

NATIONAL PRESS CLUB HEADLINERS LUNCHEON WITH CRAIGSLIST FOUNDER CRAIG NEWMARK

SUBJECT: CRAIG NEWMARK, FOUNDER OF CRAIGSLIST AND CRAIG NEWMARK PHILANTHROPIES, WILL APPEAR AT A NATIONAL PRESS CLUB HEADLINERS LUNCHEON TO DISCUSS HIS PHILANTHROPIC EFFORTS TO STRENGTHEN TRUST IN NEWS.

MODERATOR: ANDREA EDNEY, PRESIDENT OF THE NATIONAL PRESS CLUB

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ANDREA EDNEY: Welcome to the National Press Club, the place where news happens. I'm Andrea Edney. I'm an editor at Bloomberg News, and I am the 111th President of the National Press Club.

We are so pleased to welcome today's headliner, Craig Newmark, the founder of Craigslist, and Craig Newmark Philanthropies, which has supported a host of causes, especially journalism, veterans' issues, women in technology, and voter protection. Before we begin, I would like to please ask you, silence your cell phones if you haven't already. And if you're tweeting today, we are [pressclubdc](#). And the hashtag for today's event is [NPCLIVE](#).

I would like to also introduce our head table guests. Please hold your applause until everyone has been introduced. So starting from my left, we have Mike Smith, CEO of GreenSmith Public Affairs and a member of the National Press Club Headliners Committee. We have Megan Ross. She's a correspondent at Gaylord News Service. We have Marc Wojno, a Senior Associate Editor at the Kiplinger Washington Editors. We have Katie Horn, head of Product and Technology at The Markup, something that you may have just recently heard about. We have Chris Swanson, Vice-President of Editorial Projects in Education. That's the publisher of Education Week. We have Jeff Larson. He's the managing Editor at The Markup.

Coming here from my right, we have Lisa Matthews, Assignment Manager at the Associated Press and Co-Chair of the National Press Club Headliners Team. We have Caitlin

Reilly, she's a staff writer at Inside Philanthropy. We have Wesley Lowery, National Reporter at the Washington Post. We have Julia Angwin, Editor-in-Chief at The Markup. We have Barbara Cochran, President of the Board of the National Press Club Journalism Institute and the Curtis B. Hurley Chair in Public Affairs Journalism at the Missouri School of Journalism.

Skipping over our speaker only for a moment, we have Betsy Fischer Martin, Executive Director of the Women in Politics Institute at American University and Co-Chair of the National Press Club Headliners Team. Thank you for joining us here today.

[applause]

I would also like to acknowledge additional members of the Headliners Team responsible for organizing today's event, Laurie Russo, Tamara Hinton, and Ellen Ferguson, as well as the Press Club staff, specifically Lindsay Underwood, Laura Cocker, and Executive Director, Bill McCarren. Yes, thank you.

[applause]

Now to our guest. Craig Newmark is a Jersey boy who reshaped the world of classified ads with the online, mostly free Craigslist. The business began as an email service for his friends and colleagues to share information about local events, and earned him a place in the Internet Hall of Fame in 2012. Newmark handed over his managerial duties to Jim Buckmaster in 2000. But he remains a major shareholder in the privately held company he began in 1995, and incorporated in 1999.

Now he's turned to philanthropy as a way to sustain what he calls, quote/unquote, "Trustworthy journalism." He has given \$60 million dollars to journalism efforts just over the last three years.

[applause]

That includes a \$20 million dollar gift to the City University of New York's Graduate School of Journalism, and a gift that was announced just yesterday, \$20 million dollars to a brand new nonprofit journalism ventured called The Markup. So why does he compel to spend part of his fortune on this mission? He'll share his thinking with us today.

As the head of Craig Newmark Philanthropies, Newmark has also focused on helping veterans and their families, protecting voters' rights, and creating opportunities for women in tech. He credits his Sunday school teachers, Mr. and Mrs. Levin, and his high school history teacher, Mr. Schliskey, in Morristown, New Jersey, for nurturing a sense of responsibility and a love of the democratic process. So with that, I'd like to welcome a self-described nerd, who created a list, and changed the way we buy and sell things.

As he put it to Fortune Magazine, "I didn't think I would start a very successful company. It has worked out much better than I thought. [laughter] And now I can put my

money where my mouth is.” Craig, thank you so much for being here today. If you’ll join me up here, we can get our discussion started.

[applause]

ANDREA EDNEY: So it’s so nice to see you here in Washington. Welcome.

CRAIG NEWMARK: It’s my pleasure. I’ve been here a fair amount in the recent past. I spent a year in a symbolic role at the Department of Veterans Affairs as the “nerd in residence.”

ANDREA EDNEY: What did that entail?

CRAIG NEWMARK: You know, they didn’t need my help with technology at all. They already knew what they were doing pretty well. The help they needed was just talking about it better. But I seriously am a nerd. That’s not my specialty. [laughter]

ANDREA EDNEY: Well let’s talk a little bit about The Markup, this brand new project of yours. I’m sure everybody here in the room is very interested in finding out a little more about it. Can you explain to us your thinking about the need for an investigative journalism outlet focused on the impact of tech in society?

CRAIG NEWMARK: Well, my contribution to The Markup is minimal.

