

CIVIC *and* CITIZEN Journalism

INTEREST GROUP NEWS

www.has.vcu.edu/civic-journalism
ccjig.blogspot.com

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Bring crowdsourcing to the classroom

By **Anne Golden Worsham**
CCJIG Secretary

We've all seen TV shows that re-enacted the heart-rending story of a child kidnapping or a horrific crime, followed by an announcer looking into the camera,

sharing a picture of the wanted criminal or missing child and asking the audience to help solve the case.

At this point, the audience members become a community of helpers and amateur detectives with heightened awareness of

the those around them.

A toll-free number is provided and the lines start buzzing as audience members call in with information, clues or hunches to help solve the mystery.

See CROWDSOURCING, page 2

Panel proposals for Denver 2010 due by Oct. 15

The Civic & Citizen Journalism Interest Group invites proposals for engaging panels for the 2010 AEJMC convention in Denver. Send them to Co-Vice Chair Deborah Chung (dchung@uky.edu) via e-mail with a Word attachment by Oct. 15.

Past panels have focused on blogging discourse, credibility of citizen journalism practices, citizen contributions and politics, user collaborative activities, community conversations in hyperlocal media, newsroom projects, practicing civic and citizen journalism in a multicultural environment, and teaching civic and citizen journalism.

Panel proposals for 2010 may address, but are not limited to, the following broad themes:

1. Emerging models and best

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CCJIG GOES TO BOSTON



Photo by Mary Beth Callie

Scott Allen, center, talks about his work covering health care as an investigative reporter for the *Boston Globe* Spotlight team during a panel on health care coverage sponsored by CCJIG at the AEJMC convention in Boston. Other panelists — behind Allen from left to right — were Benjamin Day, director, Mass-Care; Kay Lazar, reporter, *Boston Globe*; and Trudy Lieberman, director of the health and medical reporting program at the City University of New York Graduate School of Journalism (also a contributing editor, *Columbia Journalism Review*)

MORE CONVENTION COVERAGE INSIDE

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Crowdsourcing

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Crowdsourcing is a citizen journalism practice similar to this.

When using the technique, the journalist sends out a call to the community and asks for help on a story.

Defining Crowdsourcing

On his site Crowdsourcing.com, Wired Magazine contributing writer Jeff Howe gives a “white paper” definition of crowdsourcing as “the act of taking a job traditionally performed by a designated agent (usually an employee) and outsourcing it to an undefined, generally large group of people in the form of an open call.”

While this sounds like a corporate practice, it actually just involves reporters asking the community for help, but asking that the help come in a form different from the information gathering practices of yesterday.

“Crowdsourcing, in journalism, is the use of a large group of readers to report a news story,” writes Robert Niles on the Online Journalism Review Web site. “It differs from traditional reporting in that the information collected is gathered not manually, by a reporter or team of reporters, but through some automated agent, such as a website.”

However, you have to be careful about checking the accuracy of the information received. The Knight Citizen News Network’s guide to crowdsourcing cautions that reporters should “verify, verify, verify” even as the guide shares an example of crowdsourcing that helped investigative journalists to uncover a scam in their community.

For more on crowdsourcing

Knight Citizen News Network
<http://www.kcnn.org/tools/crowdsourcing>

The Online Journalism Review
“A journalist’s guide to crowdsourcing”
<http://www.ojr.org/ojr/stories/070731niles/>

Jeff Howe’s blog
<http://www.crowdsourcing.com/>

Nieman Journalism Lab
<http://www.niemanlab.org/2009/06/four-crowdsourcing-lessons-from-the-guardians-spectacular-expenses-scandal-experiment/>

Crowdsourcing in the Classroom

There are various ways you can teach crowdsourcing principles in the classroom.

After you define crowdsourcing, the students can find examples of this practice being used by news sources across the country. The students can use the cases highlighted in the Web sites listed in the accompanying box or find other examples.

You can also provide hands-on crowdsourcing experiences for your students in the classroom. You can use a Twitter feed to send out a puzzle to be solved and have them try to figure it out as an audience. You could also have the students brainstorm about all the different types of stories that could benefit from crowdsourcing and list the types of information that reporters could seek from the community.

Panels

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practices in teaching of civic/citizen journalism

2. Civic/citizen journalism conversations over health care legislation

3. Citizen-sponsored or citizen-involved journalism, particularly focused on environmental, health, and social issues.

4. Media convergence and using new tools to facilitate citizen journalism

5. Local/global practices and perceptions of civic/citizen journalism.

In general, address topics that are relevant to current discussions in journalism, politics, technology, democracy, or philosophy. Panels addressing issues of cultural and racial diversity are encouraged.

