

Innovation: A Journalist's Freedom and Responsibility

By **Francesca Carpentier**
North Carolina at Chapel Hill
PF&R Co-Chair

America is afraid for its economy. Businesses fear losing consumers, losing money, losing ground to newer and sleeker competitors. Consumers are worried about their own incomes, their own bottom lines, their community's status in the country, and their country's status in the world. What businesses and consumers both share in this moment in our economic history is a heightened uncertainty—and this uncertainty might hold the key to sustaining the journalism industry during this difficult time.

True, the journalism industry is faced with its own uncertainties, which include, among other things, uncertainty about the changing face of the media landscape. New technol-

ogies and new content sources appear to be continually rising, competing for the audience's attention. This competition is a legitimate concern to anyone who accepts that the media audience is largely driven to select certain media fare over others due to personal interest and convenience. However, audience members are often driven to these selections because they feel a need to reduce their own uncertainties—so that they can secure their personal well-being, navigate through their community, understand themselves in the greater context of society, and the like. Audience members are also attracted to novelty, we have learned from business and from journalism alike. Combining the innate need to reduce uncertainty via information seeking with the innate attraction to novelty, and we have a

See "Innovation," p. 4

HEAD NOTE

Part-Time Volunteer Firefighter

One of the things you never really understand about heading an organization like the MC&S Division of AEJMC is how many



Jennifer J. Henderson, Trinity Division Head

fires need to be put out in on any given day. Take one day last May for example:

Fire 1: Identifying Information in Research Papers.

As you probably know, the AEJMC Council of Divisions instituted a new rule this year that any research paper submitted for the national conference would be rejected if it contained identifiable information. Now this seems simple, right? A clear distinction. Well... it turned out to be much messier. Only two submitters included a name on the title page or in running paper headers. These were removed immediately. But man, many more – about 30% - contained identifying information in the Word program macros. If a submitter followed the "cleaning" process as requested he/she was usually fine.

SEE "HEAD NOTE," P. 3

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MC&S Boston Line-Up: A Grand Slam

By **Donnalyn Pompper**
Temple
Vice-Head

Wednesday, August 5, 2009

8:15 a.m. – 9:45 a.m.

High Density Refereed Research Panel

11:45 a.m. to 1:15 p.m.

Examining Social Issues in News and Communication

High Density Refereed Research Panel

3:15-4:45 p.m.

Issues and Agendas of Campaign 2008

Mini-Plenary PF&R Panel with Communication and Technology, and Cultural and Critical Studies Divisions, and Commission on the Status of Women

5:00-6:30 p.m.

Exploring the Mechanisms Underlying Agenda Setting

Research Panel with Magazine Division

Thursday, August 6, 2009

7:00 a.m. – 8:00 a.m.

MC&S Editorial Board Meeting

11:45 a.m.-1:15 p.m.

Advancing Inter-Ethnic, Interracial, and Gender Communication Research among Latinos, Asians, and African Americans

PF&R Panel with Minorities and Communication Division

1:30 – 3 p.m.

Scholar-to-Scholar Refereed Research Panel

3:15 – 4:45 p.m.

Youth, Communication and Politics

Refereed Research Panel

5:00 – 6:30 p.m.

Refereed Research Poster Session with Newspaper Division

6:45 – 8:15 p.m.

MC&S Member's Meeting

7:00 – 8 p.m.

MC&S Executive Meeting

Friday, August 7, 2009

8:15 – 9:45 a.m.

Promising Professors Workshop

Teaching Panel with Graduate Education Interest Group

11:45-3:15 p.m.

Reporting on Economics & Labor: Challenges, Criticisms, and Responsibilities

PF&R Panel with the Cultural and Critical Studies Division

12:15 p.m. to 1:30 p.m.

Refereed Research Scholar to Scholar

3:30-5 p.m.

How Effective Classroom 'Difference Training' Once Communication Students Enter the Workplace?

PF&R Panel with the Minorities and Communication Division

Saturday, August 8, 2009

8:15 – 9:45 a.m.

Incoming Officer Training

8:15 – 9:45 a.m.

Welcome to the New Millennium: Teaching Mass Media Courses Online and in Hybrid Formats

Teaching Panel with Communication and Technology Division

10:00 – 11:30 a.m.

Health, Information and Media

Refereed Research Panel

1:30 p.m. to 3 p.m.