ANDREA EDNEY: It’s \$20 million dollars. [laughter]

CRAIG NEWMARK: Well, but I’m not a journalist. And, you know, journalism is hard, writing to deadline every day or something. And in some places, worrying about being shot at, or something of that nature in this country, or being harassed pretty badly. But years ago, I realized that there are some stories where you can only get at the truth by looking really hard for evidence, for hard fact. And sometimes, you can only figure out what’s going on by looking at the numbers; that is, doing some serious data science. That was absent, in particular, from people—well, from reports which look at the effects of new technology on our society.

Those, you know, the effects of technology on society have been completely unpredictable. No one in science fiction really predicted the rise of the internet. Everyone sort of was thinking about flying cars, and lunar colonies, and jet packs. And I seriously still want my jet pack. [laughter] But things have just proven to be unpredictable. So again, sometimes the only way you can get to the truth is through data science. That’s particularly true about the role of the effects of the big tech platforms on our culture.

We don’t know a lot about what’s really happening. Lots of conjecture, lots of anecdotes. We need something real.

ANDREA EDNEY: So how do you see data scientists and investigative journalists working together to bring us better news?

CRAIG NEWMARK: Well, the idea is, sometimes we need to find out, what are the real effects of interference in our election, whether it's by domestic actors or foreign actors. The only way you can actually take a look at that is by looking at the data present in the databases of the social media platforms. You need to do statistical analysis. You need to do social network analysis of that. That's actually really hard work. People are inventing the tools to do all that, as the problem evolves.

It makes me want to be young again when I—

ANDREA EDNEY: You're still pretty young.

CRAIG NEWMARK: Well, when I was smart and scientific, I could do that stuff. Now I've recently entered my sunset years. [laughter]

ANDREA EDNEY: I'm not even sure what that means, but congratulations on getting there. We hope you have many happy returns.

CRAIG NEWMARK: I recently acquired my Medicare Part A card.

ANDREA EDNEY: I would never have guessed it.

CRAIG NEWMARK: Thank you.

ANDREA EDNEY: So tell us, what are some of the types of stories you'd like to see coming out of The Markup when it starts publishing?

CRAIG NEWMARK: I have some ideas, but I'm hesitant to describe them, since the ethics of funding nonprofit journalism are still being clarified. And sometimes, a guy who's had some success in tech, we need to learn to keep—Well, I need to learn to keep my mouth shut at times. So I'm trying not to say anything along those lines until I better—I better understand that. So I do know some things I'd like people to take a look at.

But something I've learned in business and everywhere, sometimes you've got to get out of the way. And then you need to learn to stay out of the way. That's my history in Craigslist management.

ANDREA EDNEY: Will you have any sort of editorial role at The Markup?

CRAIG NEWMARK: No. I mean being an editor or curator of any sort is hard work, requiring journalistic smarts. And I lack those. I really need to play to my strengths and to work in areas where which are being neglected. One area where I will be involved with, since I'm involved with a number of these journalistic efforts, I need to get people to talk to each other, and then to work with each other, because given the crisis in journalism

and democracy today, we're in an all-hands-on-deck situation. We really are all in this together. And someone like me can nag people—I should say nudge people to do that, just short of being really annoying, I hope.

ANDREA EDNEY: I'm sure. So let's talk a little bit about, as you put it, the crisis, this crisis. Was there any particular one thing that prompted you to start, or one series of events that prompted you to start donating to journalism causes?

CRAIG NEWMARK: About 12 years ago, I went to the Communications and Society meeting in Aspen, sponsored by Charlie Firestone. And back then, there were a lot of publishers, editors, reporters there. And they started educating me on what they thought I should know long-term about the news industry. I really wasn't conscious of that education for several years. But then, things started getting clear to me. I remembered what I learned in high school US history from Mr. Schulsky, because he taught me, as I put it, a trustworthy press is the immune system of democracy. So I started taking action—maybe not terribly informed, but I kept learning, and then learning more. And then, with the events of the last few years, I realized I needed to stand up. I needed, as we say in Jersey, to put my money where my mouth is, to get committed, to stay committed, and to be relentless in that matter.

ANDREA EDNEY: According to Sunday's *New York Times* articles about the launch of The Markup, some of the reporting tactics employed by The Markup may violate tech platform terms of service agreements, terms of service agreements, which ban people from performing automated collection of public information and prohibit them from creating temporary research accounts. Should tech companies allow reporters to have an exception to their rules?

CRAIG NEWMARK: Well, I am now working fairly quietly, fairly diplomatically, at least for me, talking to everyone involved, reminding, this is an all-deck-on-hand[sic] thing. And trying to smooth the way to make it okay for serious people with good ethics to take a look at what's going on. The idea is that the only way we're going to work ourselves out of this crisis, the only way, I think, the country is going to survive as a democracy, is if we work together to make those things happen that we're talking about.

So I'm talking to people in platforms. I'm talking to the, let's say, constructive critics of the platforms. And I'm speaking to a lot of reporters, just so that everyone will play well together. Because if we don't all hang together, we're going to hang separately. Yes, I do remember that from Mr. Schulsky, Revolutionary History.

