

# CIVIC *and* CITIZEN Journalism

INTEREST GROUP NEWS

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<http://aejmc.net/civic>  
[www.has.vcu.edu/civic-journalism](http://www.has.vcu.edu/civic-journalism)

## Survey follow-up

### Members will vote on two names

In the Fall 2011 newsletter I posed the question "Is the name Civic and Citizen Journalism no longer relevant?"

A survey was sent out to 111 CCJIG members in October to try and answer that question. Forty-one people responded. Fifty-nine percent responded "yes" when asked if the name should be changed. When asked to suggest a name for the new group Participatory Journalism Interest Group was mentioned most often.

You can view the full listing of survey results at: <http://ccjig.wetpaint.com>.

After reviewing the results of the survey and then seeking input from the other CCJIG elected officers we have decided to send out another short survey. Members will be asked to choose between the following two choices:

Civic and Citizen Journalism Interest Group  
Participatory Journalism Interest Group

Please look for this electronic survey in your email in-box within the next few weeks. If the CCJIG leadership team gets a clear sense as to a new name for the group, then it can be formally voted on and adopted at the next CCJIG members' meeting in Chicago. If approved, the name change would go into effect on Oct. 1, 2012.

It is important to remember that



this is just a name change and that the mission of the group will still remain the same. From the CCJIG constitution:

"The Civic and Citizen Journalism Interest Group of AEJMC is a group of teachers, scholars, professionals and students who are dedicated to the advancement of journalism that promotes civic and citizen engagement, and research and teaching about these traditions. It is rooted in the traditions of civic or public journalism as developed in the 1990s and has expanded to encompass participatory, audience-involved practices of journalism. The purpose of the Civic and Citizen Journalism Interest Group is to promote and enhance the teaching of such journalism; support and critique research related to it; and to nurture and expand the discipline of civic and citizen journalism education and scholarship."

See **SECOND SURVEY**, page 4



## 2012 call for papers

The Civic and Citizen Journalism Interest Group (CCJIG) invites research paper submissions for the 2012 AEJMC Conference, August 9-12.

Papers must be submitted in accordance with all requirements of AEJMC and its uniform paper call and electronic submission process. 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.

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

See **CALL**, page 6

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Olga Klepova



Nadezhda Khlebnikova



Helen Frøyseth

## Civic/citizen/public journalism

# Evolution differs in Russia, Norway

By Jack Rosenberry

As scholars associated with the Civic and Citizen Journalism Interest Group have been noting for some time, the Internet has changed the shape of public interaction with the media in the United States.

The same phenomena is happening elsewhere in the world, and these projects are starting to get academic attention as well.

Two Russian scholars who study their country's civic and citizen journalism, Olga Klepova and Nadezhda Khlebnikova, say that civic and citizen journalism are essentially the same thing in their country.

"I wouldn't differ civic, public or citizen journalism in Russian society," Klepova said in an e-mail interview. Both also said that the two terms are translated the same from English into Russian.

The arc of civic and citizen journalism's development in Russia also has paralleled the U.S.

Khlebnikova said, also via e-mail interview, that civic journalism began there in the 1990s and developed through the early 2000s, practiced largely by regional newspapers and broadcast operations. It had

mixed results as various techniques were tried. She said it was not practiced very widely.

Both noted that no institutes or organizations for the study or support of the practice have developed in Russia, the way the Pew Center did in the United States.

Some of the theoretical bases and scholarship about U.S. civic journalism have helped to inform Russian activities, although Klepova noted that "The phenomenon didn't get as much attention in the academic world as it did in the USA."

Khlebnikova said the translation into Russian of Edward Miller's Poynter Institute book on the *Charlotte Observer's* public journalism activities helped the concept become known there. More recently, Tanni Haas's *The Pursuit of Public Journalism*, along with *Public Journalism 2.0* (edited by CCJIG members Jack Rosenberry and Burton St. John III), have become a part of the theory base used by Russian scholars.

"I am not sure if we can determine it as an adoption only of U.S. or of worldwide media practices," Klepova said. "But there are several researchers offering the consider-

ation of U.S. experience for Russian reality."

Both she and Khlebnikova are among those researchers. Klepova is a television producer and student in the graduate program of the Peoples' Friendship University of Russia in Moscow. Khlebnikova recently finished three years in postgraduate study at Moscow State University, earning the Russian equivalent of a doctorate, and also has carried out civic journalism-oriented media projects with the Murmansk Association of Women Journalists.