Facing your Fears: Use (or Abuse) of Social Networking Sites

Refereed Research Panel

For a complete listing of all panel participants, please see the MC&S website: <http://aejmc.net/mcs/boston2009.pdf>

Pre-Conference Workshops

Tuesday, August 4, 2009

1 – 5 p.m.

Learning and Teaching Through the Lens of the Holocaust

Co-Sponsored with History Division and The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (Fee \$15)

Ann Millin and Joanna Wasserman, U.S.Holocaust Memorial Museum
Andrew Mendelson, Temple U

5:30-7:00 p.m.

Teaching the Introductory Mass Communication Course

2009 Distinguished Educator Award Winner: David Rubin, Syracuse
Barbara Barnett, Kansas U

Jennifer Fleming, California State U, Long Beach
Ralph Hanson, University of Nebraska – Kearney
Aaron Delwiche, Trinity U
Tim Wulfemeyer, San Diego State U

Top Quality Research Showcased in Boston

By **Cory L. Armstrong**
University of Florida
Research Co-Chair

With the amount of excellent scholarship being conducted within the Mass Communication & Society Division, attendees at any of our conference research sessions in Boston will undoubtedly be dazzled.

As the division with the most submissions, my co-chair and I had several opportunities to showcase strong research in our sessions this year. Therefore, from our poster sessions to our research panels and high density sessions, the research being presented this year in all venues is top quality.

In programming our sessions, we attempted to group papers by topics in both our poster sessions and research panels. This strategy

allows those interested in particular areas to find multiple papers with a singular focus. From social networking site analysis to media ownership to political communication, we're showcasing papers in a broad spectrum this year.

In particular, we employed a high density session and an extra poster session (in addition to S2S and four research panels) to allow us to accept 83 papers this year. The poster session includes 40 papers, including some of the top papers in the division. Presenters in the poster session have also been assigned a discussant so that they, too, will receive individual feedback on their scholarship.

So please plan to attend our research sessions to enjoy the work being completed by your colleagues and peers.

HEAD NOTE

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But, the cleaning instructions were not available for Windows Vista Word programs. So...what to do?

The MC&S policy on identifiable information was quickly reviewed. To all of us it made perfect sense to eliminate individuals from competition if their paper had names on the title page, in the abstract, or in running heads throughout the document but much less sense to penalize individuals from not knowing how to remove identifiable information from document macros without supplying the appropriate "cleaning" software.

Fire 2: Individual Electronic Access to the MCS Journal. I received an e-mail from AEJMC headquarters saying that our new journal publisher, Taylor and Francis, had sent an invoice for payment. As we usually make money with the journal rather than spend it, this invoice set off alarm bells. We were being charged for individual electronic subscriptions to the journal whether or not members used this service. Upon closer examination, we found that only a handful of members - literally- were using the individual subscription access option but we were paying for hundreds of electronic subscriptions. Our members, and thousands of other researchers, access the journal through database systems, but very, very few through individual electronic subscriptions. In reality, our members were already getting access to the journal when they needed it without the individual electronic accounts.

After consultation with the past three MC&S division heads, we were able to identify and concur on using an "opt out" clause in the addendum to halt individual electronic access via personal e-mail addresses.

SEE "HEAD NOTE," P. 5

Innovation Needed in Content, Too

PF&R

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strong invitation to journalists to be innovative in their craft.

Interestingly, when the media industry writes about innovation, it tends to focus on infrastructure and dissemination aspects. From the broadcast side (see *Broadcasting & Cable* magazine online, for example), one can find reports on debates regarding support of digital technology innovation versus protection of studio production content, as well as innovation in connecting DVR users to advertising content versus retaining consumer control. One can also find reports of converged media plans, most recently centered on use of wireless technologies and online social media venues to deliver news content. Published discussions regarding newspaper innovation are similar, in that these discussions focus on online migration and convergence issues. Whereas it is heartening to see these conversations in a public forum, it is at the same time disheartening that there is little discussion about innovation in the actual content.

Why aren't we talking about content innovation? After all, audiences must be

attracted to the content in order to sign up to receive the content in these new innovative ways. Researchers can help fuel this conversation by communicating their experimentations with quality, story structure, peripheral additions, and the like to journalists, who can then choose which innovations to test with their own audiences. However, given this period of heightened uncertainty, journalists have a prime opportunity to do their own experimentations with content, so long as this content is informative and novel. It is certainly the journalist's freedom to explore new ways of writing and packaging content in a way that preserves the integrity and quality of the profession and fills the needs of the audience. Perhaps it is also the journalist's responsibility to take these opportunities to move the industry forward by finding new and interesting ways to tell stories. And perhaps it is the responsibility of the journalism educators to foster in future professionals the creative thinking and courage it takes to mold the changing face of the industry into a face that continues to represent the professional standards we hold dear.