[laughter]

ANDREA EDNEY: I wish Mr. Schulsky were here today. I'd like this man to stand up and take a bow.

CRAIG NEWMARK: Yeah. This was in Morristown, New Jersey, which credits itself as the center of the revolution, since Washington and his Army stayed there for two winters.

ANDREA EDNEY: Very good. [laughter]

CRAIG NEWMARK: That's why I remember, so it has to be better good. [laughter]

ANDREA EDNEY: And at some point, they made their way in this direction. So how are your conversations going with these platforms? And do those include Twitter, Facebook, and Google?

CRAIG NEWMARK: It involves everyone. And, you know, I'm pretty optimistic. Everyone realizes that we've got to pull together in this situation. It's hard sometimes. For example, if you talk about a technique used to defeat, let's say, a scammer or a disinformation op, if you say too much publicly, the bad actors get information on how to game the system. So these are—There's a whole bunch of really tough problems. It's kind of like when cops have an ongoing investigation. They don't want to say too much because then the bad actor involved will know, perhaps, how to evade capture. So sometimes you need to know when to stop talking. Sometimes that's a challenge for me, but I do remind myself that brevity is the soul of wit.

[laughter]

ANDREA EDNEY: I love this.

CRAIG NEWMARK: That was from a different teacher in high school. [laughter] But I remember, Ms. [00:15:40] and Ms. Howe. But maybe it was Ms. Toronto. It was so long ago, so very long ago. [laughter]

ANDREA EDNEY: Not so long ago. But I'm sure they would be very, very proud of you today.

CRAIG NEWMARK: I'd like to think that.

ANDREA EDNEY: Yeah. In late 2016, *New York Times* journalist James Risen, who faced potential jail time for refusing to reveal his sources during the Obama administration crackdown on leaks from government officials, wrote, "Over the past eight years, the administration has prosecuted nine cases involving whistleblowers and leakers, compared with only three by all of the previous administrations combined." So the question here is, why now the efforts, your efforts, to defend a free press? Why not during the eight years of the Obama administration?

CRAIG NEWMARK: In the past, I didn't really understand the issues. I had some sense that things were increasingly going wrong in journalism and in our democracy. But I hadn't figured things out enough. My thoughts hadn't coalesced enough to step up my action. In recent years, I realized that things took a real turn for the worse. And it was time to step up to rapidly accelerate my education, and then to do something.

I guess the real answer is that sometimes before you know what you're doing, you should not do anything until you can make sure that you're going to do no harm. That's actually a big part, for me, of the ethics of funding nonprofit journalism and maybe everything else. Do no harm really matters.

ANDREA EDNEY: So speaking of ethics, you've made sizeable contributions to journalism, now, with your \$20 million dollar endowment gift to the City University of New York, and just now with your \$20 million dollar gift to The Markup. So what metrics will you use, or will you expect to be applied, to determine if these two organizations are meeting your goals for expanding the pool of journalists who follow good practices?

CRAIG NEWMARK: I don't know if there's a way to measure that in a satisfactory way.

ANDREA EDNEY: Is there a way to take a stab at it?

CRAIG NEWMARK: Well, what I'm looking for are news outlets and so on to adopt the principles of groups like The Trust Project, from a news consumer point of view, the Trust Project is a way for news outlet to say, "Hey, you can trust us." Like having a code of ethics, like having a good corrections policy, a diversity policy, that kind of thing.

But I'm really interested, in the long run. And frankly, my guiding principle is that the arc—the arc of the moral universe is long. But it bends towards justice. If, ultimately, we see a lot more accountability, wherein the press holds politicians to account, where we don't have to have a running count every day of how much deception we're seeing from politicians, that's what matters to me.

And, you know, my background is scientific. I want to see numbers. I want to be able to measure things. But I don't know how to do that. And I'm actually kind of cynical of any attempts to be able to do that.

ANDREA EDNEY: In interviews, you've said that you're optimistic that the big tech companies are making progress towards being able to accurately identify and address campaigns of misinformation. What evidence are you seeing there?

CRAIG NEWMARK: To speak about some of the specific techniques that can be used, ones that are known publicly, some of the problem, when disinformation is introduced into the news ecosystem, you can see, if you look at the postings, you may see an alleged individual posting 24 hours a day, or possibly posting thousands of times a day. That's one way to indicate that you have a problem with a bot or possibly a bot network.

New techniques coming in which are starting to be used are when something comes into a feed, you can look at it and see, for example, if it's from a news outlet, have they subscribed to Trust Project Principles? You can take a look at things to see if the item has been fact-checked. And if the fact-checks are represented in claims, the format of which is

standardized now by schema.org. I'm looking forward to the efforts of Billaddare and Tech & Check at Duke, which would then do things like, oh, what I'm looking for are summary fact checks or maybe nutrition labels. And if a news item comes in from a news outlet, which has a tendency, for example, of getting things wrong, and never fixing them, that might play a role into what the platforms can do.

I do want to make clear that a lot of this is determined by the choice of any particular individual user of a platform. We should get to choose what level of integrity we want from the items coming into our feeds. I'll probably say, since I'm somewhat impatient, I'd say, hey, if an item comes in from a news outlet, which gets things wrong and doesn't fix them, I may not want to see that. If I do accept an item like that, but if, again, if those items, if there's been a fact checked on them, the thing looks iffy before I share it, I want the platform to say, hey, this thing looks iffy for the following reasons. Are you sure you want to share it?

