

CIVIC *and* CITIZEN Journalism

INTEREST GROUP NEWS

<http://aejmc.net/civic>

www.has.vcu.edu/civic-journalism

FALL 2011

What's in a name?

CCJIG members eye name change after convention

Is the name Civic and Citizen Journalism no longer relevant?

At the CCJIG member's meeting in St. Louis in August there was talk of a possible name change for our interest group. 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, during a time when a good deal of research was being conducted about this area. During this time many of the first leaders of the organization were involved in research on civic journalism, a movement that emerged in the late 1980s. In 2005 the current name of the group, Civic and Citizen Journalism, was adopted. Now, research in this field has narrowed and shifted to research on news content created by citizens and posted online. There are many different names for this phenomenon that were discussed at the meeting including: participatory journalism, citizen jour-



KIRSTEN A. JOHNSON, PH.D.
CCJIG Chair

nalism, news blogging, and user generated (created) news content.

As we discussed possible names, we were unable to settle on one that seemed to capture the essence of what our interest group has become, and with technology changing so rapidly it is hard to tell how our field will be shaped by these changes in the years to come.

Upon reflecting on a possible name, I was drawn to look through the CCJIG reports filed over the last few years to see where we have come from and where we hope to be in the future. In my journey through these archives I stumbled upon the preamble to the new constitution and bylaws adopted in 2007-2008. This seems to summarize the ever-evolving

mission:

"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

See NAME, page 4

INSIDE

Overview of AEJMC 2011,
page 2

Call for panels for AEJMC
2012 convention, **page 3**

Listing of 2011-2012 CCJIG
officers, **page 3**

Future of journalism is entre-
preneurial, **page 4**

Rekindling a passion for research

CCJIG scholars address 'transformation' issues in AEJMC research and sessions

Previous conferences focused on teaching and PF&R activities. The conference in St. Louis attempted to rekindle the passion for research in civic and citizen journalism activities. The research sessions in St. Louis addressed many lingering issues. It was evident that citizen journalism research is flourishing and striving to address relevant issues in the contemporary journalism climate.

Research papers touched on key issues that have arisen as journalism has undergone sort of a makeover in recent years through the emergence of various information communication technologies. Several scholars discussed the link that technology makes, or the pivotal role that it plays, in facilitating potentially more democratic, involved and engaged conversations as news consumers/prosumers within society. For example, many papers examined blogging, or microblogging activities of citizen journalism. In particular, Twitter was a popular discussion topic.

An area that was given prime attention was motivations of citizen journalists. While research describing citizen journalism sites abound, little has been done to examine the individuals who actually contribute content to

these sites. Several papers attempted to address this gap by analyzing how non-monetary motivation drives content contributions, citizen photojournalists and their particular motivations, and relationships between motivations and role conceptions.

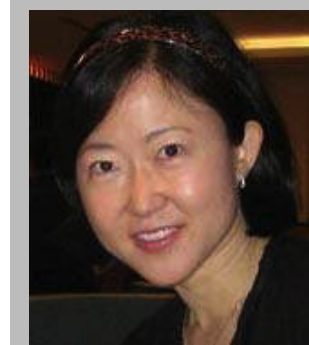
More conceptual topics were also discussed in tackling the complex phenomenon of citizen journalism. Papers looked at external conditions, internal dynamics and also economical, political and historical perspectives to more appropriately address citizen journalism activities.

Participating scholars also underscored the traditional practices and culture of journalism, a focus on objectivity, facts, credibility, authority, autonomy and control.

They pointed out that often these practices get in the way of community engagement, innovation and participation. After all, citizen journalism is a complex phenomenon that consists of cultural, political, and economical nuances.

Figuring out the complex relationships among these variables may be key to better understanding how citizen journalism works.

Most importantly, papers highlighted the hopes and prom-



DEBORAH CHUNG, PH.D.
Past CCJIG Chair

ises of a new, better journalism by connecting back with the very audiences we serve and making journalism more compelling and meaningful... together. But we're still figuring this out. While the research sessions have answered interesting questions, they have also raised additional critical issues in civic and citizen journalistic activities.

Further research is needed to better understand this complex phenomenon.

However, it appears that many are in consensus that we are witnessing an exciting period in history related to the transformation of journalism in a participatory culture that allows citizens to take center stage and become more agentic news consumers in their information seeking and sharing processes.

Lewis, Holton take top CCJIG paper honors

Two researchers were honored by the Civic and Citizen Journalism Interest Group with top papers at the 2011 AEJMC Convention in St. Louis.

The top faculty paper award for the group went to Seth Lewis, University of Minnesota, for his work, "News Innovation and the Negotiation of

Participation."

The top student paper in CCJIG went to Avery Holton, the University of Texas-Austin, for "Case of the UT Shooter: Citizens working around, with, and for traditional news media."

Call for CCJIG panels

Deadline for proposals: October 15

The Civic & Citizen Journalism Interest Group (CCJIG) invites panel proposals for the 2012 AEJMC convention to be held in Chicago from Aug. 9-12.

Please email your panel proposal to Co-Vice Chair Jeremy Littau at jjl409@lehigh.edu as 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 2012 may address, but are not limited to, the following broad themes:

1. Defining who citizen journalists are, and the roles they serve in their communities. Defining what is and is not citizen journalism.

