

Welcome!

rabble.ca celebrated its 6th anniversary in April 2007. In Internet years, some would call us an "old-timer". It has certainly been six-plus years of intense experience, as we have learned about and played a role in



shaping the directions taken by web-based media. These are dynamic times in the world and web, and dynamic times for *rabble*. In this report we highlight where we have been and the exciting places we are going in 2007 and beyond.

rabble.ca was created by a group of inspired media and community activists alongside the surge in social movements a mere few months before the security clampdowns following 9/11. In our inception was a recognition that there need to be more spaces for alternative news and views, especially given the alarming increase of media ownership concentration in Canada. That concentration and need have only grown over the past seven years. As a ground-breaker in Canadian Internet news we have been heartened to see a growing movement of people and organizations addressing under-reported issues and we are excited to see the rise of blogs, personal video and community information sharing that the Internet provides. New Web 2.0 and social media software developments allow for significantly more reader/user interaction with sites and rabble.ca will be undergoing a redesign in 2007 to better meet the needs and interests of our visitors (see the sections on our re-launch, Second Life and more below).

We have never rested on our laurels, and over the past two years, following the result of a visitor's survey, *rabble* launched one of the first podcast networks in Canada, the *rabble podcast network* (*rpn*), as well as a unique multi-layered book section, the *rabble book lounge*. Both of these exciting initiatives are highlighted in the report.

2006 was a year of many changes, challenges and opportunities, as this report will outline. Among the important shifts have been the departure last summer of our original webmistress, Jane Will and of *rabble's* founding publisher and president of the board, Judy Rebick. Both, however, remain champions of *rabble*.

rabble.ca is pleased to announce that longtime rabble board and staff member Kim Elliott has become the new publisher of rabble.ca, and associate publisher, Duncan Cameron, has become president of the board. Wayne McPhail continues in the volunteer position of executive producer of the rabble podcast network.

We aren't the new kid on the block, but we continue to innovate and create spaces to bring more voices and views to the Canadian (and worldwide) public. See you there at www.rabble.ca..

Sincerely,

Kim Elliott Duncan Cameron

Publisher President

Kun Eelin Mum



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rabble.ca will draw on the real energy and power of the Internet passionate, engaged human beings. Blurring the line between readers and contributors, it will provide a needed space for issues to be discussed, a place to explore political passions and an opportunity to expand ideas. rabble business plan March 2001

Introduction

This report is both a snapshot and a photo album; it gives a brief sense of where we are now as well as where we have come from, focusing on 2006.

We launched rabble on April 18, 2001, and leapt onto the Internet with the kind of coverage you could only get from the point of view of the rabble: grassroots blended with established journalism mixed with comment and connections around the world.

rabble quickly became not only a reliable source of independent news but a meeting place for people to discuss and debate current events, politics, arts and other issues. babble, rabble's discussion board, had its 10,000th member register for rabble in 2006. There are now over 14,000 members registered.

Beginning as a project of the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, rabble in 2003 moved to the Quebec-based NGO Alternatives. In late 2004 rabble began the process of becoming an independent organization, incorporating as a not-for profit in Ontario. The first Board of Directors meeting was held in early January 2005, setting a fiscal calendar that follows the calendar year. January 2007 marked the first two year term for board members.

Incorporating the feedback received from the reader's survey leading up to incorporation, rabble in 2005 launched two major initiatives, the rabble podcast network and the rabble book lounge. Both are still thriving and you can read more about them below.

The good news is that rabble continues to grow and improve and remains a very popular website. Our challenge of sustainable funding remains. We are committed to providing an important free public service and are exploring ways to diversify our funding, as will be outlined further below.

rabble.ca sends out a free weekly email "announce" with highlights of the news and views of the week.



Media fare is ever more closely linked to the needs and concerns of a handful of enormous and powerful corporations, with annual revenues approaching the GDP of a small nation. These firms are run by wealthy managers and billionaires with clear stakes in the outcome of the most fundamental political issues, and their interests are often distinct from those of the vast majority of humanity. By any known theory of democracy, such a concentration of economic, cultural, and political power into so few hands - and mostly unaccountable hands at that - is absurd and unacceptable. Robert McChesney from Rich Media, Poor Democracy

News and Views – from features to podcasts to books to discussions

NEWS FEATURES - NEWS FOR THE REST OF US

In Canada fewer than 4% of all newspaper dailies are independently owned with over 84% of Canadian media owned by the five largest media companies. *rabble.ca* is an independent source of journalism and is proud to promote voices and perspectives that too often go unheard in mainstream media.

rabble.ca offers original and reprinted news and columns as well as links to netted news (editor-selected links to other stories) and links to our *in cahoots* websites featuring social movement work.

rabble also promotes social movement work through our free national events listings with what's up and promotes quick actions through our 3 minute action (such as signing an on-line petition).