Your panel proposal should mention the following components in order: Type (i.e., PF&R, Teaching, Research), a tentative title, a possible moderator, the possible panelists (limit to three so we can work on linking with other interest groups and divisions), a brief description of the panel, possible co-sponsors (divisions or interest groups), and contact information. Also provide speaker demographic and funding estimates (see sample proposal).

Selected proposals are compiled into a single document, with proposals from other divisions and interest groups, in order to be considered for co-sponsorship and scheduling. Many will later be revised or expanded as part of the joint planning process.

A sample proposal is available at http://www.has.vcu.edu/civic-journalism/Sample_Panel_Proposal_09.doc

Member meeting covers various items

By Kirsten Johnson
CCJIG Co-Vice Chair

Members of the Civic and Citizen Interest Group met Aug. 6 at the AEJMC national convention in Boston for discussion of several items that affect the group's members.

This year leaders of both CCJIG and COMJIG (Community Journalism Interest Group) will examine whether to pursue division status within AEJMC. At the meeting pros and cons of pursuing division status were debated, but ultimately it was decided that more information needed to be collected. It was also decided that the leadership of both groups

needed to investigate this further and report back to the groups' membership at the national convention in 2010.

A change in policy as to who can submit papers to the interest group was adopted at the meeting. For the first time, CCJIG officers (except the CCJIG research chair) will be allowed to submit research papers to the CCJIG interest group; previously CCJIG officers were not allowed to submit papers to the interest group. This change is effective immediately and will apply to the 2010 conference in Denver. However, officers who submit a paper to CCJIG should not review papers for the interest group, but may feel free to

review papers in other interest groups/divisions.

Finally, in an attempt to save money and be more environmentally friendly the CCJIG newsletter is now being sent out as an electronic PDF to members rather than on paper.

For those who are new to CCJIG, interest group meetings are always held at the national convention. The meetings last about an hour and are a great way to get involved in the group and meet other people who are interested in teaching and research in the area of civic and citizen journalism. The time and date of the 2010 meeting will be in the convention program. We'd love to see you in Denver!

J-Lab luncheon features tales of news cooperation

By Cailin Brown
CCJIG Member

Beating the competition for stories is no longer the driving force in newspaper journalism. Now, it's all about building partnerships and finding ways to deliver and produce even better content with fewer resources.

To hear it from three editors actually orchestrating some complex alliances in their respective communities, it sounds like the industry is finally growing up. J-Lab's Boston luncheon meeting on "Civic News Networks" delivered firsthand tales of several experiments under way at three legacy news organizations: the

Cleveland Plain Dealer, the *Miami Herald*, and the *Albany (N.Y.) Times Union*.

Teachers in the audience readily recognized ways to apply in the classroom those business strategies shared by panelists Anders Gyllenhaal, of the *Herald*, Susan Goldberg of the *Plain Dealer* and Rex Smith of the *Times Union*. Much of this session focused on how these publications have cultivated untraditional methods of getting news to the audience.

Instead of fighting to publish the first images of a capsized boat off the coast of southern

Officers 2009-10

- Mary Beth Callie, Regis University, Chair; mcallie@regis.edu
- Kirsten Johnson, Elizabethtown (PA) College, Co-Vice Chair; johnsonka@etown.edu
- Deborah Chung, University of Kentucky, Co-Vice Chair; dchung@uky.edu
- Glenn Scott, Elon University, Research Chair; gscott3@elon.edu
- Sue Ellen Christian, Western Michigan, Teaching Chair, sueellen.christian@wmich.edu
- Anne Golden Worsham, Brigham Young, Secretary; anne-golden_worsham@byu.edu
- Newsletter Co-Editors: Jack Rosenberry, jrosenberry@sjfc.edu (Fall issue), Cheryl Gibbs; gibbscj@muohio.edu; (Spring and Summer issues)
- Jeff South, Virginia Commonwealth University, Webmaster; jcsouth@vcu.edu
- Jack Rosenberry, St. John Fisher College, Blog Administrator; jrosenberry@sjfc.edu

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Regionals offer venue for research

By Glenn Scott
CCJIG Research Chair

Busy researchers can look forward to submitting works to two regional conferences by December.

