

Participatory Journalism Interest Group 2013-2014 Annual Report

Officers:

Head

Melissa Tully, University of Iowa

Co-Vice Heads

Glenn Scott, Elon University

Seth Lewis, University of Minnesota

Secretary

Mark Poepsel, Southern Illinois University-Edwardsville

PF & R Committee Chair

Avery Holton, University of Utah

Research Committee Chair

Liz Viall, Eastern Illinois University

Teaching Committee Co-Chairs

Mary Lou Nemanic, Pennsylvania State University-Altoona

Anne Hoag, Penn State University

Communications Chair

Jeremy Littau, Lehigh University

Webmaster

Jeff South, Virginia Commonwealth University

Graduate Student Liaison

Mark Coddington, University of Texas-Austin

AEJMC Demographic Information for 2013-14

Year: 13-14	Officers	2013 Annual Conference Sessions				Mid-Year Meetings				Total
		Paper Judges	Panelists	Moderators	Discussants	Paper Judges	Panelists	Moderators	Discussants	
Male (tot.)	7	17	21	4	1	2	1		1	54
Amer. Indian/ Alaska Native										0
Asian			4							4
Black/ African American										0
Hispanic/ Latino										0
International		1	2							3
Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Is.										0
White		12	14	4	1	2	1		1	35
Multi-racial										0
Female (tot.)	4	3	16	1	1	1	2			28
Amer. Indian/ Alaska Native										0
Asian		1	2		1					4
Black/ African American										0
Hispanic/ Latino										0
International										0
Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Is.										0
White		2	13	1		1	2			19
Multi-racial										0
Did not report		4	2							6
Total:	11	20	37	5	2	3	3	0	1	

Assessment and Goals

3. Please provide an overall statement weighting the division or interest group's activities for this year in the Research, Teaching and PF&R areas. The new assessment process recognizes that the relative weighting of these three activities will be different from year to year, but over the five-year reporting period, the three areas should receive generally balanced attention.

The Participatory Interest Group has actively pursued activities related to research, teaching and PF&R. Between the 2013 and 2014 conferences, we programmed innovative and exciting sessions in all three areas. We also participated in the mid-winter conference this year with one research session.

Last year, we programmed one co-sponsored research panel, one co-sponsored teaching panel, and two co-sponsored PF&R panels. This year, we programmed one co-sponsored research panel, two co-sponsored teaching panels, and one PF&R co-sponsored panel. The diversity of our programming is strong and reflects different aspects of "participatory journalism." We feel that we have used our co-sponsorships effectively to work with other divisions and interest groups and to give time and energy to teaching and PF&R, as well as quality research.

Our refereed research sessions have also been high-quality in the past two years. We're very pleased with this year's submissions and the 2014 conference is shaping up to be a great first conference with our new name.

4. Please write a bullet-point statement (500 word maximum), to be co-authored by the outgoing and incoming Heads, addressing:

- ***What are your most important goals for the upcoming year?***
 - Develop an outreach plan to communicate better with graduate school programs, where much of the research on participatory journalism is taking place. We should aim to solicit interest directly in our group and research areas through targeted messages to graduate schools. Scholars tend to stay with their established interests. Hence, the interest in our research area, given its relatively recent emergence, has tended to be among younger members of the academy. We can accomplish two valuable functions by helping to seed research ideas in general and by building a more robust research base for our interest group. Informing grad students of our research paper competition might promote more submissions for our conferences. We have a Graduate Student Liaison position within our IG. This person could be tasked with this mission.