The readers of *rabble.ca* regularly provide suggestions for *netted news* and *3 minute action* as well as submit events for *what's up*.

In 2006 *rabble.ca* published well in excess of 250 articles in the news section, written by dozens of different writers, and we published columns --weekly or bi-weekly -- by ten different regular columnists from all parts of the country, including the best of the left from mainstream media, such as Heather Mallick, Rick Salutin, and Thomas Walcom.

Most of the contributors to *rabble* donate their work. *rabble* also published stories from different university chapters of Journalists for Human Rights.

We do reprints (with permission) from Seven Oaks Magazine, The Dominion Newspaper and others. We often publish Martha's Monthly from Alberta and we print or reprint regular commentary from all parts of the country.

You saw it here: sample articles on *rabble*

Evangelical sabre-rattling won't lead to peace

Oaxaca: From state of siege to police state

Advertisers make CanWest Global news go silent

The big lie about the Wheat Board

Hotel workers rising

Working for equality for Iragi women

Harper keeps carving away at Canada's soul



In addition to publishing news and analysis from some of Canada's leading progressive thinkers, such as James Laxer, Linda McQuaig, Naomi Klein and Murray Dobbin, rabble has continued to help develop new and emerging writers such as Rahat Kurd, Tricia Hylton and Keith Gottschalk. New writers introduced in 2006 included: Jenn Watt and Yee-Guan Wong (both senior interns); Nathan Rao (Quebec politics); John Peters (federal politics); Diana Gibson (Alberta health care); Christopher Hazou (Hamas victory); Brent Lewin (from Afghanistan); Emily Bowers (issues in Africa).

Our in cahoots portal with civil society information has continued to grow, publishing news and research from sustaining partners as well as more broadly getting news of Canada's progressive civil society out to a broader audience, through increasing traffic to our partners' websites, and through publishing their events in our national listing of events, what's up.



In 2006 rabble posted 287 in cahoots stories. rabble has over 30 partners for in cahoots. See Appendix 1 for a list of 2006-07 in cahoots partners.

rabble.ca also launched a special series on issues in Iraq, incorporating original articles, book reviews, podcasts and discussions. This popular series was the first in what will be an increasing number of "theme" weeks.



THE BOOK LOUNGE

In 2005 at the Toronto Word On The Street Festival rabble.ca launched the <u>rabble book lounge</u>. The book lounge focuses on Canadian authors and books with a special emphasis on smaller presses, though all books are welcome. The book lounge offers a one-stop shop visitors to read original for occasional reprint reviews, to find book event listings across Canada, to discuss books, authors, and all things literary, to listen to literary podcasts and to purchase books in the online bookstore.

Book reviews

Fans of thoughtful and well-written book reviews found sixty-two titles reviewed in 2006 at the book lounge. Fifty-two were pieces original and commissioned rabble; ten were reprinted (with permission) from other independent small publications.

FYI: The rabble book lounge bookstore has a computer generated random book pick on every page.



The book lounge reviews take advantage of rabble's interactive medium with reviews often featuring links to additional information about the author, issue or book including book excerpts. Slideshows and original art have also featured predominately in the book lounge.

Publishers whose books were reviewed in 2006 include: University of Toronto Press, Arsenal Pulp Press, Women's Press, Gaspereau Press, Drawn & Quarterly, Coach House Books, Zed Books and The Association for Women's Rights in Development, Anvil Press,

McGill-Queen's UniversityPress, Polestar, Press HarperCollins Publishers, TSAR Doubleday Canada, Insomniac Press, The Feminist Press, Arbeiter Ring Publishing, Pedlar Press, Groundwood Books, Penguin Canada, Between the Lines, New Star Books, House of Anansi, McGilligan Books, and Sumach Press.

What're you reading? Popular reviews from 2006

Six Fat Comics by Chris Cavanagh Elizabeth Ruth's profile of Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha Shannon Devine's Driving While Black Jenn Watt on Global Feminist Voices Yohannes Edemariam on The Equations

Well over half of the reviewers

in 2006 were women and there was a strong gender balance in the books reviewed as well. Reviewers also represented a range of communities (by geography and identity). Many reviewers donated their work to rabble.ca.

As with the other sections of the site the book review section had material related to Iraq during the Iraq theme week.

Book store

The rabble book lounge bookstore offers great books "left at your door" and features Canadian independent press as well as books from larger publishing houses. The store is run in partnership with the York University Bookstore which provides secure online ordering, processing and quick shipping.

The book store provides a more complete visiting experience for visitors of the book lounge who may wish to buy a book or browse new Canadian titles. It also serves to promote Canadian authors (as does the rest of the lounge).

