

Subject: 21st Century News Challenge

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From: [Gary Kebbel <kebbel@knightfdn.org>](mailto:kebbel@knightfdn.org)

To: [Gary Kebbel <kebbel@knightfdn.org>](mailto:kebbel@knightfdn.org)

Dear New Media Leader,

I want to alert you to the fact that Knight Foundation President Alberto Ibarguen has announced a \$5 million competition that we are calling the Knight Brothers' 21st Century News Challenge.

In your position, you might hear people talking about this or receive questions about it, so we wanted to make sure you knew our schedule, and some basics about our plan.

The purpose of the challenge is to fund new community news projects that use the digital world to connect people in the real world.

The communities we're concerned with are those that help people where they live and work. Online communities don't need our help. Virtual communities spring up every day. But the idea of turning the web on its head to help people connect in real life does need our help.

In the 20th Century, the Knight Brothers owned newspapers that were the glue that held communities together. We'd like to know who or what will do that in the 21st Century?

What do we mean by "glue"? Great newspapers help communities become aware of their real situations. They inspire people to come up with new ideas to improve things. And they bestir people to pursue their true interests.

We want to help news organizations create products that engage a new generation of users, particularly because other companies already have. We want to make sure that innovative products are created that continue to serve the fair, accurate, contextual search for truth.

The competition will make awards in the following categories:

- Ideas
- Pilot projects and field tests
- Leadership projects
- Commercial investments
- Open submissions

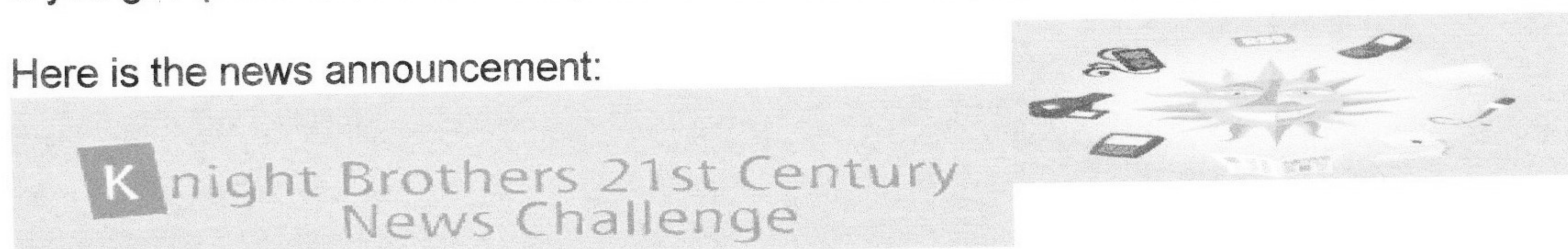
The Challenge web site, with an online application form, is at www.newschallenge.org.

We will accept applications through Dec. 31, and hope to begin announcing winners in the spring of 2007. We will be assisted by outside reviewers, using a similar process as was used to select Knight Chairs.

