

CIVIC *and* CITIZEN Journalism

INTEREST GROUP NEWS

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CAR tools boost civic journalism

By Jeff South
CCJIG Webmaster

Civic journalism grew out of disenchantment with the “horse-race” approach to political coverage in the 1980s. Computer-assisted reporting emerged with the advent of the personal computer a decade later. For many years, there was little if any crossover between these two journalistic

trends.

But Web 2.0 tools have changed that: They’ve made it easier to engage the public with CAR – to help people visualize, interact with and contribute to data sets. Now you don’t have to be a programmer to take census, traffic, crime or other data and create compelling online maps and charts.

See **CAR TOOLS**, page 3



Photo by Deborah Chung

CCJIG co-vice-chair for programming Kirsten Johnson tosses a chip during the “chip auction” session at the AEJMC winter meeting in Albuquerque to set the program for next summer’s convention in St. Louis. Convention stories inside include:

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Teaching how to use Twitter as reporting tool

By Jeremy Littau
CCJIG Secretary

I was privileged to be part of an interesting classroom experiment this spring that involved collaboration with four other universities. It started when several of my AEJMC colleagues teaching different types of multimedia reporting found ourselves talking on Facebook about how, for some reason, this semester

was proving a struggle to get students on board with social media tools.

Within hours, Carrie Brown at the University of Memphis sent us a Twitter scavenger hunt assignment with an invitation to join in. And thus #JRLWeb was born. Classes at Memphis, Drury University, Lehigh University, the University of Oregon, and the University of West Virginia all took part.

The assignment was fairly simple: students had to tweet about 10 items they obtained either by talking to people or doing some reporting. All of them, in fact, asked for a photo in some way as well.

The learning goal was to get them using Twitter and particularly on mobile, but they also knew other students were

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CCJIG officers edit new volume on objectivity

By Deborah Chung
CCJIG Chair

The idea of objectivity is a classic discussion among journalism students, professionals and scholars. Such debates and discussions regarding its appropriateness and its relevance to the field have been treated in many books and articles.

However, as Burton St. John III observes, there has been no sustained discussion of objectivity as a volume in its own right over the past seven or eight years.

In their upcoming book *News With a View: Journalism Beyond Objectivity*, CCJIG officers St. John and Kirsten A. Johnson provide theoretical and applied examinations of objectivity in today's modern journalism environment. Their book offers insights into how the field of journalism can adjust its understanding and practices of objectivity beyond its limiting frames.

Departing from traditional approaches to examining journalism's current problems with relevance, this book offers insights on how the ideal of objectivity often gets in the way. Rather than raising objectivity as the highest goal, the authors argue, it is necessary to examine the increasing amount of subjective perspectives that citizens offer in today's media climate

and how such new content brings new visions of media credibility in an era of citizen engagement and participatory culture.

"The traditional discussion of objectivity that focuses on ritual-like practices, relying on expert sources and balanced coverage, limits critical discussion that involves citizens in our society," St. John said. "The idea that journalists can approximate reality does not resonate with today's news consumers." In an age of increasing user self-selection and integration of user-generated content, the "journalist's view" is becoming less authoritative.

This project is especially relevant in today's interactive media landscape where emergent technological tools offer increasingly participatory user experiences. "Objectivity is being called into question as user-created content is becoming more prevalent online," Johnson said. "This book seeks to examine and explore that intersection between objectivity and what users are creating. This audience no longer waits for journalists to tell them what's important. Instead they go out and find it themselves—and they not only find it themselves—they share it with friends, comment on it, change it, and use it until their information experience is finished."