In 2006 the book store coordination became a volunteer position in order to provide a modest income for rabble.ca from the store. Sales on the store are not high, in part because rabble cannot compete on price point with large online stores. This is largely due to the partnership with York which gives little margin for either party. rabble.ca encourages its readers and supporters to shop at the store to support independent Canadian media.



radio book lounge

Book related podcasts are a growing phenomena (such as in The New York Times and The Washington Post) and *rabble* was ahead of the curve with *radio book lounge*.



radio book lounge (part of the rabble podcast network – see below) features interviews with authors, recordings of author readings and more. 2006 was a growing year for radio book lounge with much more activity on the show in 2007 though there were book related podcasts on the rpn including rabble's own Needs No Introduction which featured, among many other things, exclusive coverage of the PEN Canada awards.

Between covers and ears - radio book lounge

J.Hillis Miller on Toni Morrison's "Beloved" politics and Iraq

<u>Interview with Angela Rawlings, co-editor of new Canadian</u> <u>poetry anthology Shift & Switch</u>

THE RABBLE PODCAST NETWORK

The *rabble podcast network* hosts 45 podcasts, which produced almost 300 episodes over 2006. The podcasts cover a wide range of topics ranging from information and opinions about politics, debates over the latest DVDs, and trips to the kitchen to learn how to cook a Chinese-style curry.

Popular programs include <u>rabble radio</u>, the flagship program of the <u>rabble podcast</u> <u>network</u>; <u>Needs No Introduction</u>, which features speeches and interviews with people of note in public affairs; <u>Reel Women</u>, a DVD debate between <u>rabble.ca</u> founder Judy Rebick and Canadian movie maven Cathi Bond; and <u>Radio Tadamon!</u>, a program focusing on issues in Lebanon and Canada's Lebanese communities.



Programs such as *rabble radio* and *Needs No Introduction* have over 1500 subscribers each. *rabble radio* is also aired by community stations across Canada (see below) and accepts submissions from community radio volunteers, extending its reach even further.





Fresh Canadian podcasts from the left channel.

rabble radio is a mix of political commentary, sound-seeing tours, movie reviews, and the latest in Canadian music. Aired every two weeks the show also acts to promote other shows on the network as clips of interviews from *rpn* commentary shows are regularly highlighted.

rabble podcast network programs have been picked up especially well by community radio during periods where we were able to offer an alternative viewpoint to issues that were getting high coverage in the mainstream media. The best example of this is Radio Tadamon! which aired widely during the Lebanese-Israeli conflict in 2006 at the following stations: CJTR (Regina), CIRO (Kelowna), CKXU (Lethbridge), CJSF Radio (Vancouver), CJMP (Powell River, B.C.), CHMA Radio (Sackville), CJLY (Nelson), CFBU (St. Catharines), FREQ (Oshawa), CJSW (Calgary), CILU (Thunder Bay), CFCR (Saskatoon), CJSR (Edmonton), CKLN (Toronto), CFRO (Vancouver), CFRU (Guelph), CHUO (Ottawa) and CKUT (Montreal).

Many of the programs produced for the rabble podcast network are carried on community radio stations across Canada, and several programs on the network are produced for both community radio and rabble. These include Canadian Dimension's Alert podcast, the Living on Purpose podcast, which originates at Radio Malaspina on Galiano Island, British Columbia, and Redeye, which is produced by Vancouver's Co-op Radio.

Stations which regularly air content produced for the rabble podcast network include:

- rabble radio: CFUR (Prince Rupert), CKDU (Halifax), CKCU (Ottawa), CFBX, (Kamloops), CIVR (Yellowknife), CJSF (Burnaby)
- Redeye: Co-op Radio (Vancouver)
- Canadian Dimension's Alert: CFCR (Winnipeg)
- The Green Planet Monitor: CFCR (Winnipeg)



Where the rpn? At rabble.ca. Wear the rpn? At the rpn boutique: shirts, bags, shorts and more. Why should your ears have all the fun?



Don't change that dial! 2006 rpn menu sampler

rabble radio:

Holidaze!

A Reel Women cagematch over Scarface, Keith pities the poor future presidential candidate, Homebrew comes to us from Appalachia, and music from Toronto via Jamaica.

Use the tools, fools!

In this episode of rabble radio, illegal immigrants make use of American democratic methods, aboriginal storytellers amplify their message, and community radio builds a bridge in the Middle East, and music from Asani.

Your mom's favorite podcast

Wayne chats with NGO Alianza's founder, DVDiva lights one up, Charlotte takes a subversive soundtour of McGill, Google Reader takes off, Keith gets hot and bothered by the US media

Homebrew:

Turn that frown upside down

In this episode, *Homebrew* takes a gander at feminist theology, DVDiva gives herself the shivers with a scary movie from the way-back machine, and activist and artist John Steins explains how Dawson City got its municipal government back - with him as Mayor.