The idea is that you want to disrupt networks of disinformation. And that's only part of the story. If you had a few more hours, I could keep going, except I'd bore myself to tears.

ANDREA EDNEY: This is not boring. This is very, very interesting.

CRAIG NEWMARK: Well, I've got to catch up with email anyway. [laughter]

ANDREA EDNEY: Okay. Are you concerned that tech companies like Google and Facebook are using their algorithms to show a slanted political point of view? Is political bias in algorithms something that you would like to investigate with The Markup?

CRAIG NEWMARK: What I'm much more interested in is the appearance of bias, sometimes caused by platforms enforcing the terms of service. There are sites or speakers. And, you know, if they engage in fraud or deception or disinformation, terms of service should prohibit that. And then the platforms should take that action. And I think that's being confused with bias. There are issues with algorithms. And sometimes, you know, my fellow programmers, you know, sometimes we don't realize the actual privilege we have. And sometimes how that turns up in the code we write. I don't think I have ever been conscious of that, although maybe I've solved the problem by stopping coding in 2000. And I'm very sad about that. But the deal is, at the whole bias thing, right now we need to see more enforcement of terms of service.

ANDREA EDNEY: Do you think that the tech companies themselves should be self-policing? Or do you think that Washington or state government should be getting more involved in terms of regulation?

CRAIG NEWMARK: I think it needs to be a combination. But given the toxicity of the current political environment, I have a feeling Washington may only make it worse. As odd as it sounds, a lot of good work is beginning to happen in Sacramento. And I have a lot of confidence in some of what may happen there.

ANDREA EDNEY: Can you tell us a little bit about that?

CRAIG NEWMARK: Right now there's folks in Sacramento who are looking at things like net neutrality, who are beginning to think about, you know, how should platforms enforce their terms better? And I'm pretty impressed by the—let's say by the quiet diplomacy I see happening. And I'm going to keep it quiet. The only downside in this is that some day I may have to visit Sacramento. [laughter] Did I say that out loud? [laughter]

ANDREA EDNEY: Yes. [laughter]

CRAIG NEWMARK: Oh crap. [laughter]

ANDREA EDNEY: Do you think policymakers in Washington, or for example, in Sacramento, understand technology well enough to either regulate it, or even detect whether it needs to be regulated? And if so, how?

CRAIG NEWMARK: There are a handful of people who really know the stuff, or who have staff who know the issues. Maybe the most prominent, I think Ron Ryden[?], Mark Warren. I'm missing some names here. There are people who are pretty capable of it and can do great jobs, like Liz Warren and Tammy Duckworth. On the House side there's Will Hurd, and oh, probably—Anna Eshoo, and I'm missing some folks too. But there are folks that I have great confidence in, and I've chatted at length, in some cases. Well, for example, with Will Hurd about cybersecurity issues.

ANDREA EDNEY: How did that conversation go?

CRAIG NEWMARK: That was kind of fun, because I, of course, freely admit, as a nerd, I'm lacking in social skills. And so it's more entertaining to connect with someone who may share my issues. [laughter] Was that indirect enough?

ANDREA EDNEY: That was pretty indirect. So one more Washington question here. Do you think that there should be a federal antitrust investigation of Google and Facebook for online platform bias, quote/unquote, as the White House is considering?

CRAIG NEWMARK: There is no bias, in that sense. There are a lot of good people in federal agencies still there. I met a lot when I was spending more time in Washington. And I think more time is needed to investigate—well, to consider why terms of service need—or how they can be better enforced, how the terms could be improved to stop things like fraud and deception and disinformation. This is all a moving target, because the bad actors are really, really smart. They have a lot of funding and no scruples.

ANDREA EDNEY: Maybe we'll come back to this a little bit later in our conversation. But let's talk a little bit about philanthropy now. So you are making your mark as a philanthropist. The Giving Pledge, which was created by Bill and Melinda Gates and Warren Buffett, invites the world's wealthiest individuals and families to commit more than half of their wealth to philanthropy or charitable causes. So far, your name has not appeared on the list of signatories. Why is that?

CRAIG NEWMARK: Because I decided I might as well just go exceed it without going through the rigmarole.

ANDREA EDNEY: Fair answer. [applause]

CRAIG NEWMARK: Well also, a part of it's self-image, too. I don't see myself as a big deal. In recent years, I have thought about the circumstances under which I grew up. And then I realized that, across the street from our family home was a junkyard. I guess they're called salvage yards now. The junkyard that I played in, owned by family friends, though, was up the street. And that was a great, because there were stacks of old comics I could take, stuff like that. But then I realized that, you know, we grew up kind of in between hovering above poverty. And so I don't think I'm a big deal. I don't have a personal assistant or anything like that. Although my wife is really good—gotten good at making airline reservations. So part of this is just self image talking. I'm not that big a deal. And that's my reality.

ANDREA EDNEY: I'll leave that to the room to decide. You're a very modest man, very humble.

