Content Portfolio

By Joel Magalnick • joelm@jampacked.net • 206-779-2035

This article I wrote highlights the work I've been doing since the summer of 2017 to help build a platform that enables teens to understand how they can direct their careers while learning about collaboration, technology and role play.

Teens Produce Their First Game in Virtual Reality

When 13 teens showed up at Fluke Hall on the University of Washington campus one wet November day, they had no idea what they were in for. When they emerged from Portal VR in Ballard on Jan. 28, they had just played a virtual reality game they had made through learning, narrative-building, performance and collaboration.

"I liked it. It was very different from what I would have expected it to be," said Vichette Ros, a 9th grader from Choice Academy in Burien.

Ros didn't know what to expect because the workshops in this game-creation process had never been done before—they were the first in a series led by Seattle-based startup RealityNext. Over the course of two day-long sessions in November and December, RealityNext co-founders Alex Stolyarik and Joel Magalnick worked with the students and a volunteer crew that included Art Feinglass, director of the Seattle Jewish Theater Company, Luke Tokheim, co-founder of Shadow Motion Workshop, and software developer Michael Gelon to create a story and game based on photosynthesis and the carbon cycle.

"The interesting thing for me was the imagination of kids—could they convert subjects into stories and games?" Stolyarik said. "They can totally do it, and create fantastic and interesting narratives about science, something that is not easily played in a game setting."

Stolyarik and Magalnick have been working on the RealityNext concept since last June, when they set up shop at the University of Washington's CoMotion Labs. Stolyarik, 43, worked in the finance sector as CEO of a Moscow-based institution in the late 2000s and later founded a land-development education program that he said serves as the original model of the RealityNext program. Magalnick, 46, spent 12 years as editor-in-chief of a community media company, which he says is perfect for implementing the storytelling aspects of the RealityNext concept.

As Stolyarik and Magalnick began working together, both saw an opportunity to "change the way kids can interact with each other by teaching peer to peer," Magalnick said, "but at the same time putting them into a safe environment that encourages teamwork."

The release of RealityNext's first game comes at a time when adoption of virtual reality is on the rise. Given the high costs of entry, however—a headset and computer powerful enough to handle the intense graphics and data load of a VR experience runs $1,500 to $2,000—home-based adoption has not been as robust as industry leaders have hoped, according to Venture Beat. The entertainment magazine Variety reported in July that film companies, IMAX in particular, have begun investing in VR arcades to supplement their theatrical releases.

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RealityNext's goal, according to Stolyarik, is to open locations where teen can come, whether for afterschool programs, summer camps, or as school groups, to create their stories and games in what he called a "Maker Lab" over the course of two or three sessions. The other goal, he said, "is to put the workshops, which these kids did in an open space, entirely into VR so they can choose their characters, backgrounds and objects to manipulate while they make their stories."

With the kids broken into three groups to act out their stories, Shadow Motion's Tokheim affixed sensors to the arms, legs, head and midsection on half the group to digitally record each person's movements, then had them switch places. He said he was impressed with how the students took to the acting process.

"That's kind of an advanced thing to be able to pretend to act with somebody who's wearing the motion capture suit and someone who's not," Tokheim said. "The kids adjusted to that naturally."

Gelon, the software developer, collected the motion-capture recordings, the students' storyboards, and samples of background images. He overlaid virtual skins onto the recorded performances—in raw form skeletons on a grid background—which, in the final release, became five related stories accessed from a space-age virtual classroom.

"I liked how you made it something I would not have expected it to be," Vichette, the 9th-grade student, told Gelon. "I think you did really good with the surrounding environment it was in."

"I tried to bridge that gap between 'this is cool, this is new, this is realistic,' but also, 'this is a kid's storytelling device,'" Gelon responded.

Vlad Postel, a project manager at Microsoft who attended the game launch event, said he enjoyed how the teens enjoyed the experience they created. "I love the fact the kids were really making something from zero to 100, and it was interesting to see how they built it," Postel said. "The end result was pretty impressive."

