votermedia.blogspot.com](http://votermedia.blogspot.com).

CVFM is automated; can easily be used by other voter communities.

### **B. Blind Men & Elephant – What does VFM feel like to different disciplines?**

#### 1. Journalism:

- a new source of funding for media
- may help solve problem of declining revenue for public journalism
- media incentives shape what kind of media?
- future of journalism: blogger power?

#### 2. Political Science:

- checks & balances in a democratic system --
  - on the government and on the other media
  - funding dissent, political opposition
- electoral reform --
  - continuous allocation of power via amounts of funding
  - easier to start this reform because it's an add-on – don't need to replace anything
  - closer to direct democracy
  - real-time democracy – recall any time, gradually
- a substitute for campaign finance reform? – see [votermedia.blogspot.com/2010/03/vfm-for-bc-municipal-elections.html](http://votermedia.blogspot.com/2010/03/vfm-for-bc-municipal-elections.html)
- international relations -- reduce conflicts caused by leaders pursuing their own interests while harming

citizens; green taxes for global VFM?

### 3. Economics:

- competitive markets for public goods
- why VFM differs from private sector media & from vouchers

VFM could support --

- public policy think tanks
- Consumer Reports
- creative commons:
  - music, video, pharma research, literature, etc.
  - especially powerful when VFM for large communities – USA, world – fund from green taxes?
- a kind of communism that works?

### 4. Business:

- VFM for democracies = privatizing/outsourcing government
- monitoring of government as a competitive for-profit business
- competition for voter support may reduce influence of special-interest lobbying (e.g. less cartels)
- brand reputation of funded organizations vs political parties; need broad cross-sectional sample; why doesn't that work for parties?
- VFM for corporations = privatizing the regulation of corporations
- corporate governance as a for-profit business consulting service
- can also use VFM for investor education, other shared infrastructure
- a kind of capitalism that works?

### 5. Law:

- constitutional law, free speech, corporate law
- What might VFM do to the legislative process, our legal system, our police system, crime...?
- change drug laws?
- police accountability – VFM can support more independent monitors of police
- stronger independent advocates for human rights, checking abuses by those in power
- better support for whistleblowers
- greater trust could encourage police-citizen cooperation
- reduce the costs of a legal system that encourages expensive legal conflict

- simplification of tax laws