CRAIG NEWMARK: I just think I'm being connected to reality. Yeah. I still do enough customer service to stay in touch with what's real. It's not like I was doing 10 years ago, and yeah, bear in mind that whenever you're dealing with a customer service rep, you're dealing with someone who has a taxing, stressful job. And, even when you're getting stressed, try to give the customer service rep a break. [applause]

ANDREA EDNEY: So on any given day, if I'm having an issue with something on Craigslist, and I pick up the phone and call a number at the bottom of the screen and the Craigslist site, I might get you?

CRAIG NEWMARK: Not these days. [laughter]

ANDREA EDNEY: Okay.

CRAIG NEWMARK: What happens is that typically, people will find me through email, through social media, that kind of thing. And typically, I gather enough information for the mainline customer service team, and I'll pass it onto them.

ANDREA EDNEY: Why is it important to you to stay involved in that way?

CRAIG NEWMARK: I've seen company founders have issues in two different ways. One is founders syndrome, people who are good at starting something aren't good at continuing it. That's why, in 2000, after people helped me understand that I suck as a manager, I turned it over. [laughter] Yeah. And the other thing is that, when you drift away from everyday kind of company functions, when you drift away from your customers, that's like drifting away from reality. And you just lose touch. And that's not good for anyone.

ANDREA EDNEY: Was there any one major event that was the catalyst for you founding Craig Newmark Philanthropies in 2016?

CRAIG NEWMARK: It kind of just happened increasingly, increasingly. And then, at some point, I hit a reflective tipping point and said, “Hey I got to get my act better together.” Because I had something called Craig Connects going, which failed, in terms of branding. And I needed just to get a lot more serious to stand up, and, like I like to say, put my money where my mouth is. And that’s how I kicked everything into a much higher gear.

ANDREA EDNEY: What is the ultimate goal of Craig Newmark Philanthropies?

CRAIG NEWMARK: There's different ways of putting it. Remember, that arc of the moral universe thing. We want to protect it going in the right direction. We want to accelerate it. And my way of doing that is to find people doing good work in areas that I believe in. And then give them the resources that I have to help them succeed. That’s a combination of money, plus whatever influence I have. And I have no idea how much influence I have. But I'm trying to use it in stuff that I believe in. Yeah. I'm looking forward to doing more and more. For example, I’d love to go and help out in Sacramento.

ANDREA EDNEY: How would that work?

CRAIG NEWMARK: I don’t really know. Frankly, it’s like a two hour drive. And I hate driving. [laughter]

ANDREA EDNEY: Somebody could drive you. Or there are planes. You’ve learned to fly.

CRAIG NEWMARK: Planes?

ANDREA EDNEY: Yeah, yeah.

CRAIG NEWMARK: What about that jet pack? [laughter]

ANDREA EDNEY: The jet pack is the best idea. The jet pack is the best idea. But seriously, are there other areas of focus that you might be considering donating towards?

CRAIG NEWMARK: I have an area of four focuses right now, which I need to stick with, although some are kind of in gray areas. My favorite is Donors Choose, where a teacher and a public school classroom, a teacher often in the high poverty area, can put their projects up on the Donors Choose site and ask for funding, a dollar or \$20 bucks at a time. Last year, my Donors Choose program supported the teachers in schools that served military families. That idea I stole from Stephen Colbert.

This year it’s about supporting teachers, focusing on STEM work. The deal is that this country, we need more and more people who are really, really smart in STEM fields, as a

matter of national survival. So that's an investment in that area. It plays into my interest in women in tech. So does the work being done by Girls who Code, which is a really big Deal.

ANDREA EDNEY: That's a great organization. I didn't realize that you support them.

CRAIG NEWMARK: I'm on [00:33:50] Board.

ANDREA EDNEY: That is a lot of support. Technological innovations, including ad revenue, lost to free online services like Craigslist, have disrupted the old business model for news. Is relying on wealthy benefactors the way forward for the news business, in your opinion?

CRAIG NEWMARK: Business models for journalism span a range from traditional advertising to sponsorship models, membership models, and then the philanthropy. I wanted to see everything tried, because no one knows how all this is going to evolve over time. Me, I do have a preference for philanthropy, sponsorship models, membership models. And I want to see more of that happening. And so that's what I'm doing to help out.

You know, I think advertising is a legitimate way to pay for things. But me, I'm, for some reason, I just find more affinity with philanthropy, sometimes sponsorship like we have here on NPR.

ANDREA EDNEY: What are the responsibilities of others towards the free press, others including schools, governments, nonprofits, parents, and ourselves?

CRAIG NEWMARK: I'd like to say that we all should learn some degree of media literacy. For example, being able to sniff out when a story might be fake. But on the adult level, you know, we're all busy. And sometimes getting that extra education is just one more task too many in the day. For kids in school, I've listened to Dana Boyd says, from Data and Society. And she says, trying to teach media literacy, well telling kids what they should and shouldn't believe might be like herding cats who hate you already. [laughter] So I don't know if I'm a big believer in that. I don't want to criticize it, but I have a feeling it may not be productive. Plus, I might have to go to Sacramento. [laughter]

ANDREA EDNEY: Why do I get the feeling you're going to be in Sacramento sometime very, very soon?

CRAIG NEWMARK: Well, there's possibilities to it, because I've been friendly and supportive of Mr. Newsome for some time.