- More actively connect the teacher-scholars in our interest group with professionals engaged in forms of participatory journalism. This will help to freshen and sustain research and to build important bridges between practitioners and academics. We can aim to make connections by encouraging our members to attend professional gatherings and by inviting professionals to join in our panel discussions.
- Revise our social media policies and practices. We often have vowed during member meetings to get far more engaged in our social media platforms, sharing ideas and exercising skills in exactly the digital forms that are often the center of our research (see the note below about the Communications Chair position). But once conferences end and faculty members return to their hectic academic schedules, our best-intended goals tend to be overwhelmed by the realities of our daily tasks. We can investigate methods that might serve our purposes more directly and allow for a sustained level of social media contact among members and others. This is more ambitious than it may seem. But we should at least generate an extensive discussion as we seek opportunities and solutions. Given the function we aim to study, we also should seek social media engagements – a development that could energize our group and yield additional benefits for our students.
- Monitor legal and legislative actions that carry implications for participatory journalism. As our field moves so quickly, we need to keep our members in the communications loop. We can ask our PF&R chair to perform this service.

- ***What goals did your group set this year that you were unable to reach? Why?***

Goals Met:

- Goal: Increase the number of high quality paper submissions that address a diversity of topics that fall under participatory journalism. *(Successful: Received 20 submissions and scheduled two refereed research sessions and a full scholar-to-scholar session)*
- Goal: Continue to promote the name change from Civic and Citizen Journalism Interest Group to the Participatory Journalism Interest Group. Update our materials to reflect and promote the name change. *(Successful: We have used PJIG in all our materials and our submissions reflected that submitters understand our new name and focus)*
- Goal: Develop a stronger social media presence and strategy. We currently have a Facebook page with 34 “likes” and no Twitter

account. Our goal is to increase our engagement on Facebook and to start a Twitter account for sharing relevant information and stories regarding “participatory journalism” teaching, research and practice. *(Successful: Although we still have room for improvement, we were more effective using social media this year and will continue to invest in Facebook and Twitter.)*

- Goal: With the money saved from no longer traveling to the winter meeting for the chip auction, develop additional paper (e.g. Top Poster) or travel awards (e.g. graduate student travel award for Top Paper winner). *(Successful: We created a second-place student paper award and a top poster award, both with cash prizes.)*
- Goal: In light of points #3 and 4, we propose creating a Communications Chair to replace the Newsletter Editor position. This person would be responsible for updating the blog and social media accounts and the e-newsletter. *(Successful: We created this position and filled it at last year’s meeting. However, we were not successful in updating the blog more often – see comment below)*

Goals Not Met:

- Goal: Update the CCJIG blog more often. We need to continue to develop interesting and relevant content to keep members engaged with the group. *(Unsuccessful: We did not keep the blog updated. The task was part of the Communications Chair position but relied on content from other Chairs, which was lacking.)*
- *How may any or all of the Standing Committees help you to achieve your goals in the coming year?*
 - We don’t require any extra attention in this area, but hope to keep our relationship with the committees strong and productive.

Research

5. *Number of faculty research paper submissions 11; number of acceptances 5; 55%.*

6. *Number of student research paper submissions 9; number of acceptances 7; 77%.*

7. *Overview of judging process.*

The Research Committee Chair approached judges from previous years and sent out calls for judges on PJIG Facebook and listserv. PJIG used the standard judging matrix offered by AEJMC to rate paper submissions.

8. Total # of judges 25; #2-3 papers per judge.

9. Did your group conduct any other type of refereed competition?

No

10. Please list your in convention activities related to research.

With our name change to Participatory Journalism Interest Group now in place, the group had enough paper entries to schedule two full referred paper research sessions and a full (4) poster session. The papers selected for presentation included several strong student entries. We also scheduled a research panel entitled "Defining emergent journalistic behaviors," co-sponsored with the Community Journalism IG, which focuses on explicating key concepts in our field: citizen journalism, civic journalism, participatory journalism, etc.

In addition, we added a poster award, which will be judged at the convention. The winner will receive a cash prize.

11. Please list your out-of-convention activities related to research.

PJIG supported the mid-winter conference with one paper session featuring two student papers and one faculty paper.

12. Please describe briefly the research goals and activities of your division. Such description may include discussion of primary accomplishments, programming diversity, special competitions, faculty/student research awards, newsletter activities and other activities.

