

LIKE MOST PEOPLE ATTENDING THE YEARLYKOS CONVENTION, I was there because I was a fan. I first discovered the blogosphere before the term, “blogosphere,” existed, when 15 comments on a Markos post was huge. No longer a lonely oasis for a handful of concerned citizens, today’s blogosphere gives voice to expert opinions and experiences that would otherwise be unavailable to hundreds of thousands of regular people occupied with the responsibilities of everyday living.

I got involved with the YearlyKos Convention because I believe the best blogs enable a politics of trust that respects individuals and their choices. And the chance to be among the people who witness, experience and drive this extraordinary phenomenon was an adventure I couldn’t pass up.

I always knew it would be big. The writing was on the wall when we started the YearlyKos project in November 2004. The Republicans were still in charge and America’s path was not going to change, but the progressive blogosphere would continue to grow and lay the groundwork for fabulous opportunity.

I knew it would be big, but I honestly had no idea what big would look like. Big looks like over 120 of our experts coming together and sharing their knowledge. Big looks like over 150 traditional media trying to understand who we are. Big looks like over 1000 citizens trekking to Las Vegas from all over the country, to organize, learn, and volunteer.

Big looks like, or rather feels like, the hopeful determination that defined YearlyKos. In my closing remarks Saturday evening I stated, “The YearlyKos Convention has been built on a foundation of trust.” Markos set it out with Daily Kos, trusting us to create our own content and manage our own community. In return, the community has trusted us, investing in YearlyKos and then showing up for the convention. Together we created a new avenue for waging politics, and together we created something big.

So, what next? Society is rapidly changing, and it’s not simply the availability of technology that defines this change; our attitudes, outlooks, and expectations are molded and remolded in a dynamic environment. The blogosphere, and YearlyKos, must adapt, but coming together in hopeful solidarity to share ideas will always be the driving force behind our convention. We will continue to be fans of each other and trust the process. We will continue to take advantage of the latest technology. We will continue to challenge assumptions.

With a proven record of upsetting the status quo, the rest depends on our collective imagination and determination as new opportunities arise. And that is the way it should be. Technologies change. Leaders come and go. Issues evolve. But that same creative drive and individual need to be heard that built the blogosphere will endure. ❖❖