Radio Tadamon!

Lebanon: poverty, war & globalization

Recent estimates on poverty in Lebanon indicate that upwards of 35-40% of the country is living below the poverty line. This radio piece attempts to address poverty within the context of Lebanon's civil war between 1975 & 1990, the postwar reconstruction and the major political changes taking place today in Lebanon.

Needs No Introduction

The Bioneers at Hollyhock

Kenny Ausubel and Nina Simmons of the Bioneers address the Social Change Institute conference at Hollyhock on Cortes Island, British Columbia. Their talk took place in early May and covers their unique approach to healing the planet.

PEN Canada's annual fall gala reading

Exlusive coverage features Nigerian Nobel laureate Wole Soyinka. Also appearing Azar Nafisi (reading Lolita in Tehran) along with acclaimed Canadian writers Miriam Toews, Wayson Choy and M.G. Vassanji.





BABBLE

babble is one the most dynamic discussion boards in the country. You can always find dozens of threads on politics, culture, and the happenings of the day filled with insight, wit and passion. In fact by the end of most days fifty or so threads have been active on the twenty seven meta-forums (see list of forums below). The political discussions are very active and it is not unusual to find involved in discussions party members, supporters, staff and some MPs and MPPs from all the major parties.

In fact babble is a major hub for all things related to electoral reform with active discussions on regional reform from British Columbia to Ontario with people across the country talking about it, promoting democratic exchange about democracy.

There are over 14,000 registered babble users – sign up now for a free account!

As reported above 2006 was a year of great change in babble including changes in how babble is moderated and organized. The discussion board now has six moderators including two part-time staff, two interns and two volunteers, all with a varying degree of responsibility. This model has allowed babble to maintain an active hand in moderating the discussion, promoting constructive dialogue and starting topics of discussion. The moderators have their own listserve to maintain communication.

The moderators at babble established a more formal code of conduct for babble in 2006, enshrining what had been more of a "common law" approach and will be revamping the internship program in 2007 to strengthen the babble interns' roles.

I'm a babbler a tiny sample of the many provocative topics found in 2005/2006

Voting with the pocketbook

<u>Piatkowski: Buddy can you spare a payday loan?</u>

[Elections] Biggest surprise/near surprise results?

Norway and World's Largest Windpark

France: solidarity with movement for young workers' rights



babble forums (each contains many topics)

first stop

introductions and frequently asked questions - Where we get to know the newbies, and they get to know us. Non-newbies can post their questions here too!

rabble content

rabble news features- Read it on rabble, then talk about it here.

auntie.com- You love her, you hate her, you can't stop reading her.

rabble book lounge- A virtual book club.

rabble reactions- Topical questions and comments about the site only.

current events

national news- Read it watch it live it discuss it.

canadian politics- Layton-Lovers to Harper-Harpies. Talk about it here.

international news and politics

the media- What're we being told, and by whom?

walking the talk

babblers helping babblers- Do you have a pet idea or project? Would you like help or feedback? Or are you trying to track down some information? Work with each other.

activism- Share strategies, calls to action, and success stories here.

anti-racism news and initiatives- Discuss issues of race and racism from an anti-racist point of view.

feminism- Feminists discussing feminist issues from a feminist point of view.

aboriginal issues and culture- Aboriginal insights, issues and initiatives.

labour and consumption- Discuss work and economic issues from a pro-worker point of view.

environmental justice- Discuss earth-friendly initiatives and issues here.

youth issues- The *rabble* school cafeteria.

right brain rabble

culture- Don't be a passive audience. High brow, low brow, no brow.

body and soul- For issues to do with mental, spiritual, and emotional health.

humanities and science- Talk about what you (or those more famous than you) have been saying and doing lately.

rabble writers' circle- Do you scribe haikus on napkins? Talk about it here.

out and about- Where are you going, where have you been?

babble banter- For when you are so far off topic, you were never even on it.

far and wide

nunavut, nwt, yukon

bc, alberta, saskatchewean

manitoba, ontario, quebec

nfld, labrador, pei, ns, nb

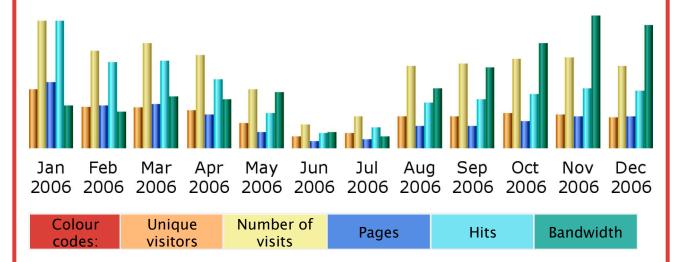


Count on us - traffic and statistics

The good news is that traffic is heavy. Measuring traffic remains a challenge.