PJIG has been concerned about the number of paper submissions to the annual conference and hoped the name change to Participatory Journalism Interest Group would clarify our area and prompt more entries that fit the IG's scope. We were delighted to see submissions go up and see that many submissions were from student researchers. Submissions this year were 20; in 2013 there were 16 submissions; in 2012 there were 22; in 2011 there were 17. We had an acceptance rate of 60% this year and no papers were disqualified.

In addition, we have expanded our awards this year to include a second-place student paper award with a cash price and a top poster (scholar-to scholar) award with a cash price. These awards should incentivize people to submit to our IG and allow us to highlight exemplary research in our area.

Teaching

13. Please list your in-convention activities related to teaching. Describe how these activities fulfill one or more of the Teaching Standards Committee's focus on curriculum, leadership, course content and teaching methods, or assessment.

The goals of our interest group, curriculum, leadership and course content, were fulfilled through programming at the 2013 annual convention. Our group co-sponsored with the Newspaper and Online News Group a panel on "Best practices/lessons in the teaching of participatory journalism," which focused on how to teach the students who soon will be thrust into leadership positions in this effort. This session assembled leading teachers of participatory journalism and engagement.

For the 2014 conference, we have two teaching panels scheduled: "Google Glass in the Classroom" and "Best Practices in Participatory Journalism." The Google Glass session features journalism professors who were chosen to test the device while it was still in beta. They were all picked for the Glass Explorer program, meaning they got their hands on the prototype device before the general public release. By the 2014 conference, they will have had two semesters to use it in classes and push students to test the bounds of the device, and they also will have some troubleshooting war stories to share. Panelists will focus on what they did in classes and share examples. They'll discuss what worked and what didn't so that others can learn from their failures and successes. And, they'll offer curriculum ideas and introduce attendees to a shared web space hosting syllabi, curriculum, and discussion on Glass and journalism education. The Best Practices teaching panel is geared both to those who teach the skills necessary for participatory journalism and those who teach about participatory journalism as a phenomenon of this digital age. The panel will cover an array of topics and issues related to best practices including basic skills, encouraging more news images from non-journalists, the role of social media, volunteer engagement and management, teaching journalism to non-journalist contributors, and resources and tools for participatory journalism.

14. Please list your out-of-convention activities related to teaching. Describe how these activities fulfill one or more of the Teaching Standards Committee's focus on curriculum, leadership, course content and teaching methods, or assessment.

Teaching Committee co-chair Mary Lou Nemanic also wrote an article on teaching participatory journalism that included related online resources. Co-chair Anne Hoag is in the process of organizing a syllabus exchange available for interest group members. She has set up a WordPress site and is gathering syllabi to post.

Description of the syllabus exchange: Given growing interest in teaching participatory journalism, in 2014 we began gathering teaching resources for a [blog](#). Members are asked to contribute syllabi and other teaching materials by posting

them directly to the blog or sending them to Anne Hoag at Penn State. We are compiling a spreadsheet of institutions that teach participatory journalism and related topics including entrepreneurial journalism, innovation in journalism, and citizen journalism. It will be shared at the teaching resource site as well to foster more idea exchange. Ideas and feedback are absolutely welcome and much needed!"

15. Please describe briefly the Teaching goals and activities of your division. Such description may include discussion of primary accomplishments, programming diversity, special competitions, faculty/student research awards, newsletter activities and other activities.

We hope our panels and initiatives will encourage faculty and students at institutions nationwide to foster scholarship, awareness, critical thinking, curriculum development, and original research in the field of participatory journalism. Through our innovative panels, which attract top scholars, teachers, and practitioners, we hope to push the boundaries of participatory journalism research, teaching and practice.

PF&R

16. Please list your in-convention activities related to PF&R. Describe how these activities fulfill one or more of the PF&R Committee's focus on free expression, ethics, media criticism & accountability, racial, gender and cultural inclusiveness, or public service. Include a list of non-member invited convention speakers with names and affiliations.