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> The Washington State Jewish Historical Society brought me in to develop the Washington Jewish Museum site. The engagement went from user research to design to build. This document gives a snapshot of the content strategy to ensure that the Society's staff understands the different aspects to the site and how to populate each with content.

WSJHS Digital Portal and Digital Museum Content Strategy

About the site

1. Monthly theme – four or so articles per month
2. Archival materials (display from collection)
3. Focus on People
4. Recipes/Cookbook stories
5. Historical timeline
6. Milestones
7. Oral/recorded histories

Connecting our three web properties together

Site 1: www.wsjhs.org – about the organization

Site 2: www.washingtonjewishmuseum.org – about the community and its stories

Site 3: The digital archive collection, collection.washingtonjewishmuseum.org.

Washington Jewish Museum will be the central hub. It will link to the WSJHS site as a reference in the top-level navigation; in submenus; in the footer; and anytime the society is referenced. WJM will display regular updates related to themes, and museum collection items. The WJM will expand on the collection items with stories about their history, if possible. The WJM Collection runs on its own software and sub-site, but is accessible through WJM links, including prominent homepage placement, and on WSJHS.org.

WSJHS.org will link to both WJM and the archive in its top-level menus, footers, through conspicuously placed links on the site, and through updates when appropriate related to events or new updates.

What are the content sources?

1. **Collection calls for new content on every relevant site page.**
2. Passport stories already submitted
3. Shalom Family Business exhibit
4. Who's Minding the Store?
5. Distant Replay sports histories
6. Yesterday's Mavens… cookbook
7. The Jewish Experience of Washington (book) – **for Timeline feature**
8. The Way We Were (Our Village in Seattle) – 2-part series
9. Oral histories: 30-40 on WSJHS site; 200+ on UW archive site; 470 taken total –For the **Washington Jewish History** archive collection

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Social Media strategy

WSJHS should engage in a three-pronged social media strategy:

1. Informing users about events, site updates, and community gatherings
2. As collection calls for stories and digital artifacts
3. As a conversation starter about local history, questions about artifact provenance, fun Q&A, and two-way (or more) communications about interesting events in local Jewish history or how non-Jewish history may relate to what the Jewish community was doing.

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In addition to the Washington Jewish Museum, as exhibit curator for the Historical Society's gala event Passport to Washington I worked with a team of volunteers to collect stories from nearly fifty community members, then wrote these capsules about their lives. This exhibit board measures 20"x30" at its full height.

TECHNOLOGY AND STARTUPS

Eyal Levy

Born 1951, Jerusalem, Israel.
Arrived in Washington, 1989 and 2002

For anyone who visited Israel from the mid-1990s on and heard anyone refer to their Pelophone, you can thank Eyal Levy.

Eyal ran the cellphone company from 1994-97 and grew it from a tiny outlier to a major player, with more than 2 million subscribers, at a time when the cellular world looked to Israel as the leader in this exploding space. But to ascribe that success to Eyal without seeing everything else he's done tells only a fraction of his story.

He attended Stanford for a year, but with the Six Day War having just ended and Israel in the midst of its war of attrition, "I decided to leave everything and move back and join the military."

He spent five years on active duty, worked in South America and Africa, then became a lecturer at Tel Aviv University.

Eyal taught database management systems, which introduced him to the students who created Israel's first wave of startups.

"I think close to three, four thousand of them were my students," he says.

A company Eyal founded in the early 1980s went public and brought him to the U.S. Motorola recruited him in 1989 to run operations in Washington, where he stayed for five years before returning to Israel.

Following his Pelophone stint, Eyal moved into venture capital, which created the partnerships with companies like Microsoft that have made Israel such a strong center of research and development. He returned here in 2002 with his wife, Dr. Zehava Chen-Levy.

In 2007 Eyal joined and helped to fund the Washington-Israel Business Council, an effort to bring Israeli companies to our state while bringing companies to Israel to create jobs there. He said the council got very little support from local government and even the Jewish community, "but we gave it a shot." The effort ended in 2015.

