AIDS, Media & Technology

September 25, 2009 By Oriol R. Gutierrez Jr.

The inaugural conference of Funders Concerned About AIDS (FCAA) took place September 16-18 in Washington, DC. “AIDS, Media & Technology” was one of two concurrent sessions that opened the event. Sean Strub, president and CEO of Cable Positive and *POZ*’s founder, was the moderator and I was a panelist.

The goal of the panel was “to make effective and innovative use of media and technology to battle stigma, discrimination and criminalization; share prevention messages; raise awareness; empower youth; engage public and political support; and help leverage resources in lean times.” I think we did most of that...

My fellow panelists included: Sam Graham-Felsen, director of outreach & content for Blue State Digital; Catherine Hanssens, executive director of The Center for HIV Law and Policy; Tim Rosta, board member of the MTV Staying Alive Foundation; Todd Murray, founder and executive director of Hope’s Voice International; Miguel Gomez, director of AIDS.gov; Brittany Hume, program officer of Johnson & Johnson (J&J) corporate contributions; and Alyce Myatt, executive director of Grantmakers in Film & Electronic Media (GFEM).

Sam outlined general best practices for engaging an online audience through lessons learned from his time working on the online media strategy of the Obama campaign. Catherine, Tim and Todd focused on how media and technology can be used to support HIV/AIDS advocacy. Miguel and I spoke about how blogs, video and social media can be used for HIV/AIDS messaging. Brittany shared lessons learned by J&J from collaborating with the Kaiser Family Foundation and others on producing HIV/AIDS television programming in Africa. Alyce shared an invaluable resource for funders seeking HIV/AIDS-related media projects, the GFEM Media Database, “a searchable database of media projects-in-progress.”

We didn’t have too much time for questions from the audience, but anecdotal feedback suggested to me that attendees got their money’s worth, so to speak. It was a sincere pleasure to share my enthusiasm for media and technology.

Thanks to FCAA for the photos (from the cocktail reception after the panel, explaining the beverages in hand): first photo, Sean Strub (left) and Catherine Hanssens; second photo, Todd Murray (left) and me.

© 2026 Smart + Strong All Rights Reserved.