ANDREA EDNEY: Right now Jason Yurasek is the only employee listed on the Craig Newmark Philanthropies website. Do you have plans to scale up the foundation in the future?

CRAIG NEWMARK: Not that big a deal. And I kind of—Well, I kind of feel like I could be most effective this way. And it forces me to do what I'm naturally inclined to do, to be personally involved every day, to be hands-on every day. That may limit me in some ways; except, again, my model—well, my models on the way is to work with the people that I'm funding, staying out of the way, but still, as I reflect on this, the group of nonprofits that I support constitute maybe the greater Craig Newmark Philanthropies. And I'm finding good people and good groups, getting them resources, staying out of the way. Maybe that's the model.

On the other hand, in social media, when you see something posted or tweeted, that's me. If you do see it at three a.m., that means me insomniac. [laughter] The thing is, that in the past, I got some help with some of that, people who would help me out. Now, I, as an engineer, I'm the hands-on guy.

ANDREA EDNEY: Who are some of your mentors? Who are some of the people that you've been learning from?

CRAIG NEWMARK: Historically, the ones I could think of most, Mr. And Mrs. Levin in Sunday School, who taught me to treat people like I want to be treated, and to know when enough is enough. Again, high school history, Mr. Schulsky, who also taught me that, as a country, we aspire to fairness and opportunity and respect for all. We're a flawed nation. But I really do believe that we're that shining city on the hill, and that we should, you know, commit to that, and do something every day. More recently, it's been my rabbi, Leonard Cohen.

ANDREA EDNEY: Is that a coincidence in the name? Or is your—okay. It's a joke.

CRAIG NEWMARK: You are referring to the—

ANDREA EDNEY: I heard.

CRAIG NEWMARK: No, that's not a joke.

ANDREA EDNEY: Oh it's not a joke?

CRAIG NEWMARK: He's not doing much preaching anymore. But he is my rabbi.

ANDREA EDNEY: Okay. You've supported several publications through grants in the past. Would you consider buying one outright?

CRAIG NEWMARK: Buying a publication is for important fancy people. [laughter] That being said, I have a great deal of faith—

ANDREA EDNEY: Not people who donate \$20 million dollars here or there?

CRAIG NEWMARK: Well, \$20 million won't get you all that much.

ANDREA EDNEY: In terms of a publication.

CRAIG NEWMARK: But I have worked with a bit, and have a lot of confidence in both Marty Barron and Mark [00:39:42]. Mark, in particular, has done a lot for veterans and families, which means a lot to me.

ANDREA EDNEY: And is one of your causes, one of the causes that you support.

CRAIG NEWMARK: Very much so. In brief, I figure if someone is willing to sacrifice a lot, maybe go someplace and risk taking a bullet to protect me, I should do something. And as a country, we're kind of forgetting how much we owe vets. And, as a country, we never understood how much their families sacrifice to support us.

ANDREA EDNEY: What do you think we should be doing more of to support veterans and their families?

CRAIG NEWMARK: There's a pretty big range of things. Starting, a lot of small things. Like we need to preserve and expand the GI bill. We need to get veterans better coverage for things like exposures to burn pits, where they may have inhaled a lot of really toxic stuff. We need the VA to be better suited for the support of women veterans. Because right now, the number of women veterans is large already, and just getting bigger and bigger. And maybe we need to remind veteran service officers that if a couple comes in, please don't assume that that the vet is the male.

ANDREA EDNEY: Moving back to journalism for just a bit, beyond charity, what do you see as the new revenue model for newspapers and investigative reporting, given that classifieds are dead?

CRAIG NEWMARK: I don't really know. And frankly, I'd have to defer that to people who know stuff, like Thomas Bectall[?], Jeff Jarvis, Kelly McBride and company, at Pointer. This, remember, is my philosophy of "do no harm." I'd rather say nothing than say something stupid.

ANDREA EDNEY: Well it sounds like you've been talking to a lot of people and informing yourself.

CRAIG NEWMARK: I have. But again, I'm not in the news business. I'm not a news professional. I'm a news consumer and should respect those boundaries. And particularly, when I have people around who can do the job far better than I can. If I got too smart, you know, I might have to go visit, you know, Sacramento. [laughter]

ANDREA EDNEY: At a time of rapid digital journalism, what is your wish for the future of the press, particularly as it pertains to millennials?

CRAIG NEWMARK: What I want are mechanisms that are evolving already in the journalism mechanism system, to find means by which it's easy for a platform to figure out, on the fly, what's probably trustworthy and what's not. I want millennials to become aware of those mechanisms. And to be smart about what they see, and, more importantly, what they spread.

The theme is that, oh what went so wrong in 2016, and even now, is foreign bad actors, themselves, may not have that much of an effect on our country or the Ukraine or other countries. The problem is with news consumers who may not have a good idea of what not to share with their peers. It's often the sharing of disinformation that does the real damage.

ANDREA EDNEY: Are you concerned that a repeat of Russiagate is threatening greater tensions with the other major nuclear weapons state, or threatening us at all?

CRAIG NEWMARK: I am reading the publicly available open source intelligence reports. And that's a known thing that's happening. I don't know if we understand it well enough. But there are both foreign and domestic bad actors who just come out and say, "Here is what we're doing." And that's a big deal. They are pretty open about that. They say, "Here, here's what they're going to do." And then they do it.