Metrics have been a major concern for rabble over the course of 2006, and have continued to be for web-based organizations in general, as the industry seeks standard measures of traffic and as the appropriate metrics for podcasting are introduced and debated. The industry faces the challenges of distinguishing a person visiting a site versus a software program visiting, a variety of algorithms producing different statistics on who and how many are visiting (more on this below) and other issues¹.

Through most of 2006 rabble continued to measure statistics using log-file analysis programs, AW Stats and Web Analyzer. The chart below outlines the story of 2006:



This chart tells the story of a tumultuous year. rabble.ca reached an all-time high of nearly 150,000 unique visitors² and more than 16 million pageviews³ recorded by AW Stats count in January 2006. This peak is attributed to the federal election coverage, particularly on the discussion boards. The monthly average for 2005 was about 95,000 unique visitors and 5.5 million pageviews. In the spring of 2006 a number of prolific posters on babble left the board in response to a personnel decision at rabble and the traffic on babble (and therefore rabble) decreased significantly for a period.

³ A count of **pageviews** is the number of complete pages that are requested by browsers (not robots or other web crawlers). The average number of rabble pages viewed on each visit is 4.4. This number is high partly because of the large number of people viewing different threads on babble.



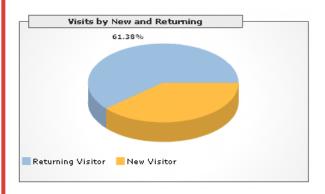
¹ For more on the challenges of measuring web traffic see *Measuring Web Site Traffic* by Sharon Machlis, ComputerWorld.com, June 17, 2002.

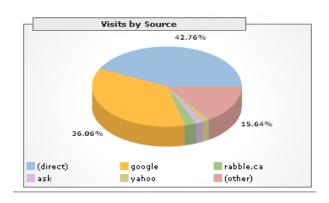
² A count of **unique visitors** is the number of visits from different IP addresses, so each person is counted only once. This statistic is considered the most relevant in terms of measuring a site's true audience size.

By the fall numbers had begun to regain ground, and by the end of the year reached about 85,000 unique visitors per month and about 7.5 million page views. This trend has continued steadily into 2007.

An analysis of the statistics finds that rabble has several primary points of entry. While most of the traffic continues to enter and stay in babble, a growing proportion of the traffic is coming through the rabble podcast network, while the front page, and news, columns and *in cahoots* continue to be a prominent point of entry.

rabble.ca consists of a strong community of returning visitors. In 2006, about 61% percent of our users were return visits. Similarly, nearly 43% of our users come directly to the website, as the two pie charts below indicate.





Geographically, while close to 80% of our traffic is from Canada, a growing proportion comes from the US, counting close to 20% for 2006 overall. A large part of this traffic appears to be to the rabble podcast network.

In 2006, Google launched a free version of its analytic software, Google Analytics. Though there is some contention on the accuracy of Google Analytics, which measures tagged pages or java-script (and not log-files), many believe that it is becoming the industry standard for web metrics. rabble experimented with Google Analytics in 2006, with plans to fully tag for Google Analytics in the redesigned site 2007/2008.

As rabble grows its advertising base, keeping up with industry standards is vital, and rabble intends to use a combination of measurements in its redesign, including Google Analytics (to track java-script), and AW Stats (to track log files) as well as other podcast specific measurement tools, such as Feedburner, to provide podcast metrics.

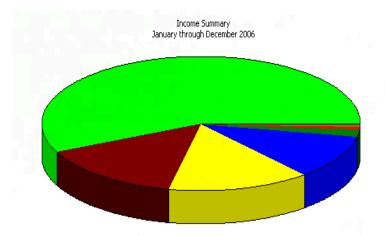
2007 looks like the year for traffic measuring tools with lots of new software coming out for tracking visitors.

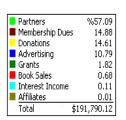


Show us the money - Finances

Operationally, financial sustainability has been the key focus of the year, as we have worked to diversify our income-generating portfolio from an almost complete reliance on sustaining partnerships and donations to include membership and advertising revenue.

The total operating budget for *rabble* in 2006 was **\$214,215**. The revenue recorded in 2006 was \$191,790.00. The year ended with a debt of about \$22,400 that was recouped in early 2007. However, the organization has been operating with a very tight budget and cash flow.





In 2006, rabble continued to rely heavily on sustaining partner funding, accounting for about 57% of the budget. However, for the first time other sources of revenue increased, with membership dues accounting for 14% of the annual budget, and advertising sales accounting for close to 11%.