2. The use of mobile technology as a newsgathering and reporting tool in civic and/or citizen journalism.

3. Global trends in citizen journalism for the purpose of social change, civic engagement, or broad-based activism.

4. Emerging models and best practices in teaching of civic/citizen journalism.

5. Research techniques used by civic/citizen journalism scholars.

In general, address topics that are relevant to current discussions in journalism, politics, technology, democracy, or philoso-



phy. 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.

For a sample proposal see http://aejmc.net/civic/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/Sample_Panel_Proposal.doc#more-142. We look forward to your proposals!

Contact Jeremy Littau, jjl409@lehigh.edu, Co-Vice Chair, Civic & Citizen Journalism Interest Group, with questions.

This call is also posted on the CCJIG website.

CCJIG OFFICERS

2011-12

Kirsten Johnson,

Elizabethtown College,
Chair; johnsonka@etown.edu

Jeremy Littau, Lehigh

University, Co-vice Chair,
jeremy.littau@lehigh.edu

Melissa Tully, The University

of Iowa, Co-vice Chair,
melissa-tully@uiowa.edu

Glenn Scott, Elon University,

PF&R Chair; gscott3@elon.edu

Sue Ellen Christian,

Western Michigan,
Teaching Chair, sueellen.christian@wmich.edu

Burton St. John, Old

Dominion, Research Chair,
bstaintjo@odu.edu

Jeff South, Virginia

Commonwealth University,
Webmaster; jcsouth@vcu.edu

Liz Viall, Eastern Illinois

University, Newsletter
Editor, ekviall@eiu.edu

The J-future is small - think entrepreneurial start-up

By Jack Rosenberry
CCJIG chair 2007-08

A highlight of CCJIG programming most years is the J-Lab Luncheon, and this year in St. Louis was no exception.

One of the featured speakers was Lisa Williams of Placeblogger, who compared current large institutions (think: big metro daily newspapers) to the Titanic, and said that when you're coming upon the iceberg you're better off in a kayak (think: small, entrepreneurial organization).

In another terrific analogy, she compared the current media landscape to the high-tech industry of the late 1980s, which was dominated by large, centralized institutions that clung to outdated technologies and ways of working, and eventually went out of business. (One of those was Digital Equipment Corp., which she called "the Knight-Ridder of its time," drawing a laugh from the audience.)

As companies such as DEC disappeared, smaller startups such as Google came on the scene using technology in innovative ways to better serve customer needs. "The future is small," she said, meaning many smaller organizations will collectively make bigger impacts than the large central ones that are now fading away. That applies to technology, and needs to apply to journalism as well, she said.

Also on the J-Lab Luncheon panel was David Boraks of DavidsonNews.net, an online community news site in North Carolina. He discussed how he started off with a journalistic mindset, but quickly learned that success required a business mindset. The operation now employs three people, including one who is editor of a companion site in a neighboring town.

In a post-session conversation someone asked whether Boraks should be considered a journalist? Citizen journalist? Citizen who IS a journalist? But probably the most logical way to view it is that he's a publisher, plain and simple. His operation is virtually identical in the scope and style of its coverage to any small-town weekly printed newspaper, led by an editor/publisher with a variety of responsibilities to the operation and the readership; Boraks just does it without printing his work on paper and stuffing it in the mail to readers.

The main difference is that Boraks is able to publish on a

more ongoing basis rather than writing and editing his stories for several days to meet a once-a-week deadline. And he doesn't have the expense of printing and mailing the product.

But the journalism is the same. And so is the business side, with support from local business as advertisers and readers as "subscribers"/supporters. During his talk, Boraks said he doesn't have formal subscriptions but does ask for and does receive voluntary contributions, and said he might some day investigate a pay wall. *Disclosure:* A version of this story appeared as a post on the author's personal blog.

Name change From Page 1

Citizen Journalism Interest Group is to promote and enhance the teaching of such journalism; support and critique of research related to it; and to nurture and expand the discipline of civic and citizen journalism education and scholarship."

This statement is useful because it can help frame a conversation around a new name. What is clear to me after reading this statement is that citizen engagement in the journalistic process appears to be a cornerstone of the group. This statement also helped me to better understand the relationship between civic and citizen journalism—namely that citizen journalism grew out of civic journalism and that is why the two concepts are both in the group's name.

In terms of the process for a name change, according to AEJMC headquarters the first step in the process is to come up with some possible names and have a discussion among the members. After name choices have been narrowed down mem-

bers need to have a formal vote on the specific names. In an email from Jennifer McGill, Executive Director at AEJMC, she points out, "Normally the hardest part is coming up with just what name best reflects what you do." She also said that any AEJMC groups who may be impacted by the name change, and any groups that have overlapping interests with ours, need to be alerted to the discussions.

Once a formal name has been approved by members in a formal vote, then the AEJMC board needs to be notified and they review the name. According to McGill, the name changes take effect on October 1, so the earliest we could possibly change CCJIG's name would be Oct. 1, 2012.

So, where should we go from here? In the next few weeks you should see a survey that will gauge whether or not members would like to see the name changed. I'd encourage everyone to participate as we explore the possibility of a name change.