ANDREA EDNEY: How much impact do you think the Russian involvement had on the 2016 elections?

CRAIG NEWMARK: My understanding is that the effect was substantial. But I'm going to wait for more until I read that excerpt from the Jane Myer article which just appeared in *The New Yorker*, which I have sitting on my phone. So my understanding, after a lot of reading and talking to people in the appropriate community, that the effect was substantial. But I don't feel right saying more without reading what appears to be definitive information.

ANDREA EDNEY: Do you think there should be an open source social media platform?

CRAIG NEWMARK: Boy, I don't know if there's a need for that. But just reflexively, almost, I support open source almost automatically. The idea is that some people have tried to do that. I think one of them recently shut down because of lack of interest. I do think, as more and more of the ethics of running social media platforms, as more and more of that is explored, I think things are going to get better for all of us.

One of the big problems, for example, is lack of informed consent. A social media platform should clearly tell you what it's collecting, who it's going to share that with, and so on. And those things are happening. I'm involved, now, with the Center for Humane Technology, which is doing that kind of thing. And for that matter, there's the European GDPR which actually goes some ways in that direction, requiring platforms to tell you,

“Hey, here’s what we’re going to collect about you. And here’s what we’re going to share about you.” Different countries have different flavors. Some opt in, some opt out. And that’s a controversial topic. Plus, implementing that is going to be really hard for some people. But I can see all those areas improving. And I'm committed.

ANDREA EDNEY: Do you think it’s time to regulate social media?

CRAIG NEWMARK: Again, I don’t think positive regulation will come from Washington, although I do hear good things about work going on, you know, in Sacramento.

ANDREA EDNEY: In Sacramento.

CRAIG NEWMARK: And I just can't wait to get there. [laughter]

ANDREA EDNEY: I hear it’s about a two hour drive. [laughter] Not from here.

CRAIG NEWMARK: Well, jet packs.

ANDREA EDNEY: Jet packs. Jet packs. As one of the pioneers of online dating, now that Craigslist has removed personal ads, what do you see as the future of online dating? And how can people, or what can people do to ensure its practices are implemented safely?

CRAIG NEWMARK: That’s an area which, well at Craigslist is all Jim Buckmaster’s domain. Me, I don’t think about online dating. And to reinforce that, Mrs. Newmark just tried calling me a few minutes ago, when you saw me doing something with my watch. I'm pretty glad it exists as a thing. And I think rightly facilitated when digital cameras came along. But I haven't thought about it for a long time, specifically not for about 12 years, which, by coincidence, is when I met the future Mrs. Newmark.

ANDREA EDNEY: Did you meet her via an online website?

CRAIG NEWMARK: I met her at my favorite café back in San Francisco. I almost said Sacramento. [laughter]

ANDREA EDNEY: I heard. I was going to say, now, yeah. In your opinion, is there still a need or a place for print journalism? And how should that coexist with digital news?

CRAIG NEWMARK: I'm going to interpret that two ways. Whether it’s on paper or not, I don’t care too much. I do love paper and books in particular. But for what's done in print journalism, and specifically and most of all, investigative reporting, I think that’s more and more important. Because journalism, and investigative journalism, more than anything, is, well, is the immune system of democracy. We do need reporters keeping people honest. And that is never going to end.

ANDREA EDNEY: How do you define trustworthy journalism?

CRAIG NEWMARK: Well, I define it as involving journalism which involves doing research, not just finding anecdotes, but looking at the evidence and the data, if that's available. Fact-checking pretty thoroughly, adhering to the principles of the Trust Project. And then, when something goes wrong, because people do make mistakes, whenever the errors are made, that they're corrected quickly and in a serious way.

That's pretty much as much as I would expect as a news consumer. Remember, fact checking is hard and time consuming and expensive, but required. And you know, I don't need, as a news consumer, I don't care too much about scoops. Please take the time to get it right.

ANDREA EDNEY: It's clear that you follow media. So who are some of your favorite reporters?

CRAIG NEWMARK: Well, I like to answer questions which will piss people off no matter how I answer. [laughter] And right now, I'm thinking, in a way, of the first thing, the thought came to mind, actually, was the News Aggregator, Tegan[?] Goddard, who does Political Wire. In terms of bylines, I like seeing, I think the number is too large. In my field, it's like a Kara Swisher is a really big deal. And I'm trying to think of more, because I work so hard to get bylines into tweets. So that's as far as I'll go right now, is Kara.

ANDREA EDNEY: Okay. Where do you get your news, primarily?

CRAIG NEWMARK: Man, it's across a very wide range of feeds, because I subscribe to some tens of them. I will make special efforts to look at what's in the *Washington Post* or the *New York Times* and so on. I'm just sorry that not enough of them are funny. Oh, there's—Last Week Tonight, of course. And the podcast where John Oliver figured things out, The Bugle.

ANDREA EDNEY: How should we be empowering students to contribute with fact checking?

