



Focus on the Future

Guest Predictions: Dan Clemens

Guest Predictions is a regular feature in which we ask leaders in a number of professions questions that affect us all.

Dan Clemens is a media, communications and content consultant with expertise derived from more than two decades as a journalist for The Baltimore Sun. His abilities include writing, editing, design, content development and management, messaging and strategic communications, media relations, and social media.

Over the past two years, Dan has served as a consultant and subject matter expert for clients in diverse industries, including government contracting, higher education, health care, and non-profits.

Q: What changes in your professional environment in the past 3-5 years have you found to be the most beneficial?

A: Technological change has remade the news and communications industries. The earlier wave included advances such as desktop publishing for newspapers and video technology for TV news. In more recent years, the Internet and multiple new distribution channels provided new and faster ways to deliver information. Now, delivery of content from almost anywhere in the world can be instantaneous and continuous.

Q: What changes have been the most troubling to you?

A: The increasing instantaneousness and nonstop flow of information has spawned a migration away from comprehensive, in-depth news and information. The growing emphasis on commentary, in greater amount and often lesser insight, and the fixation on pop culture and entertainment news has displaced a significant portion of coverage of important topics that affect citizens' lives.

Q: How will globalization affect your professional area in the near term?

A: With globalization, the world shrinks and once-far-flung places become areas of interest, creating demand for news and information about new locales. Understanding the behavior, habits and preferences of information consumers in other parts of the world becomes increasingly important, particularly for marketers seeking to do business abroad through news electronic distribution channels.

Q: What significant challenges might be anticipated in your professional area in the next few years?

A: We are living in a Golden Age of Information, an era of content in unprecedented abundance, diversity and availability through multiple channels. A key question: How does my message avoid getting drowned in the torrent of content?

Q: What are the greatest challenges confronting young professionals in Western culture today?

A: Many industries and professions are changing (or even emerging and disappearing) so rapidly that it can be hard for young professionals to make an assessment on which will be right for them in five or 10 years. In many industries, the value of specialization is falling, requiring competency in a greater range of skills beginning early in a career.