

**Participatory Journalism interest Group**  
**2014-2015 Annual Report**

**Officers:**

**Head**

Glenn Scott, Elon

**Co-Vice Heads**

Liz Viall, Eastern Illinois

Avery Holton, Utah

**Research Chair**

Ann Hoag, Penn State

**Communications Chair**

Melissa Tully, Iowa

**Secretary**

Mark Poepsel, Southern Illinois Edwardsville

**Teaching Chair**

Mary Lou Nemanic, Penn State Altoona

**PF&R Chair**

Mi (Rosie) Jahng, Hope

**Graduate Student Liaison**

Mark Coddington, Texas Austin

**Webmaster**

Jeff South, Virginia Commonwealth

## AEJMC Demographic Information for PJIG

Year: 2015	Officers	Annual Conference Sessions				Mid-Year Meetings				Total
		Paper Judges	Panelists	Moderators	Discussants	Paper Judges	Panelists	Moderators	Discussants	
<b>Male (tot.)</b>	5		5	2	1					13
Amer. Indian/ Alaska Native										
Asian			1							1
Black/ African American										
Hispanic/ Latino			1							1
International			1							1
Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Is.										
White	5		3	2	1					11
Multi-racial										
<b>Female (tot.)</b>	5		12	4	4					25
Amer. Indian/ Alaska Native										
Asian	1									1
Black/ African American					1					
Hispanic/ Latino										
International										
Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Is.										
White	4		12	4	3					23
Multi-racial										
Did not report										
<b>Total:</b>	<b>10</b>		<b>17</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>5</b>					<b>38</b>

## 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.*

Our weighting for was roughly equal. As a smaller group, we typically hold two conference sessions for research paper presentations, with a few more poster presentations. We carried some short news briefs, with photos, on our Facebook page as well with rundowns on research. In the 2014 conference, we enjoyed high-quality panel sessions on teaching, PF&R and research – the latter a talk we co-sponsored with Visual Communication Division on findings about Google Glass initiatives. A fair breakdown: Research, 40%; Teaching, 30%; and PF&R, 30%.

*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?*

- **Establish a stronger presence for PJIG in AEJMC.** We need to grow the group, not just in numbers of members but also in contributions through paper submissions and discussions. Our group has faced a challenge from the start in defining itself as the conditions in our media industries change. We began with a focus on civic journalism and then, as the trends changed, tacked on an interest in citizen journalism. We more recently decided as a group, after some careful discussions and a membership vote, to rename ourselves Participatory Journalism Interest Group. Our goal was to demonstrate a more expansive outlook that captures the dynamics of the flows of created content, whether in a lone poster's civic-minded blog or in a news organization's efforts to welcome user contributions. Our challenge continues as participatory practices become standard, such as in the realm of social media. Social media use is so ingrained – and so highly researched – that a paper on such a topic might be sent to any of several divisions and groups. This is one reason we're seeing a decline in our paper submissions.

We met one of last year's goals by making a stronger push this year to recruit more submissions, especially from graduate students. Last fall, our diligent graduate school chair, Mark Coddington, sent notes to directors of many of the larger research-driven grad programs to invite paper submissions. Still, our submissions declined. We thought our name change would help, but it may not be helping with recognition – at least in the short-run. That, combined with the ubiquity of digital interactions between and among users and organizations, has tended to water down what formerly was more of a clear-cut area of study. We will be tackling this issue at our members' meeting and, let's hope, in discussions afterward. Because we tend to define ourselves according to function rather than topic (public relations, sports, politics, health, small programs, etc.), we need to push even harder for awareness.

- **Involve PJIG in areas of entrepreneurial journalism.** In our members' meeting in 2014, we agreed that our group should extend our interests more into entrepreneurial journalism, since such practices often are found today in hyper-local coverage. We are fortunate to move toward that goal by becoming a co-sponsor of a pre-conference session that PJIG member Michelle Ferrier has organized. Our research chair, Anne Hoag, is one

of the presenters. Dr. Ferrier approached us with a request to co-sponsor with Media Management & Economics, and we are happy to engage in this.

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

- **Improve our internal communications programs.** This represents a goal we established last year and did not meet. We suspended our online newsletter three years ago because of the difficulty in collecting timely contributions, and because we aimed to do more with social media. Our listserv functions well but we can improve in other areas. Although we did make strides, such as with web initiatives springing from panel sessions, we haven't found the right formula. At issue: Generating the time and inertia.

*\*How may any or all of the Standing Committees help you to achieve your goals in the coming year?*

- We appreciate all the support we receive. I would say, as head, that I struggled to find time day-to-day to absorb lengthy email messages. I tended to skim and sometimes missed points (and deadlines) that I shouldn't. Perhaps some of the email might have a few bullet points at the top summarizing with key 'news.'