Our PF&R panels focus on the ideals, norms, practices, and incorporations of the public into the process of journalism as well as the implications of each on news and information sharing, journalism, and society. Over the last several years, we have worked to explore unique areas related to these endeavors through a variety of panels. Last year's panel, "Block by Block: Participatory Urban Journalism in a Changing Media Landscape," focused on the current and changing forms of hyperlocal journalism. Panelists discussed emerging trends in citizen-produced journalism, changing norms and expectations of the profession, and the roles of race and culture in the news process. This year's PF&R panel is co-sponsored by the Law & Policy Division and is titled "Acts of Journalism And Acts of Congress: Media Policy and Participatory Journalism." Panelists will engage with legal and ethical issues related to participatory news practices, focusing specifically on issues of privacy, news creation, and the use of new innovations in reporting.

17. Please list your out-of-convention activities related to PF&R. Describe how these activities fulfill one or more of the PF&R Committee's focus on free expression, ethics, media criticism & accountability racial, gender and cultural inclusiveness, or public service.

We have continued to promote PF&R concerns through our Facebook page, which offers a platform for discussing a range of issues related to participatory journalism ranging from citizen journalists covering natural disasters to the use of Google Glass for the capture and sharing of news and information, an issue which continues to raise ethical, legal, and practical concerns for journalism.

18. Please describe briefly PF&R goals and activities of your division. Such description may include discussion of primary accomplishments, programming diversity, special competitions, faculty/student research awards, newsletter activities and other activities.

Our primary PF&R goals are to build bridges with the professional community by improving the quality and diversity of PF&R programming at the annual AEJMC convention, seeking to offer panels of relevance to scholars and practitioners alike while opening up broad conversations about participatory journalism. This includes a more concerted effort to recognize obvious points of intersection such as the professional interest in the laws and policies that guide participatory journalism and questions related to the successful integration of participatory journalism into the traditional and evolving processes of news. Going forward, we hope to expand our outreach to professionals and to continue bolstering relationships and ideas through our panels as well as other internal and external efforts.

General Information

19. Please attach copies of the newsletters sent by your group this year, and any other material you wish us to note.

Communication Chair (replaced Newsletter Editor position)

This year marked a departure from previous years in terms of how our group thinks about communication. In the past we have relied on newsletters as the sole tool for communication, and that has depended not only on skills and layout expertise to put it together but also assumes that readership was there without tracking. In addition, our blog went unused and our social media presence was nonexistent. Beginning in Fall 2013, we adopted a strategy of using social media and the blog as our primary communication tool, with the idea of using email as the way to publicize the social media accounts and give a roundup of communication efforts.

What we know is that on the social side the efforts were successful. Retweets for the Twitter material were often in the double digits, and Facebook analytics report our reach on posts often was between 75 and 100 users. We have gone from not being able to know what our level of engagement was with communications to having better access, and it is strong relative to our group membership numbers. Much of

this was possible because I was able to mass schedule content for Facebook and Twitter using social tools.

The blog and email efforts have gone less smoothly and remain a goal for next year. The big problem is my lack of time as communication chair as I have come closer to my tenure year. One thing this has revealed is that any system, whether a newsletter or using digital tools, is difficult to maintain if it depends on one person. In my case, with less time to give, I had to triage efforts around achievable goals.

My recommendations for my successor for the 2014-15 academic year are threefold. First, I would work to assign posting powers to the key chairs (head, vice head, research, PF&R, teaching) so they can directly post updates as necessary such as paper calls or links that are relevant to their areas. Second, let the communication chair then focus on content for the blog and an email digest that goes out to the group once a month, an email that publicizes new blog content and broadcasts the existence of the Twitter and Facebook accounts. Third, I'd recommend, that the new chair see their main job as curating the blog with content from chairs as well as generate original content specific to their area.

Long term, our goal should be to phase out email communication in favor of social, but for now I think we need to use email to make sure our social following grows. My experience in leadership in the group is that people often are annoyed by email from the listserv, so email is a less-perfect situation.