Eyal is grounded by the simple concept of human dignity. As such, he was a founding member of Peace Now, is today involved in New Israel Fund, and supports a successful conclusion to the peace process. Without strong leadership on either side, however, he doesn't have a lot of optimism.

"But you never stop trying," he says. "The easiest thing to do is to give up."

"I have one pretty broad term to describe my values, which is human dignity. Human dignity basically covers everything: how you treat other people, how you treat yourself."

PASSPORT to WASHINGTON
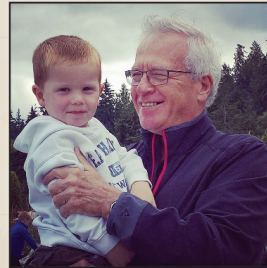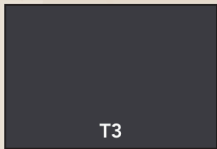
A project of the
Washington State Jewish
Historical Society

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I spent twelve years as the editor and publisher of the JTNews, a nonprofit community media company that served the Jewish population of Washington State. During that time, in addition to leading the content strategy and staff, I wrote, edited, assigned articles, and much, much more. This article is a sample of community-focused news.

A look back at what Kline Galland was, and now is

By Joel Magalnick, Editor, The Jewish Sound
When the Caroline Kline Galland home first opened on the shores of Lake Washington in 1914, the ramshackle farmhouse held seven inmates, as they were called, all of them poor, infirm, single Jewish men with no other place to go.

"It is my desire that the home be so constructed and managed that it may bring to the lives of the aged men and women who shall be domiciled therein the greatest degree of contentment and happiness in their declining years," wrote Kline Galland in her will, which, upon her death in 1907, set in motion the wheels that would become the institution that celebrates its 100th anniversary this year.

These men — women would be admitted later — were required to help with the building's upkeep and to adhere to a strict set of rules that included who could visit and set times for when the lights must be turned out in the evening. Should the "inmates" break these rules, they'd be summarily removed. And where would they go?

"They could care less," said Josh Gortler, the Kline Galland's now-retired CEO, of the matrons who ran the facility.

Gortler, who now manages the Kline Galland's endowment from the 10th floor of the Summit at First Hill, the independent and assisted-living facility that opened in 2001,

arrived in Seattle in 1968 to lead the organization and serves as its de facto historian.

While Kline Galland has always strived to live up to the wishes of its first benefactor, it was not always easy. In the late 1920s, a zoning request to expand to 25 residents resulted in a case that went all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court, which sided with Kline Galland. By the end of the 1940s, the number of beds had reached 45, but it soon became clear that its original mission of housing the poor and infirm would need to change to suit the community's needs.

"What happened if you had money?" asked Gortler. If "you had a house or you had any possessions, you had to give it to the trust" that managed all of the finances of the agency.

In the 1950s, a consultant working with the advisory board recommended a new facility and a move in the direction the rest of the nation was going with nursing care: Less custodial, and more social work and psychiatric intervention.

"The recommendation was that there needs to be a new facility to move into from this sheltered home," Gortler said, "into a more progressive approach for caring for the elderly."

The state agreed. In 1960, licensors called Kline Galland "an antiquated, inadequate

facility," according to their report, and refused to renew its license. After pushback from the Jewish community, plus the launch of a $1.1 million capital campaign, the home stayed in place and a new, modern 70-bed facility opened in 1967.

Spearheading that effort was local businessman and philanthropist Sol Esfeld, whose mother had been a longtime resident of Kline Galland.

Any resident of the nursing facility today can recall Esfeld's name — it graces the wing that made up the expansion after the new facility quickly filled to capacity.

"The impact of the home is so widespread that nearly everyone in our community will be touched sooner or later," said Esfeld, who also led the $3.6 million expansion campaign that brought Kline Galland's capacity to 140 beds.

Esfeld is also the man who first invited Gortler to move to Seattle to become the agency's new director. Gortler, a Holocaust survivor, had at the time been working for an organization in New York that served refugees. A staffer at the United Way in Seattle "discovered" Gortler when he presented a paper on "serving elderly people in a new type of a setting, combining housing and recreation and social services," he said. United Way courted Gortler, but he turned them down. A member of that hiring committee tipped Esfeld to Gortler's ideas and the two met at a hotel in New York. Gortler agreed to a two-year commitment — after being approved by both the Kline Galland advisory committee and Seattle Trust, which still managed the finances — and "apparently things did work out, and I'm here, 45 years later," he said.