Want to Get Involved? The Time is Now!

IMMEDIATE
PAST HEAD

By Diana Martinelli
West Virginia

Have you ever wondered how you can get more involved in AEJMC? It's easy: Just let us know of your interest. Whether you're drawn to teaching, research, convention programming, communications, or professional freedom, responsibility and ethics, there's a role you can play in our division.

If you're not sure what it entails, don't worry. We've devised a co-chair system to help new officers adjust and learn while doing. In addition, it's been my experience during the past eight years of service that previous officers also are willing to help and mentor newer ones.

MC&S uses an open call for officer nominations to ensure anyone who's interested in serving has the opportunity to do so. To be placed on the ballot, simply follow these steps: 1) Contact me via email (Diana.Martinelli@mail.wvu.edu) by August 1 and indicate which position you're interested in holding. (See the back page of the newsletter for a complete officer list.), 2) Await contact from a current officer to discuss the position/s in which you've expressed interest, and make plans to attend our division's business meeting (scheduled for Thursday, Aug. 6 at 6:45 p.m.), where a nominations slate will be presented to members, and a vote will be taken.

Taylor and Francis to Expand Journal

RESEARCH

By **Stephen Perry**
Editor-in-Chief, MCS

Big news for Mass Communication and Society arrived in early May when Taylor and Francis gave us official word that the journal is moving from four to five issues per year with a corresponding page increase from 480 to 600 beginning in 2010. This will help reduce some publication backlog and will support the increased submissions.

We averaged one manuscript per day in winter submissions, a 35% increase over 2008. The average turnaround time for a final decision on a manuscript is 77 days since Associate Editors were added.

At the 2009 convention we will propose adding a section to the journal's bylaws to provide up to three Associate Editors an annual stipend of \$1,000, paid from the journal account. The journal's financial balance continues to increase annually.

3rd Special Symposium

A theme had been selected for the 2010 MCS Symposium. It is, "The Facebook Election: New Media and the 2008 Election Campaign." Guest editors are Tom Johnson from Texas Tech and Dave Perlmutter from the University of Kansas. The full call for symposium papers can be found at <http://aejmc.net/mcs/paper-panel.php>. Papers will be due on January 12, 2010. Manuscripts should state that they are for the symposium and should be submitted at www.mc.manuscriptcentral.com/mcas.

Upcoming Topics

Issue 12.3 of Mass Communication and Society will feature articles on the portrayal of race and occupation on prime time media, news credibility, violence in sports and video games, and community structure.

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In the end, more good than harm will come from this decision – protecting both the division's budget and our member's privacy.

Fire three: Programming mishaps. As part of the convention planning process each year, staff at the AEJMC national office put together a program preview and registration materials that include detailed information about division offsite visits and preconference sessions. Unfortunately, the MC&S materials were misplaced at headquarters so there were no mentions of MC&S events in the materials or on the registration forms this year. The way to quiet the flames in this case was to plan as best we could. The preconference workshop on How to Teach the Introductory Mass Communication course with GEIG and our preconference with the History Division on Propaganda and the Holocaust will still go on as planned. In fact, AEJMC staffers have done an excellent job of helping us promote these two pre-conference panels. But the offsites just had to be canceled.

I take these fires very seriously. Their solutions directly affect the tenure and promotion, research path, and professional work of our members. But, I have never put out a fire alone. Honestly, I am the luckiest volunteer fire chief in the whole association. I get to work with some of the best firefighters in all of AEJMC. They make me look good every day. I encourage you to join the MC&S volunteer fire department. The benefits always outweigh the stressors and your partners in the officer corps are truly "Medal of Honor" worthy.

2009 Research Award Winners

RESEARCH



By Michael McCluskey
*The Ohio State University
Research Co-Chair*

Efforts by volunteer judges made the refereed paper competition in MC&S a success. Full credit goes to the 97 reviewers who graded manuscripts and drafted thoughtful comments.

Of the 175 submissions, the division accepted 83 papers, a 47% acceptance rate. In 2008, the division had 150 submissions and accepted 74.

The division's top paper, "Political Consumerism and Youth Citizenship: The Development of Identity Politics Among Tweens and Teens," was by Melissa Gotlieb, Kyurim Kyoung, Itay Gabay and Dhavan Shah from the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

The top student paper was by Myiah Hively of the Ohio State University, titled "Creating a Measure of News Mediation:

How do Parents Talk about the News?"