Total expense for rabble and the rpn in 2006 were \$214,250 of which \$22,766 (not including rpn administrative overhead) were incurred by the rpn specifically 4.

Average monthly expenditures for rabble and the rpn shifted from a previous average of about \$22,000 per month to about \$12,000 a month beginning in August. These major cuts in expenditures were entirely absorbed by staff, as is discussed in more detail below.

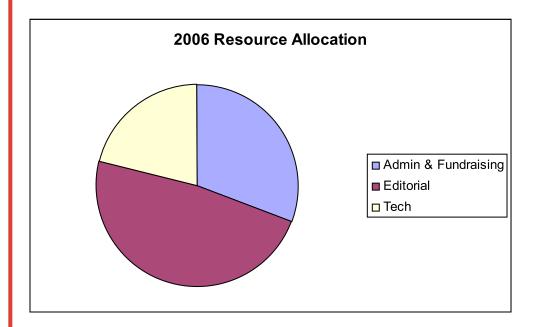
As a virtual office, rabble works with a very low overhead, with just over 2% of the budget spent on conference call meetings, and 4% spent on server fees. 86% of expenses are attributed to the contract staff.

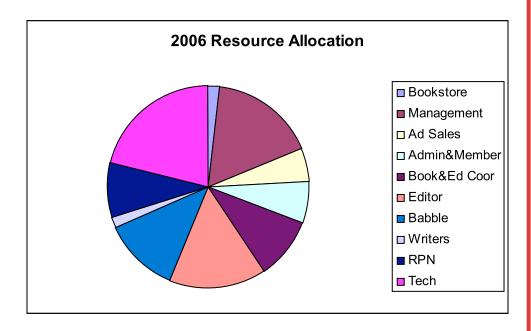
In late 2006 we were very excited to join the Centre for Social Innovation as a virtual tenant, providing us with a regular space to hold meetings, receive mail and courier parcels.

⁴ Note that rpn accounts are accounted for separately as the network was initiated with a \$60,000 social investment, for which the investor requested separate books to track the money spent.



The following two charts indicate how resources were allocated between Management/ Revenue Generation, Editorial, and Tech over the past year. The first chart provides a general overview, while the second chart highlights specific program areas.





Revenue generation continued to be a challenge for rabble in 2006. While a "mayday" campaign in May 2006 offset some of the challenges, in June the organization fell into a fundraising crisis. The staffing budget was cut in half in August 2006, as were expectations in all editorial areas.



Furthermore in September 2006, administrative and revenue generation resources were cut in half with the departure of rabble's founding, and long term, sometimes volunteer, Publisher, and with the loss of the office administration support donated by the Sam Gindin Chair in Social Justice at Ryerson University. In September, the Managing Editor position was converted into a part-time paid Publisher position.

Despite the cutbacks all staff continued to put energy and enthusiasm into their work, and all staff donated volunteer time to the operation, notably the News Editor, the babble Moderators and the Publisher, where the cutbacks were most pronounced.

Sustaining Partners

rabble's Sustaining Partners are organizations that support rabble's mission and vision through cash and in-kind support and receive support from rabble in advertising and site promotion. In 2006, we expanded our Sustaining Partner program, recognizing that civil society, particularly organized labour's contribution to rabble is and should continue to be a vital part of our operation, just as publishing news and providing an increasingly

robust tool to disseminate civil society news and for organizing and discussion, are vital to our mandate. The addition of sustainer benefits - including in cahoots membership and a full year of high-traffic advertising space, has been a successful program, with many of our partners making great use of and/or donating their advertising space to a variety of causes.

Sustaining Partners 2006

Alternatives The Atkinson Foundation B.C. Government and Service Employees' Union Canadian Auto Workers CAW-Sam Gindin Chair in Social Justice and Democracy Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives Canadian Media Guild Canadian Union of Postal Workers Canadian Union of Public Employees Hospital Employees' Union National Union of Public and General Employees Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation Public Service Alliance of Canada

Interested in becoming a Sustaining Partner? Contact business@rabble.ca



Advertising

Over the past year we have worked to develop an advertising base on rabble.ca. We recognize that the psychographic of our readers, a community of engaged individuals from across the country, together with our strong website traffic, represent an important means for organizations and progressive businesses to communicate their messages.

rabble.ca increased its diversity of ads in 2006 and launched a special ad program for small businesses and organizations entitled small is beautiful. This special ad service is targeted at individuals, businesses and organizations with fewer than 25 staff and small budgets. The ads are highly affordable and there has been modest interest in the program.

We've received valuable feedback on our advertising offerings over the course of the year, and are incorporating that feedback into the major project for 2007: our website redesign (more on that below).