The book first provides an

overview of the rise of objectivity in journalism and its evolution in Western societies. Part 1 then covers historical aspects of objectivity and its integration into the U.S. press, investigative journalism and alternative journalism. Part 2 deals with contemporary perspectives and examines news consumption and production by actively engaged citizens and includes topics on selective exposure, collaborative models, role conceptions, and crowdsourcing activities. Part 3 offers global considerations and investigates cultural norms of journalism across various societies, including Norway, South Africa, Russia and global news agencies. Part 4 assesses objectivity and theoretical approaches and offers critical views on how objectivity might potentially contribute to a disconnect between news workers and their audiences. The volume concludes with an essay on post-objectivity perspectives for contemporary journalism.

Contributors for the volume include Aaron Barlow, Deborah S. Chung, Andrew Flanagan, John Hatcher, John Jirik, Kirsten A. Johnson, Farooq Kperogi, Gerry Lanosga, Wilson Lowrey, Doreen Marchionni, Sharon Meraz, Seungahn Nah, David Ryfe, Daxton Stewart, and Burton St. John III. The book is expected to be published by Summer 2012.

Meet us in St. Louis: convention facts, key dates

Convention Hotel:

- The Renaissance St. Louis Grand Hotel, 800 Washington Ave.

Key Dates

- Paper submission deadline 11:59pm CDT – April 1, 2011.

- Pre-conference sessions: Tuesday Aug. 9
- Conference begins – Wednesday Aug. 10



CAR Tools

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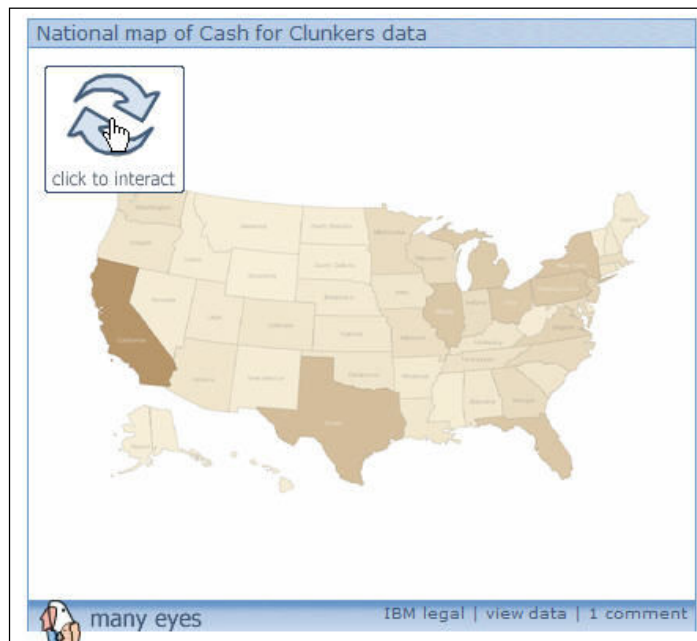
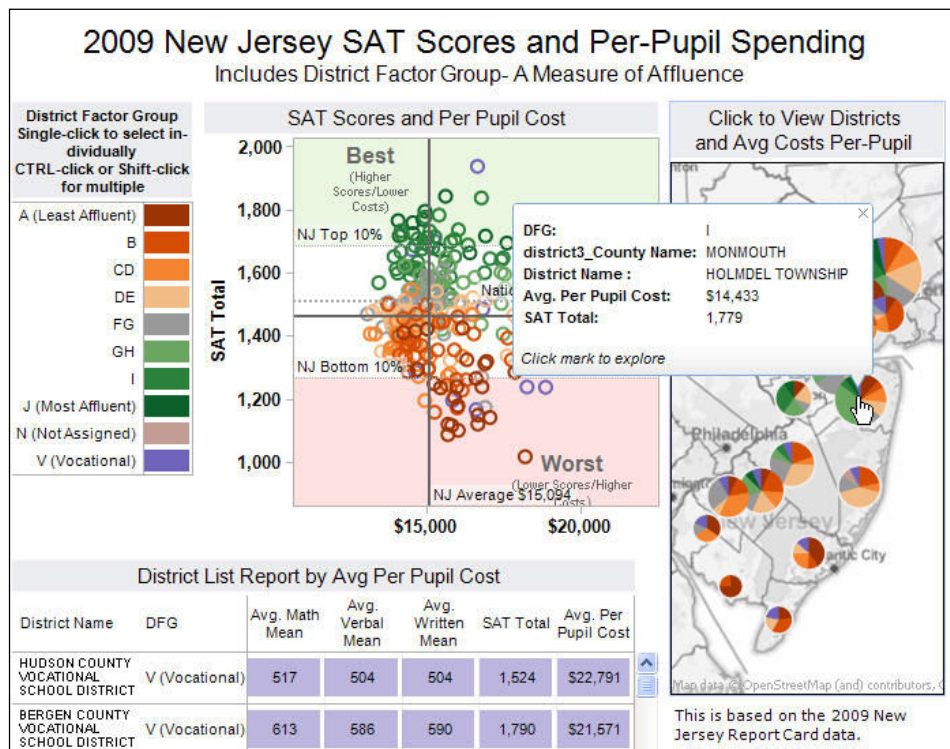
Those tools were on full display at the 2011 CAR Conference held Feb. 24-27 in Raleigh, N.C., by Investigative Reporters and Editors Inc. and its National Institute for Computer-Assisted Reporting. Besides learning how to analyze data, attendees learned how to present it – in ways that often intersect with civic and citizen journalism.