In another similarity with U.S. practice, collaboration of traditional media and citizen journalism has not developed very far, either. "There are very few examples of engagement between citizen journalists and traditional media," Klepova said.

Some public initiatives in the regions within small media organizations have happened, she added, and one big news agency called RIA is trying to form audience partnerships into a citizen journalists' network. "But it's hard to consider such cooperation as a stable trend for the Russian media yet," she said.

See RUSSIA, page 6

# Teaching moments

## Compliments of crowdsourcing

The collective wisdom of CCJIG members is so great that I've crowdsourced this column to pass along some teaching ideas that have worked. Here we go:

### *For introductory journalism courses*

Early in the semester, I assigned students first a media diet paper and then a media fast paper. For the media diet, they had to record all media consumption over a 24-hour period and then reflect on it. For the media fast, they had to refrain from all electronic media (including their cell phones) for seven hours (the maximum amount of time they felt it was physically possible) and then reflect on the experience.

I compiled some of their answers to the media fast in this video:

[http://www.youtube.com/user/donicajean?feature=mhee#p/a/u/1/mlIGJzak\\_YM](http://www.youtube.com/user/donicajean?feature=mhee#p/a/u/1/mlIGJzak_YM)

(Note from Sue Ellen: If for whatever reasons you choose not to use this assignment, it is still well worth the time to show the video as a launch-pad for discussion on the topic of digital media consumption.) They have used their two assignments as touchstones throughout the semester. It was a good self-awareness exercise.

-- Donica Mensing, University of Nevada-Reno

### *Free writing and an oral history project*

I have gone back to free writing at the start of class (introductory reporting). The idea is to get students away from their laptops/iPads and their Blackberrys. It's just to get them to limber up and get their brains going. Sometimes I switch it to more directed writing. This is something that could turn into a blog post.

We also did an oral history project since earlier this month was the



Compiled by  
Sue Ellen Christian  
CCJIG Teaching Chair

40th anniversary of the founding of the country. The theme there was: Sight-Sound-Story. They had to interview folks who were around in 1971 when the British let go and the U.A.E. arose. They had to write a story, shoot photography and get digital sound. I think it worked pretty well. One student interviewed a woman who is 107 years old. Good stuff

--David Bulla, Zayed University, Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates

### *For an introduction to mass media course*

I've wanted to require a research paper forever but the size is prohibitive to getting them graded, so we did research posters this time. I let students pair up and then charged them to do the same research they'd do for a paper and then present the research visually on posters.

The final six class sessions we did something like a high-density session at AEJ: 5-minute presentations for each of the five groups that day and then some walk-around time. Students not presenting that day filled out feedback sheets and we gave out awards at the end of the semester for best poster. It's not the rigor of a paper but it was a great way to let them apply what they

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# Teaching moments

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learned to a particular topic.

--Jeremy J. Littau, *Lehigh University*

## *Teaching tweets*

My best assignment the fall semester was sending my students to live Tweet from an event on campus. It was challenging for them and we had a great discussion at the end of the semester about whether Twitter is a legitimate journalistic tool. All of them had smart phones so they were able to use those to do the tweeting.

Also, our campus has wireless in the presentation spaces so that helped. The only thing I will change for next semester is to increase the minimum number of Tweets to 30 from each event.

--Kirsten A. Johnson, *Elizabethtown College*

## *An accuracy survey as teaching tool and community outreach*

Our journalism students here are producing regular online content for the Albany (NY) Times Union, the most widely circulated newspaper in our market.

They have provided us "blog" space but we are producing journalism in that space. Fall semester, Journalism II students conducted an accuracy survey to measure the validity of content on the blog, which now has some 190 stories published since its inception in February 2010.

This excerpt from a published story shows the results: "This semester, Journalism II students at Saint Rose conducted an accuracy check of content on The Pine Hills blog. The goal was to measure the accuracy of student reported stories. Students mailed letters to 18 random sources from 159 stories published on the blog. Recipients received a short survey with a self-addressed stamped envelope.

"As of Nov. 11, some 67 percent of the surveys were completed and returned. Only one inaccuracy, a misspelled name, was reported by a source, after which, a correction was posted. Another source indicated that pertinent information was omitted from a story. That information was later added.