Finally, we are also following the lead of the successful U.S. online alternative independent media consortium that formed to work together to improve financial sustainability of member organizations, among other goals. Media, including Mother Jones, Huffington Post and The Nation, are exploring ways to increase collective ad revenue along with other potential cooperation. In Canada, rabble.ca has joined consortium meetings and has begun discussions to form a similar network, and unite a stronger voice for progressive, independent media across Canada. rabble also initiated an exchange of subscriptions for advertising space with ten of Canada's best independent print magazines as part of our 2006 membership campaign.

Membership

Our membership program, launched fall 2005, is growing. The fall 2006 membership campaign doubled individual memberships. We are very proud of this campaign which brought great gifts to new members, ranging from subscriptions to ten of



Canada's best alternative print magazines to fair trade organic chocolate (from La Siembra, one of the country's most innovative and successful worker's co-ops) and introduced our membership "mascot", "Ruckus" the sock monkey.



Marketing

rabble took advantage of opportunities to support events and promote rabble a few times in 2006. In most cases these were promotion exchanges with rabble providing advertising and receiving promotion from event coordinators.

Sponsored events included the PEN Canada Freedom to Write awards and the Journalists for Human Rights – Annual Student Conference.



In 2007 rabble is exploring the use of Google Ad Words to promote rabble and its different sections.

rabble has also hosted events to promote the site such as the launch of the *rpn* and the *book* lounge.

Charlotte Scott at rabble podcast network launch 2005

Judy Rebick leads a talk at the Word on the Street Festival with authors Varda Burstyn, Susan Swan and Camilla Gibb for the launch of the rabble book lounge.





Behind the curtain: staff, board, interns and volunteers

A lot of work goes into making rabble an accessible, up-to-date, and secure site. And the people who work at rabble - staff, interns, volunteers, board members and consultants- are committed to making *rabble* a better site.

Staff

rabble's staff operate through virtual offices and are located around the country, enabling us to tap more easily into local and regional networks. All staff are part-time and also work in community radio, emerging media, adult education, marketing, organizational consultancy, website design and technology as well as journalism. These skills, experiences, and related networks all contribute to the success of rabble.

rabble's staff in 2006 were:

Judy Rebick, Publisher. In August 2006 Judy stepped down as Publisher to pursue some new and exciting projects but she remains an ambassador for rabble.

Kim Elliott, Managing Editor, and as of August 2006, Publisher.

Sharon Fraser, Editor Jane Will, Webmistress

Charlotte Scott, rpn Producer

Meagan Perry, rpn Producer

Matthew Adams, Program and Special Projects Coordinator

Lisa Rundle, Books Editor

Laurel Smith - Administration and Membership Coordinator

Jenn Watt, in cahoots Editor

Audra Williams, babble moderator (until March 2006)

Michelle Langlois, babble moderator

Frank "OldGoat" Preyde, babble moderator

The Anarres Worker Co-op, Technological support

Interns

The work of rabble is greatly strengthened through the involvement and dedication of interns and volunteers. Our internship program is now three years old and develops future progressive journalists by working with Canada's Journalism programs. Interns generally work in the editorial (content) sections of rabble assisting editors with stories, themes, research, etc.

Last year (October 05-May 06) we recruited four interns, two of whom continue to write for rabble, and one of whom has joined the rabble staff as the editor of in cahoots. In April 2007 six journalism students from across the country completed another round of internships.



In addition, *rabble* has negotiated a relationship with the student section of Journalists for Human Rights, through which we will be further supporting young writers, and at the same time, establishing a grassroots presence for *rabble* at the 14 universities that currently house their chapters.

2005-2006 Interns

Stephanie Russell, Tor Sandberg, Jenn Watt, Yee Guan Wong

2006-2007 Interns

Michelle Gregus, Karon Liu, Robert Meynell, Jessica Rose, Jay Satur, Alexandra Samur, Yee Guan Wong

Volunteers

Volunteers are the heart of *rabble*. In addition to the many writers who donate their work, volunteers currently support our online bookstore as well as perform some moderation work in *babble* (in conjunction with *rabble* staff), and advise us on technical and other matters. We also draw on volunteers for special events, fundraisers and promotion.

Regular volunteers in 2006:

Tori Allen, John Hall, Adrian Harewood, May Lui, Eric Piché, Kshama Ranawana, Corvin Russell, Stephanie Russell, Phillip Smith, Mark Surman, Dale Whitmore, Bill Wittur, Yee-Guan Wong, Nina Wyndham

Board

The role of *rabble's* Board has shifted over time from what was initially a management board involved in many day-to-day decisions to an oversight board monitoring financial and legal responsibilities and assisting in fundraising. 2006 marked the end of a number of two-year board terms and the Board is currently expanding to bring in new voices.

rabble's Board in 2006:

Judy Rebick (President until August 2006), Glenn Shentag (Interim President until January 2007), Duncan Cameron (Associate Publisher, and as of January 2007, President), Wayne MacPhail, rpn Executive Producer, Diane Touchette, Secretary and Treasurer, Matthew Adams (alternate staff rep) Jan Armstrong, Kim Elliott, Manmohan Panesar, Charlotte Scott (staff rep), Jane Will



Foreshadowing: what's coming in 2007 and beyond

Re-launch!

rabble is excited to announce a re-launch of the site coming in late 2007!