CRAIG NEWMARK: With students on the fact checking level, and I'm assuming like high school, I would encourage them instead to learn how to become Wikipedia editors. Wikipedia needs more and more people writing articles and correcting them, and in Wikipedia parlance, an editor is someone also who writes an article. That's what I would like to see in school. Because Wikipedia is where facts go to live. And it's actually pretty good in those regards right now. Not perfect, pretty good, getting better and better over time. So I'd like to see—You know, I'd like to see high school students writing articles, fact checking them, and you know, getting credit for that. I'd like to see that at the college level, also, because Wikipedia needs more and more editors. In particular, Wikipedia needs more female editors, because there is a harassment problem there, which I'm in a very small way, helping address. Harassment nowadays is being directed towards lots and lots of reporters, particularly women or people of color. And so I'm involved in a number of efforts to help resolve that.

ANDREA EDNEY: Can you talk a little bit about those efforts?

CRAIG NEWMARK: I'm involved in some efforts with the Global Fund for Women, Online SOS, the ADL, and boy, there's one based in Europe that we're trying to get nonprofit status for here, whose name I can never remember. The International Consortium of Journalists. I'm missing several. Because, you know, at my age, you forget things. I like to play that card, now, as often as I can. [laughter]

ANDREA EDNEY: So how do you handle hackers, people who hack into individual accounts?

CRAIG NEWMARK: I prevent—Well, I take precautions. And, to the best of my knowledge, haven't had much of a problem yet, which is a terrible thing to say openly, because that will be attempting. But I am taking appropriate measures which I will not discuss openly. What happened, about 15 years ago, I did say something. And then, a couple people from the tech staff showed me excerpts from a black hat bulletin board saying, "Here is what Craig said about what they do." And so—

ANDREA EDNEY: So they're listening.

CRAIG NEWMARK: Yeah. So I try to take some measures. I can recommend two factor authentication for everyone. That's where basically you often carry a gadget around so that if someone tries to log in with your password on a different system, your token or some other means of authentication will be required. And that's going to be a big deal, more and more, for reporters particularly.

ANDREA EDNEY: So I have a question here. How do I contact your philanthropy organization for an idea?

CRAIG NEWMARK: Look at CraigNewmarkPhilanthropies.org. And then there's a contact form right there.

ANDREA EDNEY: Perfect. So easy, whoever submitted that question. So thank you for being here with us today. I have just maybe one or two more questions here that we'll ask before wrapping up today's conversation. You've mentioned several groups you're working with. Will you bring them back to the National Press Club to give us an update on the progress of The Markup?

CRAIG NEWMARK: I'd like to do an "all the above," because I guess this is a mission required for our country's survival as a democracy. We need to support good groups. We need to support them more. And then, just I plan to do this only as long as I live. After that, it's over. Or I go to Sacramento. [laughter] Which is not the same as death. [laughter]

ANDREA EDNEY: Thank goodness. What advice do you have for young people or students of journalism, people who would like to become journalists?

CRAIG NEWMARK: Well first, I like to remind everyone of youth that youth is wasted on the young. But the advice I'd give them is that in doing journalism, you're actually helping protect the country. I mean some people protect the country by being cops or firemen or members of the armed services. But as a journalist, you're a part of the immune system of democracy. You're part of something much bigger than yourself. And the country needs you right now. The country needed you yesterday. And that's how I'd encourage people.

ANDREA EDNEY: Thank you.

CRAIG NEWMARK: I was just thinking if I could tell you how much I would love to be in Sacramento. [laughter]

ANDREA EDNEY: But we love having you here with us right now. So I'm going to take this opportunity, just very quickly, before my final question, to let everybody here know about some other events at the Press Club this week. At 6:30 tonight, we have a Headliners Book Event with Dan Abrams, author of *Lincoln's Last Trial*. On Wednesday, Air Force Secretary Heather Wilson will be speaking about the service's evolving role at a Headliners Luncheon. On Thursday, we have retiring House Speaker Paul Ryan speaking at a Luncheon and taking stock of his career as a House member and the leader of a sometime fractious Republican majority. We also have a spelling bee between politicians and journalists here at the Club on the 27th. And the President of Slovenia will be visiting us as well. So please, we hope that some of you can join us for these events. We hope that we can see much more of you soon.

We have a gift for you. This is something that we present to all of our esteemed speakers. It's a mug, as you can see. We hope that you use it often and in good health.

CRAIG NEWMARK: Thanks. I really appreciate it. And since my wife is always looking for new mugs, she'll appreciate this very much.

ANDREA EDNEY: Fantastic. It can be used in the microwave, and it goes in the dishwasher.

CRAIG NEWMARK: Excellent. [laughter]

ANDREA EDNEY: So I have one final question for you. And we like to end these with a less serious question, because we touched on a lot of serious issues today. If you were going to put an ad in Craigslist, what would it say?

CRAIG NEWMARK: If I was—That we were looking for new rugs for the New York place. [laughter]

ANDREA EDNEY: Excellent. Not Sacramento?

CRAIG NEWMARK: You don't know the email traffic going back and forth right now are about, "Where should the rugs go? Should we get something vintage or with pile?" You know, lead times. I'd rather be in Sacramento. [laughter]

ANDREA EDNEY: I believe it. I believe. Well thank you so much for spending time here in D.C. with us today. Thank you.

[applause]

ANDREA EDNEY: That was great. You did a very good job.

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