CCJIG will be among the sponsoring groups and divisions for the 2010 Mid-Winter Conference on Friday and Saturday, March 5 and 6, at the University of Oklahoma. The Midwinter requires proposals in the form of research abstracts of 300-500 words, with a Dec. 1 deadline. The official call can be found at <http://aejmc.org/talk/?p=1758>.

This will be the second straight year that OU's Gaylord College of Journalism and Mass Communication will be the conference host. Assistant Professor Elanie Steyn, a conference organizer, said most of the presentations will occur on Saturday, March 6.

CCJIG Research Co-Chair Glenn Scott will handle Mid-Winter proposals for our group. His e-mail address is gscott3@elon.edu.

CCJIG is not a sponsor of the Southeast Colloquium, to be held Thursday to Sunday, March 11 – 13, at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, but don't let that stop you from submitting. Five divisions

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CHAIR'S REPORT

Public journalism principles offer ideas for health debate

By Mary Beth Callie
CCJIG Chair

The Project for Excellence in Journalism (PEJ) has found that 55 percent of recent press coverage of health care has focused on political battles, 16 percent on protests, and 8 percent on substance. “What, really, I think,



surprises me... is how little coverage there is of how our health care system works,” PEJ director Tom Rosenstiel said on PBS' News Hour in late August. “What wrong with it, and what the alternatives could be, based on other countries, other systems, alternative programs in the United States.”

At the AEJMC annual convention in Boston this past August, members of a panel sponsored by CCJIG emphasized the need for more focus on how the health care system works as a business.

As contributing editor to the Columbia Journalism Review, Trudy Lieberman cited the strength of fellow panel members Kay Lazar's ongoing daily coverage for the Boston Globe and Scott Allen's award-winning investigation of Boston hospitals and health care policy, as part of the Globe Spotlight team. The Spotlight series prompted the

Your ideas sought

Have you encountered exemplary, citizen-centered coverage of health care issues or other civic/citizen based initiatives? Stories and resources that help readers understand core concepts, values, complexities, and possibilities for action? Send the examples to mcallie@regis.edu, for a special CCJIG blog page.

Massachusetts attorney general to investigate “whether the state's largest health insurance company and its largest health-care provider may have illegally colluded to increase the price of health insurance statewide” (Boston Globe, Jan. 23, 2009).

Lieberman and panelist Benjamin Day of the Mass-Care health advocacy coalition also described a February 2009 study of the Massachusetts health reform model, by Public Citizen and Physicians for a National Health Care Program. The study found that while big hospitals and insurers had profited from reform, people had been directly affected in less beneficial ways, by unaffordable premiums or lack of access to care.

That health care as business tends to be overlooked and underplayed can be explained, in

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J-Lab

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Florida back in May, Gyllenhaal explained why his paper used a photo from the *Fort Lauderdale Sun Sentinel* on the front page. *Herald* readers benefited from seeing the best photograph generated that day and because of a new business partnership, the newspapers' editors were no longer were caught up in "self-indulgent conversations" about who had the photo first, the kind of shop talk "that most readers could really care less about."

The *Herald's* relationship with the *Sun Sentinel*, the *St. Petersburg Times*, and the *Tallahassee Democrat* are enabling the paper to focus its energies more efficiently on enterprise stories and other special projects, Gyllenhaal said.

"We have been forced into this world of partnerships by events, but I'm not sure we would have gone there on our own," he said. One of the challenges now for the industry is figuring out how to develop working relationships with a variety of media, including the kinds of sharing he spoke

Watch video online

To view highlights of the luncheon program, which was produced by J-Lab: The Institute for Interactive Journalism, with funding from the Ethics and Excellence in Journalism Foundation, go to: www.jlab.org/speeches/2009_aejmc_conference_luncheon/

of, while managing to stay competitive.

One experiment that has been successful involves the newspapers' decisions to reconfigure some beats so that coverage of one beat might be delivered to several newspapers in the partnership. Another experiment has students from Florida International University writing feature stories for the papers.

In fact, students have more power to take entrepreneurial approaches to the industry because of the emphasis now on freelance solutions, he said.

Editors in Ohio joined forces to build ONO – the Ohio News Organization – where eight of the top newspapers in the state are sharing content.

The cooperative is especially productive for sports coverage, said Cleveland editor Goldberg. The arrangement has worked so well, she told luncheon attendees, that the *Columbus Dispatch* has stopped covering the Browns and the Indians. "The Columbus editor decided to use his resources in a different way."

One of the challenges facing editors nationwide is the cost of new services such as the Associated Press, she said. Cleveland has paid almost \$1 million annually for its AP subscription, and the industry is now searching for ways to cut those costs.