CAR expert Steve Doig, the Knight Chair at the Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication at Arizona State University, has compiled a best-of-the-conference tipsheet on “13 free tools to analyze, display data.” You can find it at <http://bit.ly/h4GPea>.

Google, which co-sponsored the CAR conference, has a number of tools for both professional and citizen journalists. They include Google Maps (for geo-based mashups); Google Refine (for cleaning up “messy data”); and Gapminder (for illustrating trends over time). Many journalists are using Google Fusion Tables to visualize data as maps, time lines or charts. As with other tools, you can embed your graphic on a website or share it via social media.

Here are three other tools that my journalism students and I have found especially useful:

ManyEyes – Created by IBM, this Web-based service lets you upload a spreadsheet or free-text document and then create a visualization. For example, you might visualize a politician’s speech as a word tree or tag cloud – or demographic data as a



Virginia Commonwealth University students created the “Cash for Clunkers” graphic at left with IBM’s Many Eyes program. The data visualization above was created with Tableau Public. (Screen grabs of work provided by Jeff South)

map or bubble chart.

Tableau Public – You can download the basic version of this program for free. It helps you bring data to life with interactive graphs, charts, maps, tables and entire dashboards. Visitors can click on it to “drill down” for more details.

NodeXL – This is an Excel

add-in for doing social networking analysis. It can take a spreadsheet of people and organizations, for instance, and show how they are interconnected. That’s useful for visualizing the web of connections among politicians and campaign donors – or among members of corporate boards.

Convention planning already well under way

By Kirsten Johnson
CCJIG Co-Vice Chair

Planning for the 2011 AEJMC Conference in St. Louis began just a few weeks after the 2010 conference ended and is now well under way. The program grid so familiar to convention-goers was assembled at the AEJMC mid-winter meeting in Albuquerque in early December.

This year's CCJIG programming as scheduled at that meeting is well balanced, with two sessions each in the areas of Research, Teaching, and Professional Freedom and Responsibility.

One theme from last year's conference that garnered a lot of attention was how to conduct an effective content analysis of online content. This methodology is frequently utilized when studying user participation and work created by citizen journal-

ists, and questions often arise around how to code content that is constantly changing. The 2011 conference will feature a session on this topic that is co-sponsored with the Radio-Television Journalism Division.

This year's programming also boasts collaborations with groups that CCJIG has not partnered with in recent memory. One of them is a teaching session co-sponsored with the Magazine Division that will focus on effective ways to teach journalism that touches communities. Instructors will share their experiences teaching courses in which students engaged in working on projects to benefit the community. Panelists representing both of the groups will participate. CCJIG will also partner with the Mass Communication and Society Division on a teaching panel about using location-based services in

the classroom. Mobile applications, such as Foursquare and Yelp, are becoming more prevalent in journalism. This session will highlight how instructors are using these technologies to teach students.