As one of the pioneers of independent Internet news, rabble's content management system - the software that runs the website - is now outdated and limits our ability to implement our vision for rabble. In the last few years there has been a significant increase in high quality open source software that allows (and encourages) a more social, participatory Internet experience. From social tagging (where people collectively select and highlight important sites and issues), to individual and collective blogging, to sites such as YouTube, Flickr, MySpace and Facebook, Internet users are becoming less passive respondents to content and more commentators, and contributors. Of course at rabble.ca we have always had significant user content through babble, but now we will turn it up a notch.

In 2006 we joined forces with the web design expertise of Phillip Smith from Community Bandwidth and the technical expertise of the Anarres group to redesign the website. Our vision is to make rabble more flexible and easily able to respond to the demands of changing technology, to improve our advertising space and capacity for advertisers, and to make the site more easily accessible to readers, through improved navigation and new on-demand features, and to make the site a more interactive experience for visitors, incorporating Web 2.0 tools such as RSS feeds. We will also be adding videos, a blog section, better comment functions and more columnists and reporters. Our redesign will feature more content, more voices, more diversity and greater ease of use.

Over the spring and summer 2007 a major fundraising specific to financing the implementation of the redesign, and to increase the editorial budget, will run.

You can support rabble's redesign and re-launch here.

Second Life home

In 2007 rabble launches its first "new space," joining the social justice organizations of Better World Island in the virtual world Second Life. Second Life is a 3D online world with all the content (buildings, land, clothing, etc.) created by the users themselves. It is an immersive, collaborative social space. Some compare it to a high-end video game in which the objective is not to hunt aliens, but instead, to learn, shop, socialize and explore.

And exploring is just what rabble is doing in Second Life. We are exploring how we can learn, inform and network in a new social space with residents from all over the planet.





rabble.ca's tree house home in Second Life

We will reach new audiences for rabble.ca and we will host and create events at our home base including book events and discussions.

Many businesses and organizations, from the Alzheimer Society of Canada, to Toyota Motors, to Reuters Group, to General Motors have taken notice and created a presence on Second Life. There are small businesses, non-profits (like rabble), big corporations, and almost everything in-between. There are also over 100 academic institutions either offering classes or library services to in-world residents. There are even Second Life specific media.

Visitors to Second Life can find rabble.ca at a place called Better World Island. Better World Island is also home to CARE International, the Centre for Water Studies, Camp Darfur and the Peace and Justice Centre, among other NGOs and non-profits.

If your computer has Second Life installed you can jump right to rabble's Second Life home here: http://slurl.com/secondlife/betterworld/116/226/30.



rabble in Facebook

Continuing to expand our presence beyond rabble.ca, as of 2007 we now also have a presence on the popular social networking site Facebook. You can find the rabble appreciation site here.

Conclusion

rabble.ca is a rare independent media success story. We are pioneers in Internet news and podcasting. In being so we have also created a unique Canadian book section, host a large, active, and important discussion board and nurture emerging writers as well as support established writers. As a non-profit media source we have struggled with finances but are diversifying our funding base as we seek out new audiences through a redesign and re-launch. The new rabble will feature more voices and original content, greater interaction with the site and most importantly will continue to promote the ideals of a democratic press.

We look forward to the next seven years.





Appendix 1 The following are rabble's in cahoots partners 2006-2007:

Africa Files

Amnesty International

Association for Women's Rights in Development

BC Teachers' Federation

CAW

Canadian Feminist Alliance for International Action

Canadian Council for International Co-operation

Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives

Centre for Social Justice

CEPAL

Canadian Federation of Nurses Union

Council of Canadians

Canadian Labour Congress

Canadian Peace Alliance

Citizens for Public Justice

CUSO

CUPE

DisAbled Women's Network Ontario

Democracy Watch

Elizabeth Fry

Early Childhood Care and Development

HEU

International Fund for Animal Welfare

International Freedom of Expression exchange

International Institute for Sustainable Development

Journalists for Human Rights

Doctors without Borders

National Farmers' Union

NUPGE

The North-South Institute

OSSTF

Parkland Institute

Polaris Institute

PSAC

Probe International

Rights & Democracy

South Asia Partnership Canada

Service Employees International Union

Sierra Club

Taking IT Global

Working TV



Thank you to rabble's sustaining partners partners 2006, 2007:





