"In addition, one-third of respondents indicated they were satisfied with the reporting by student journalists. Ninety-two percent of respondents said they would welcome another interview." (See: <http://bit.ly/sWdfi7>)

In addition, we held a community meeting at the local library to collect feedback from members of the neighborhood we write about. (See: <http://bit.ly/rvGbNn>)

--Cailin Brown, *The College of Saint Rose*

## *For graduate level discussion of civic/citizen journalism and technology*

In a new master's class on Social Change and Communication Technology, we used the following three pieces to talk about what role journalism may be playing in getting citizens involved in shaping news (Book chapters: "Madison Commons 2.0: A Platform for Tomorrow's Civic and Citizen Journalism," Sue Robinson, et al. Or "User-Generated Content and Journalistic Values," Jane Singer & Ian Ashman) or in using journalistic tools to promote social change (Journal article: "Digital Communication Networks and the Journalistic Field: The 2005 French Riots," (2007) Adrienne Russell).

A highlight: Russell's journal article seemed to allow for more prompting of the class to discuss how much the leveraging of technology really changes journalism practice. Russell makes some pretty strong claims that mobile technology use during the French riots clearly shows that the field of practice of journalism is already being greatly shaped by the public.

That is quite a strong -- and apparently overreaching -- comment to make (especially for 2005, but even for now). Russell does this at the same time that she applied Bourdieu's field theory, which would seem to invalidate a lot of her assertion since Bourdieu maintains that fields of practice have long-standing dispositions that are slow to change.

--Burton St. John III, *Old Dominion University*

# Second survey next month

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Talk of a new name began at the CCJIG members' meeting in St. Louis last August. Following a discussion of why the number of quality papers submitted to our interest group was so low, several people at the meeting pointed out that it may be because of our name. Some newer members to the group pointed out that the current name may not resonate with those in graduate school or newly minted Ph.D.'s.

The Civic Journalism Interest Group (as it was first known) was founded in 1994. In 2005 the current name of the group, Civic and Citizen Journalism, was adopted.



**Left, small groups of students at the University of Ryukyus quietly discuss media. Right, Glenn Scott with students, has had new experiences in cross-cultural teaching.**

## Teaching methods can adapt to the culture

**By Glenn Scott**  
**PF&R Chair**

The college landscape was new. Instead of life amid the oaks at my school in North Carolina, I was adapting to the banyans and island breezes in Okinawa.

But higher education isn't always so foreign. So standing in front of a class of 20 students at the University of the Ryukyus, I explained that we would break into small learning groups to promote thinking and discussion. Just like we do back home.

My Japanese students looked up and nodded.

Most American students relish small groups. They often tell me they learn best that way. One-way lectures bore, they say. Student presentations waste their time and force illicit texting. Response papers are just so inky when printers expire on deadline, which is nearly always. But small groups are built on that promising pedagogical notion of lively chat.

You learn by talking.

This method seemed just right. As a visiting Fulbright lecturer teaching about the media, here was a chance to make a connection. The small-group communication, after all, could reveal the same dynamics as the participatory activity we're seeking in digital journalism. This exercise could demonstrate that.

What I wanted from my Okinawa class was simply this: Talk a lot, in English, and experience the way the multiple flows might enrich understanding. First we'd watch a video segment from the 60 Minutes website. Then the students would talk. It was a good idea, and at the end I'd make my big point.

Ah ha! See what you've done? This is what the media will be doing more often.

Just like in a mediated forum, we needed to train our attention on the subject. I handed out a sheet with questions, 14 of them. This is something else I've learned from American students (and from studying reader comments).

Without direction – shall we call it moderation? – they'll veer in no time into thoughtless, even abusive, talk.

But this was Japan, guided by a different set of cultural practices. They didn't need 14 questions. Two would have been fine. And the problem wasn't idle, aimless talk. It was prodding them to say anything.

Colleagues had advised that in a Japanese classroom, there is no point in asking if students have questions. They probably do, but they will never ask them. It would be a concession that they had missed a point or failed to pay attention.

My small groups had that same ring of silence. Before any student could volunteer a point, all had to study the questions with great care, eyes glued to those hundreds of English words – 14 questions! I might as well have handed them a Norton Anthology.