The Moeller Award, for the top student paper submitted for a class, went to Zhang Yin and Tang Shing Tung from Chinese University of Hong Kong for "Why and How Facebook Satisfies You: Collective Self-Esteem, Emotional Openness, Communication Apprehension as Predictors of Facebook Uses and Gratifications." Their paper was written for a class taught by Louis Leung.

"Media and Social Change" was the topic of the special call competition, with the winner "The Effects of Health Message Vividness on Attitudes Toward Students with ADHD," by Michael Barthel, Philip Johnson, Jinghui Hou, Yujing Ma and David Crider of Syracuse University.

Midwinter Conference a Resounding Success

RESEARCH

By Janet A. Bridges
*Sam Houston State
Midwinter Chair*

Mass Communication and Society received 42 abstract submissions and one panel submission for this year's Midwinter Conference at Norman Oklahoma. We were able to accept the panel, "Understanding Journalism and Trauma: An Overview of New Scholarship," and 20 of the papers, with five included in each research session. The panels were:

The Political and the Legal
News Media: The Issues Old and New
Special Populations and Media
The Personal, the Commercial and the Virtual

Former AEJMC head Charles Self moderated the panel discussion, a combination of information from psychology and from journalistic sources. The primary on this, Elana Newman from Tulsa, is working with trauma in many different professions.

Lauren Reichart, MC&S Graduate Student Liaison, and Peter Gade and Meta Carstarphen at Oklahoma, helped out as discussants/moderators for the research sessions. All the moderators and discussants were able to keep a lively – on target - discussion moving, especially among the students.

Rubin Receives Distinguished Educator Award



By **Frank Dardis**
*Penn State
 Teaching Co-chair*

The MC&S Division is proud to announce that David M. Rubin, Professor in the S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications at Syracuse University, is the recipient of the 2009 Distinguished Educator Award. Rubin undoubtedly is an educator whose “personal teaching excellence and influence on pedagogy in the field is profound,” as the announcement for the award nomination says. Rubin taught at NYU from 1971-1990 before going to Syracuse, where he has been ever since. In addition to his teaching commitments there, Rubin served as Dean of the S.I. Newhouse School from 1990-2008.

One of the more telling examples of Rubin’s constant commitment to his students at Syracuse is the fact that every year he continues to teach the freshman introduction course in the fall semester and the senior media law course in the spring, a schedule he has followed since his arrival. According to several of his nominators, even during his tenure as dean, Rubin saw himself no different than any other professor. This included availing himself exclusively to his students during his mandatory office hours, during which no faculty or staff members were allowed to meet with him.

His vast accomplishments related to course planning, curriculum development, graduate education, and peer mentorship are far too many to mention. Rest assured that he truly is a Distinguished Educator in every sense of the award. Therefore, the MC&S Division gladly recognizes and congratulates Dr. Rubin as an educator who certainly has had a tremendous pedagogical impact on our field.

Promising Professors to be Honored in Boston

Every year, the MC&S Division and Graduate Education Interest Group honor our best and brightest teachers during the Promising Professors Awards Panel & Workshop at the AEJMC national convention. In addition to being recognized at the workshop, competition winners also share their experiences, advice and insights about teaching. This year’s session in Boston, which includes a continental breakfast, is scheduled from 8:15-9:45 a.m. on Friday, Aug. 7. Come on out to hear what these excellent educators have to say!

The Promising Professors competition is held annually. Faculty who have taught no more than five years full-time and graduate students who have primary responsibility for teaching at least one course are eligible to enter. All entrants must be members of the MC&S Division. In addition to participating in the workshop at the annual convention, winners are awarded cash prizes. For more information about the competition, please visit the MC&S Division’s Teaching webpage: <http://aejmc.net/mcs/teaching.php>.

2009 Promising Professor Competition Winners

First Place:

David Cullier, Arizona

Second Place:

Kevin Williams, Mississippi State

Third Place:

Sue Robinson, Wisconsin-Madison

Graduate Student Winner:

Jennette Lovejoy, Ohio

2008-2009 Executive Committee

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Show Your MC&S Spirit!

To show our pride in MC&S and let other attendees see our strength and diversity, MC&S stickers will be available in the registration area and throughout the conference. Pick one up! Stick it on your badge! Show AEJMC how many, how active and how amazing our members are!

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