The annual J-lab luncheon, always a popular session at the conference, is on the schedule again this year. The session will focus on community news sites and what works and what doesn't when it comes to community journalism. The session will build on the new J-Lab report, "New Voices: What Works." It is co-sponsored with the Council of Affiliates, and the Community Journalism Interest Group.

Overall, this year's programming proves to be an exciting mix of panels that highlight new teaching ideas and technologies, research methodologies, and best practices in civic and citizen journalism.

Research paper call; deadline is April 1

The Civic and Citizen Journalism Interest Group invites research paper submissions for the 2011 conference of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication to be held in St. Louis on August 10-13, 2011.

Papers must be submitted by 11:59 p.m. on April 1, 2011, in accordance with all requirements of AEJMC and its uniform paper call and electronic submission process:

(<http://www.allacademic.com/one/aejmc/aejmc11/>).

Authors should ensure that their papers do not contain identifying references. For a detailed explanation, please see "submitting a clean paper"

under the uniform paper call on the AEJMC website (<http://www.aejmctlouis.org/home/papercall>).

Papers submitted will be eligible for separate faculty and student top paper awards of \$151. Because of the separate competition for students, graduate students should be careful to identify themselves as such in the submission process. Papers co-authored with faculty members do not qualify for the student competition.

CCJIG is interested in research that examines the emergence, practice, sustenance and/or teaching of civic/citizen journalism. Authors are urged to submit papers that generally conform to this group's interests. Papers should make sure to include discussions of news within the context of civic/citizen journalism. For example, papers that

See PAPER CALL, page 5

Regional colloquia can offer slower pace, more interaction

By Anne Golden Worsham
CCJIG PF&R Chair

Recently the Civic and Citizen Journalism Interest Group sponsored a research session at the AEJMC midwinter conference at the University of Oklahoma. The research topics were wide-ranging and included a study of the motivations of citizen photo-journalists, the use of twitter during a heartbreaking crisis, the social role of badge owners on the Huffington Post and online defamation.

I attended that conference and learned what it's like to experience a meeting with a far smaller scale and more relaxed pace than the national AEJMC conference. At one point, when the conference attendees emerged from the six conference sessions being held just before the lunch hour and converged on one lunchroom, there was an opportunity to luxuriate in the atmosphere of creative intellectual brainstorming that always

seems to emerge when you sit and converse with other scholars.

I found myself sitting at a table with several members of a panel I had just attended. As we ate our Subway sandwiches, chips and cookies, we were able to talk about one of the panel presentations and suggest research extensions to the presenter.

At the reception held at the first evening of the conference, there was a sense of fluid collegiality as attendees migrated from table to table in a panorama of human interaction.

In spite of the fact that it was a smaller conference, I was fascinated by the research being presented at the sessions I attended. I could tell that the research projects were deeply meaningful to the presenters and the presentations were evoking creative thoughts and questions in the minds of the audience members.

So, I would highly recommend

CCJIG papers at Midwinter session

The following papers were accepted by the Civic and Citizen Journalism Interest Group for a session titled "Citizenry as Journalism in the Digital Age" the AEJMC midwinter conference in Oklahoma:

- *A Study of the Motivations of Citizen Photojournalists* – Tara Buehner, University of Oklahoma. (Top paper co-recipient)
- *Case of the UT Shooter: Twitter Voices and Ambient Journalism During an Acute Crisis* – Avery Holton, University of Texas Austin (Top paper co-recipient)
- *We Don't Need No Stinkin' Badges: The Social Role of Badge Owners on the Huffington Post* – Julie Jones and Nathan Altadonna, University of Oklahoma
- *Online Defamation and the Internet Host Site* – Julia Bristow, Arkansas State University

that you give the regional conferences a try, because you might be surprised by how much you enjoy the experience.