Never mind about animated chat as a learning tool. I just wanted them to talk and broke in to promise they could pick just a few questions. After several minutes, a few polite discussions began. The talk was soft, measured, never louder than the next group's. I admired the whole, quiet experience – a most cerebral small-group episode.

What worried them about the news segment? Mainly the lack of science. How could 60 Minutes report facts simply by letting a source spout out his own, nonempirical ideas? Where, they asked, was the confirmation?

Hmm, yeah. Good point. I had a feeling I didn't need to underscore the problem of aimless comments in media forums. So we left the exercise there. They learned a little about popular U.S. TV documentaries; I discovered a lot more about applying my presumptions to cross-cultural teaching.

It was a new way to participate, and I'm still trying to adjust, quietly.

*Scott is spending this school year as a Fulbright visiting lecturer at the University of the Ryukyus in Okinawa, Japan.*

# Russia, Norway

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Khlebnikova said there are some “mutual aspirations” to cooperate more, but traditional journalists think citizen-produced information can be unreliable.

One area where Internet-based citizen journalism has had a large impact on Russian civil society, both said, relates to the recent protests there. “Citizen journalists played a huge role in development and realization of the protests (that were held) because of elections in the State Duma and presidential elections,” Khlebnikova said.

Klepova noted that citizen journalists also helped to organize a boycott of an oil company after its chief executive managed to avoid being tried despite accusations of involvement in a fatal car accident.

As it has in other locations, such as

the Arab Spring across Northern Africa and the Middle East, social media has played a major role.

“The current activity that young people are showing in the Internet is very high,” Klepova said. “Their creative approach and alternative view on the events appeal to society.”

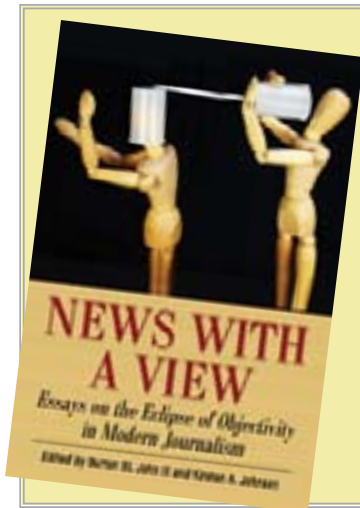
Meanwhile, several hundred miles to the west in Norway, local papers and at least one journalism association are working on public journalism projects reminiscent of those in the prime days of U.S. practice a decade or so ago. The largest paper in Norway, Oslo’s *Aftenposten*, has started a project called Better Town consisting of a citizens’ panel meant to provide the public’s opinion on town-development questions such as traffic and weekend crime.

“Public journalism is not, and never has been, a widespread movement in Norway,” according to Helen

Frøyseth, who conducts academic and editorial activities for a 114-member newspaper association based in Oslo called Landslaget for Lokalaviser (LLA).

But Frøyseth’s group is about to start pilot projects at three of its papers. “The local papers are close to people and they are good at letting people being heard; this is why we believe that a public journalism project in the local papers can succeed,” she said in an e-mail interview.

Citizen journalism is also just starting to take root in Norway. The paper *Firda*, for example, is working to encourage citizen contributions via the Internet, including pages devoted to reporting on individual communities. “People are also starting new Internet-sites for their communities, without help from the paper,” Frøyseth said.



## Book examines objectivity, features civic/citizen journalism researchers

“News with a View, Essays on the Eclipse of Objectivity in Modern Journalism” will be issued by McFarland in summer 2012.

The book, edited by Burton St. John III and Kirsten A. Johnson, features researchers published in the civic and citizen journalism arena, including Seungahn Nah, Deborah Chung, David Michael Ryfe, John Hatcher, Serena Carpenter, Sharon Meraz

and editors Johnson and St. John III.

According to the McFarland website, the book “offers new examinations of how the traditional notion of objectivity is changing as professional journalists grapple with a rapidly evolving news terrain—one that has become increasingly crowded by those with no journalistic credentials.” For more information, visit <http://www.mcfarland-pub.com/book-2.php?id=978-0-7864-6589-7>

## Call for papers

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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 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 mapping, 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 questions to CCJIG Research Chair Burton St. John III ([bsaintjo@odu.edu](mailto:bsaintjo@odu.edu)).