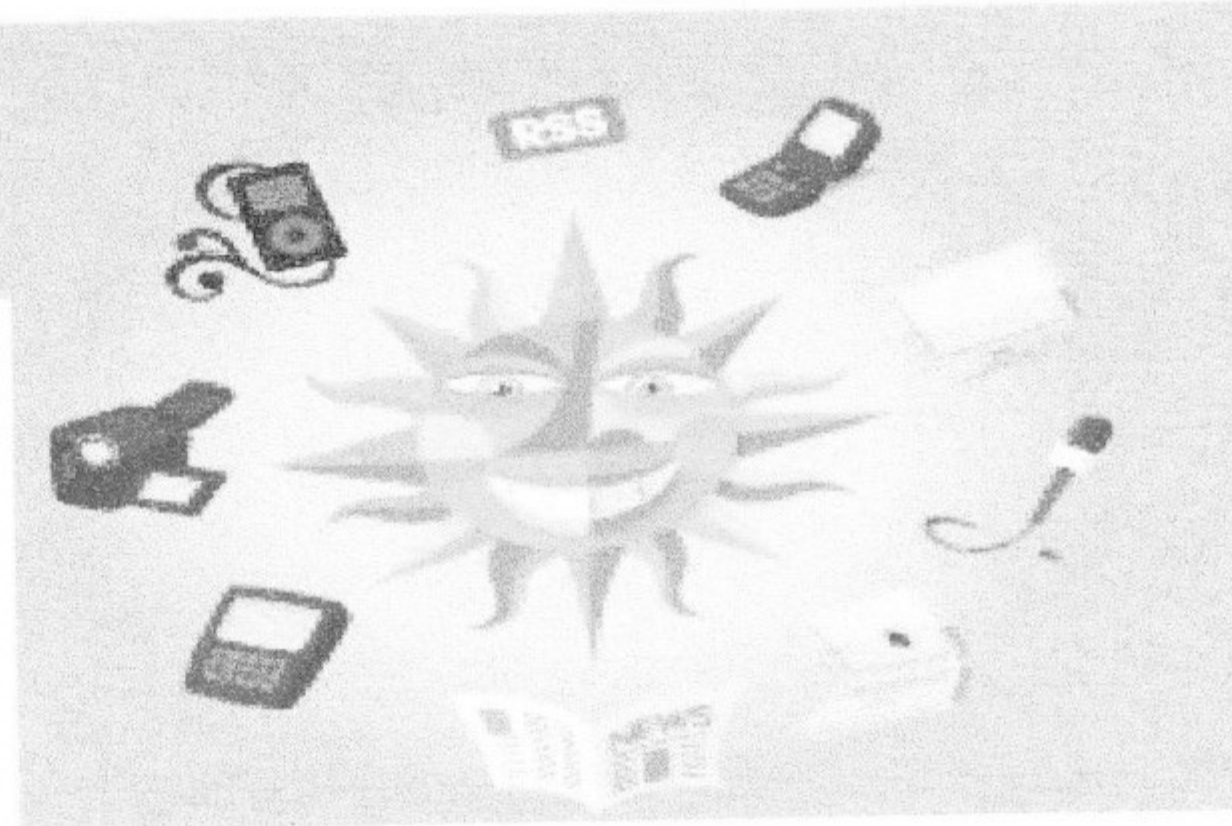
We hope you will pass this information along to anyone who might have an idea or project that would qualify. This competition is open to anyone, not just the journalism community.

If you get questions about this, please refer them to newschallenge@knightfdn.org.

Here is the news announcement:



Knight Brothers 21st Century
News Challenge



Knight Foundation Competition Will Award Millions To Innovative Community News Experiments

*\$5 Million 'Knight Brothers 21st Century News Challenge'
to Fund New Forms of Community Journalism in Cyberspace*

MIAMI ? The John S. and James L. Knight Foundation today launches the Knight Brothers 21st Century News Challenge, investing as much as \$5 million in its first year in community news projects that best use the digital world to connect people to the real world.

The News Challenge is looking to fund new ideas, prototypes, products and leadership initiatives that use innovative news methods to help citizens better connect within their communities.

The competition is open to anyone, not just the journalism community.

"News and information are the glue that binds communities. We want to help today's high-tech news do in the 21st century what the Knight brothers' newspapers did this past century," said Alberto Ibargüen, president of Knight Foundation.

"Through their newspapers, the Knight brothers helped build a sense of community in cities and towns across the country. They did it by providing news, information and commentary that helped citizens understand their common interests and opportunities. The Knight brothers helped define the geography where people lived. We want to continue that tradition using new media to do what the brothers used to do with ink on paper," said Ibargüen.

If the quality of entries warrant it, the foundation may spend as much as \$25 million during the next five years in the search for bold community news experiments.

"We'd like to encourage the newest ways for people to pursue a great American tradition: the fair, accurate, contextual search for the truth," said Eric Newton, Knight's director of Journalism Initiatives. "We want to help the citizens of this new century get the news they need to run their governments and their lives."

The Challenge web site, with an online application form, is at

www.newschallenge.org. The competition will accept applications through Dec. 31, and expects to begin announcing winners in the spring of 2007.

The foundation and its special panel of new media advisors will look for innovative proposals that contain a unique combination of vision, courage and know-how in their ability to use cyberspace to better connect people to the physical space where they live and work.

Cell phone documentaries? New operating software for news collectors? Journalism games? Nothing is too far out to qualify.

“We hesitate to set too many rules,” said Knight journalism program officer Gary Kebbel, “because we expect the best entries will be ideas that totally surprise us.”

The John S. and James L. Knight Foundation promotes journalism excellence worldwide and invests in the vitality of U.S. communities where the Knight brothers owned newspapers. Since its creation in 1950, the foundation has invested nearly \$300 million to advance journalism quality and freedom of expression. For more on Knight’s work, visit www.knightfdn.org

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