The Kline Galland that Josh Gortler came into — 70 residents, a $250,000 budget, hardly any administrative staff to speak of — is far different from what exists today.

"There was no bank account. On Fridays I would take all the bills for the week, I would take a sheet of paper with all the employees, how many people would work, and how much they should get paid," he said. "The bank paid the check, the bills, and then the next Monday I would pick up the checks for the employees and we would hand them out. It was strictly controlled by the bank."

In the 1970s, Kline Galland finally freed itself — mostly — from the management of Seattle Trust.

"The bank didn't want to let go," Gortler said. But the bank also refused to sign on the loan to expand to 140 beds. "They didn't want to sign the contract because they were afraid they were going to get stuck with this project if it was going to be a failure."

Eventually Esfeld and businessman Robert Block worked out a deal that the trust would continue to own the land, and the agency, as an independent 501(c)(3) nonprofit, would manage the operations. Kline Galland signed a 99-year lease and the expansion was built.

"We said it was going to fill up in two years," Gortler said. "Within six months the place was full."

Today, Kline Galland owns the land outright. Kline Galla nd expanded programmatically during that time as well. In the early 1970s, Gortler presented a grid to his board laying out the community-wide options for Seattle's seniors: Those who lived at home could find activities at the Jewish Community Center's Golden Age Club, those who needed some help could find a group facility such as Council House, and those in need of daily care would find a space at the Kline Galland. That document served as the blueprint for Kline Galland's future, though it took close to a decade for the plan to begin to bear fruit with the introduction of the Morris Polack Day Center. After its introduction in 1980, local philanthropist Polack created a base fund of $1 million to sustain a program for seniors to live at home while receiving

necessary services on-site a few days a week. Gortler's blueprint also sowed the seeds for the transitional care unit, which opened in 2000 and allows for post-operative patients to spend time in rehabilitation before heading home. And eventually, that plan set in motion the idea of a residential facility for Jewish seniors who can live independently or with some assistance.

That facility, the Summit at First Hill, opened in 2001, with financial commitments from the who's who of Jewish Seattle's donor base: Sam and Althea Stroum, Jack and Becky Benaroya, Sam Israel, Ray Galante, who ultimately chaired the building campaign, and many others.

"We looked all over," Gortler said. "We looked at Eastside properties, we looked in Renton, then this property becomes available."

The patch of land, owned by broadcasting magnate Patricia Bullitt Collins, was purchased on very favorable terms with payments taken "as money becomes available," according to Gortler. But then a strange thing happened.

When Gortler was about to deliver the final check — an $800,000 payment — Sam Stroum decided they should ask Collins for a $50,000 donation as well.

"I told her that anybody who moves in here who ever runs out of money will not be moved out, that we will subsidize them, and we're going to do it by creating an endowment," Gortler said. "She says, 'Mr. Gortler, tear up the check.'…Sam fell through the floor."

That $800,000 started the Kline Galland Foundation, an endowment that Gortler said is doing "exceptionally well" and paid for the recent top-down remodel of the Kline Galland home. In 2006, Gortler handed over the reins to its current CEO, Jeff Cohen, who has been continuing Gortler's expansion of services.

That so many people in Seattle's Jewish community give of their time and money to the Kline Galland is in part a recognition that, as Cohen puts it, "eventually everyone's going to need one of the Kline Galland's services," but also a tribute to loved ones to make sure they live comfortably in their later years.

"The community is proud of what they're doing," Gortler said.

As a participant in the Seattle Interactive Conference's Design Swarm, organizers brought a group of seven from different careers and walks of life to create a graceful solution to a seemingly intractable problem. This case study explains how we did it—and did it successfully.