The *Times Union* is one of several newspapers from around New York state involved in a new consortium that shares sports and statehouse coverage and content, Smith said. But, it doesn't sound as though the Albany paper will be so quick to let go of a mainstay like the AP.

Smith said that as editors navigate through these new partnerships, they must try to maintain standards while attending to several constituencies – the communities and readers served, as well as the publisher, and the staff.

Regional

From page 4

are involved: History, Law and Policy, Magazine, Newspaper, and Radio-Television Journalism. Beyond those is an open division.

Organizers are seeking research papers and panel proposals. The Southeast Colloquium requires submission of four cop-

ies of a research paper. The postmark deadline is Friday, Dec. 4.

All of the colloquium events will take place in Carroll Hall, the home of UNC's sponsoring School of Journalism and Mass Communication. (Events will occur during spring break.) The main colloquium hotel will be the historic Carolina Inn, which sits across the street, about a five-minute stroll from Carroll

Hall. Book your room early.

Find the conference website, including the full paper call, at <http://www.jomc.unc.edu/SEC2010>.

These regional conferences are known as good places for scholars to present research and gather feedback because work presented at the events remains eligible for submission to the national 2010 AEJMC convention in Denver.

Callie

From page 4

part, by the interlocking economics of the health care and media industries. Moreover, with news-gathering cutbacks, stories about protests and politics are cheaper, easier, and safer to produce. Still, we can find the principles of public journalism at work in coverage, such as the Globe investigation, that has examined the workings of the U.S. health care system, and possible alternatives. Some recent highlights:

- PBS Frontline special Sick Around the World, which explores health care systems in rich, industrialized democracies, with Washington Post foreign correspondent T.R. Reid.

- Reid's book, *The Healing of America: A Quest for Better, Cheaper, and Fairer Healthcare* (2009)

- PBS: collaboration of Now on PBS, Tavis Smiley and Nightly Business Report on an in-depth, 90 minute special, PBS Special Report: Health Care (Sept 21, 2009); Bill Moyers' Journal's ongoing coverage of single payer health care.

- Physician Atul Gawande's "The Cost Conundrum" for the New Yorker (June 1, 2009).

- In response to the health care "town hall" meetings, Sandy Heierbacher, co-founder and director of the National Coalition for Dialogue and Deliberation (NCDD), compiled tips for "upgrading the way we do politics." Based on NCDD member recommendations, these tips (which include use of a facilitator and "ground rules," or

Online examples

Boston Globe Spotlight Team, "Unhealthy System" http://www.boston.com/news/specials/healthcare_spotlight/

Boston Globe, Partners, insurers under scrutiny. 23 Jan. 2009 http://www.boston.com/news/local/massachusetts/articles/2009/01/23/partners_insurer_under_scrutiny/

Massachusetts's Plan: A Failed Model for Health Care Reform, 18 Feb. 2009 http://pnhp.org/mass_report/mass_report_Final.pdf

PBS Frontline, Sick Around the World <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/sickaroundtheworld/>

PBS Special Report; Health Care <http://www.pbs.org/now/shows/health-care-reform/index.html>

Atul Gawande, "The Cost Conundrum," 1 June 2009 http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2009/06/01/090601fa_fact_gawande

National Coalition of Dialogue and Deliberation, Yes magazine <http://www.yesmagazine.org/democracy/upgrading-the-way-we-do-politics/>

The Harwood Institute, "Stations turning Outward" <http://theharwoodinstitute.org/index.php?ht=d/sp/i/22730/pid/22730>

"agreements") can be found in Yes! magazine. Organizations such as National Issues Forums, Study Circles, and World Café have developed engagement techniques that enable citizens to have authentic and civil discussions. As the early experiments in public journalism demonstrated, news organizations have the opportunity not only to participate in the facilitation of these meetings, but also in helping to provide a common starting points.

- In recent months, the Harwood Institute, which introduced the practice of "community conversations" to the Virginian-Pilot in 1994—has partnered with the Corporation for Public Broadcasting for the

"Stations turning Outward" initiative.

For example, station WINN in Champaign-Normal, Ill. has worked with the Harwood Group to re-focus its community impact. As the report details, "WILL convened doctors, educators and public health experts to discuss childhood obesity, using [Community Engagement Initiative] principles and its work with African American youth as a model...The new effort sought to 'deepen our collective understanding of the breadth and depth of childhood obesity in our service area, the organizations and individuals working to prevent childhood obesity, and the assets each of those organizations brings to the table.'"