Paper call

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examine the use of blogs without touching upon news do not automatically meet the group's interests.

Suggested paper topics include: Citizen/civic journalism in political campaigns, citizen media (including news consumers as news producers), civic map-

ping, community conversations, newsroom projects, legal and ethical issues in civic/citizen journalism, crowdsourcing versus traditional "gatekeeper" journalism, civic/citizen journalism in a multicultural environment, civic/citizen journalism and new technologies, history/philosophy of civic/citizen journalism, the changing newspaper industry economy and its effect on the development of civic/

citizen journalism movements, media convergence and civic/citizen journalism, the missions and meanings of "civic journalism" and/or "citizen journalism," teaching civic/citizen journalism, and use of polls, focus groups and other methods in civic reporting.

Please direct any questions you may have to CCJIG Research Chair Burton St. John III (bsaintjo@odu.edu).

Twitter

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watching at other schools. Each class tweeted their 10 items using their class hashtag (for example, Lehigh used #J198), and students at each school were given the list of all the class tags to follow.

What ensued was instructive. Students learned about interesting things happening at other schools or got to know the area residents a bit more. They retweeted each other, and they connected on other interests. One of my Lehigh students, for example, has been blogging about sports this semester and found a similar student at West Virginia. They now follow each other and I see them talking to each other

Assignment guidelines

Details about what students were assigned to find can be found at <http://umemphissocialmedia.posterous.com/twitter-scamenger-hunt>

on Twitter every so often. The connections alone that students develop make the exercise worth the effort.

The project led to other things. We did a large group chat on a Sunday night after all the classes had finished the assignment using our new #JRLWeb tag, and we also live tweeted the Oscars together using #JOscars. We ended up creating a virtual classroom that was much broader than the individual classes we hold, even if those extend to virtual environments.

The professors found it to be such a good experience that we're planning for more. We'll

replicate this assignment next semester, but we're also envisioning other projects together such as working on crowd-sourced custom Google maps. One of the big takeaways for us is this kind of thing not only lets students see the value of collaboration, but it also enlarges their view of how far these tools reach. If they follow only students and local residents on Twitter, they have less sense of scope. This assignment helped them see a bigger social media world.

So we're planning to have a larger conversation at an AEJ meetup this August in St. Louis. Anyone interested can contact me at jj1409@lehigh.edu

Research reminders to maximize your chances in CCJIG

By Glenn Scott
CCJIG Co-Vice Chair

In the past two years, CCJIG reviewers have accepted slightly more than half of the papers submitted. As a former research chair – the person who coordinates the peer-review process – I'm quick to admit that we've had to reject some papers that were quite good. The competition is usually strong.

More to the point, some authors have missed chances to strengthen their submissions. Here are three simple reminders as you aim to submit in our CCJIG research-paper competition this year.

1. Speak to our interest group: Make sure you're mak-

ing a case that your paper relates to issues of civic or citizen journalism. Many papers clearly do, but not all. If yours does not easily "live" in our areas of interest, invest a few paragraphs in the introduction, lit review and conclusions highlighting and justifying the linkage with what we study.

2. Give principled explanations about research methods. More papers get the boot for a failure of methodological transparency than probably any other area. It's not uncommon to create samples of college students, for example, but explain the steps and logic behind your choices. If you're studying three distinct citizen journalism sites, explain why you selected these

three – and what the findings from these particular sites have to offer the scholarly community. Don't expect reviewers to trust what you don't tell them. Be specific and principled.

3. Connect your lit review to your methods and findings. This one is aimed mostly at graduate students. We often see papers with marvelous literature reviews that likely were products of theory courses. Where a paper's section on theory is deep and rewarding, though, the actual methods and findings can be thin and segregated from the theory and lit. Either improve the methods or build on your strength by revising the paper into a deeper work strictly on theory.