How Clean Becomes Culture: A case study

I had the opportunity this week to participate in a Design Swarm as a part of the Seattle Interactive Conference. A design swarm consists of multiple groups of people, many of whom previously didn't know each other, come together, in an environment of controlled chaos, to solve a problem. Hopefully, as was the case here, the problem seeks a solution that makes the world a better place. Regardless, the process bring many minds together to create a solution where one person could never provide so much insight.

The swarm

MSR, based here in Seattle, has long been known for its camping stoves, water filters, and even snowshoes. At some point someone realized that the gear they've designed for back-country use could also help people with little to no access to clean water. As the World Health Organization has reported, of the 1.5 million deaths per year from diarrhea—a condition that should easily be avoidable—roughly 360,000 are children.

Cascade Designs, owners of MSR, therefore established MSR Global Health, and a product called the Community Chlorine Maker that can be distributed to communities around the world. Chlorine, as we learned, kills the majority of bacteria in water and makes it safe to drink.

MSR is committed to distributing these chlorine makers to villages and communities across the world. The maker consists of a machine that connects to a motorcycle or car battery with a jar that turns water and salt into a chlorine solution—that's the real innovation of this product—plus a pill-bottle-shaped container that holds the finished chlorine, a package of salt, and disposable strips that test for contamination levels.

Several hundred, in fact, have been distributed across Haiti in the aftermath of Hurricane Matthew earlier this month.

The problem

MSR faces several challenges in distributing what could be life changing for community health across the globe:

· Understanding of the product

· Understanding of what clean water is, and why it's important

· Getting the devices to the small communities they're intended for

Our mission, as we chose to accept it, was to come up with some way to answer this challenge.

The Swarm method

The Swarm organizers confined all seven groups to a small space, each with our own table and plenty of Post-its, markers and

sketch paper. Our leader, Surya Vanka, explained the situation, then introduced subject-matter experts from MSR, WorldVision, and other NGOs, who would circulate through and answer questions as we sought further information. He then pushed us through multiple phases:

1. Learn our group's strengths
2. Brainstorm the problem
3. Create personas to put faces to the problem
4. Ideation toward multiple solutions
5. Narrow possible solutions
6. Establish how a final solution would work
7. Build the story of how we bring our solution to fruition

He then left us to our own devices in half-hour chunks, dispensing further information in between to help us move forward. Despite this being a competition, Surya also allotted time for us to move between groups and encouraged us to beg, borrow and steal anything and everything from other participants' imaginations.

The path to our solution

Team Osmosis, as we called ourselves, consisted of seven of us from different backgrounds but similar skillsets. Interestingly enough, nearly all of us had a history in user experience or research.

Our thinking ultimately coalesced around two big ideas: bottom-up education to promote adoption of the product, and utilization of existing infrastructure to deliver and replenish the chlorine maker and its accessories such as salt and testing strips.

But we had to settle on one, so we opted for education.

Our solution

Once we'd settled on education—and it was a difficult choice, because we left a lot of good ideas on the table—we then had to decide who should be educated and how. We operated on the premise that communities have access to the chlorine maker, but they needed to be convinced to use them. We wanted to be sensitive to the idea that villagers have no reason to trust some Americans who swoop in and tell them how to live their lives.

At the end of six hours of iteration, here's what we came up with:

NGOs or religious groups distribute sets of educational cards about water use to teachers, who use them as a jumping-off point to engage what we called a youth-generated curriculum. The students can use these cards to create games that tell stories of how contaminated water affects their families and communities, then come up with solutions to make sure they use clean water for drinking and sanitation. They then have a community celebration that brings this knowledge to families so it can trickle up and be adopted more widely. At the same time, however, these kids would pass this knowledge down to create a culture of clean water.

After all seven groups presented, the five judges deliberated, and while word is they liked our idea, it didn't feel fully baked enough.

But on day two we came back. Over the course of just a couple more hours, and with a smaller team (some groups didn't even return for the second day), we refined the idea, tightened the story, and we won the People's Choice award! We walk away with a nice award, but MSR Global Health now has seven actionable ideas they can take to communities across the world. If a room of fifty has a hand in saving even a few lives, that's huge.