## **Research**

5. Number of faculty research paper submissions: 13; number of acceptances: 8; 61%. (overall research activity; please note the Research Committee guideline is a 50% acceptance rate).

6. Number of student research paper submissions: 6; number of acceptances: 3; 50%. (research activity with students; please note the Research Committee guideline is a 50% acceptance rate).

A few other papers were collaborative, with faculty and grad student authors.

*7. Overview of judging process (forms used, please attach).*

Relying primarily on our research chair, Anne Hoag, we used the All-Academic judging template and databases. Reviewer scores and responses led us to opt to accept eight papers, including one submitted for a poster presentation. Two points for the higher-than-average acceptance rate: It reflected the natural break in reviewer scores, and we wanted to fill our two paper panels. We have one panel with four papers, one with three.

8. Total # of judges: 18; 2-3 papers per judge (please note the Research Committee guideline is no more than 4 papers per judge).

*9. Did your group conduct any other type of refereed competition? (Could be creative projects, teaching papers or any other non-traditional method of inquiry.)*

No. But we do offer cash awards for top papers by faculty and students.

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

We have scheduled two research-paper sessions and will sponsor one poster presentation. We'll also co-sponsor a research panel highlighting lessons from examining participatory coverage of the Michael Brown shooting in Ferguson, Missouri. We expect that session to attract a large and interested audience. Though we're a small group, we always have taken some pride in the quality of our papers and the discussions that follow the presentations. One of our promises to grad school submitters is that they can count on thorough and, we hope, helpful discussions.

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

PJIG supported two graduate students who presented at the Mid-Winter Conference in Norman.

We have given some thought in the past year to initiating our own online research journal. It's a huge undertaking. No progress yet. This will be another topic for discussion at our members' meeting.

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.*

Some of this has been covered in previous answers. We've always delighted within PJIG (and CCJIG before that) in welcoming research initiatives that explore new relationships, roles, tools and practices. That has been part of our 'brand.' Our research and discussions have added to the important work in defining – and expanding – journalistic norms and roles. We often see papers that apply theory to timely case studies. For example, in San Francisco, our top student paper examines gatekeeping related to Reddit's coverage of the Boston Marathon bombings. This approach fits neatly into our area of interest, and we're glad that the co-authors chose to submit to PJIG. As mentioned earlier, our primary challenge is to generate more awareness so that more researchers will submit our way. The irony is that while participatory activity is becoming more pervasive, that very ubiquity has allowed other groups to embrace their connections to related research. Thus, the Reddit paper could work within the bounds of CommTech, Theory & Meth, Ethics, Community Journalism, and others. Such border-sharing naturally occurs throughout our organization and is far more useful than the alternative: Research silos. Our goal is simply to keep a spotlight aimed tightly at participatory journalism and to attract a worthy share of submissions.

We give four awards for research papers: One for top faculty paper, two for top student papers, and one for top poster.

## **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.*

Our group focused on the goals of curriculum, course content and teaching methods. Our group sponsored two teaching panels at the 2014 conference. Our panel "Google Glass in the

Classroom” was hatched by PJIG officer Jeremy Littau and was co-sponsored with VisCom. It featured journalism professors who tested prototypes of the device for the Glass Explorer program and had two semesters to use it. Google Glass enables journalists – and not only professionals – to create content easily, making the tool particularly useful for recording and chronicling events. Panelists shared class examples and curriculum ideas. They introduced a shared web space that hosts syllabi, curriculum and discussions on Glass and journalism education.

Our panel “Best Practices in Participatory Journalism” was co-sponsored by the Scholastic Journalism Division. It was geared both to those teach the skills necessary for participatory journalism and those who teach about participatory journalism with three educators and one participatory journalism professional from Montreal. Although illness kept the Canadian representative from participating, the teaching chair presented a summary of his presentation on Canada’s Media Co-op, a coast-to-coast network of local media co-operatives that provide grassroots coverage of their communities and of Canada. The panel also covered an array of topics and issues related to best practices including basic skills, social media in crisis situations, encouraging more news images from non-journalists, volunteer engagement and management, and resources and tools for participatory journalism.

This best-practices session dealt thoughtfully with methods for introducing the concepts of participatory journalism into traditional undergraduate journalism courses. This targeted methods and curriculum. It also ranged into theory, thanks to Jane Singer’s involvement on the panel.

After two teaching sessions last year, we will not offer a teaching panel this year in San Francisco. We discussed possibilities at the 2014 members’ meeting and aimed to float a teaching proposal involving participatory journalism but did not work out a deal with a co-sponsor.

*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.*

The co-teaching chairs, Mary Lou Nemanic and Anne Hoag, had several discussions on strategies for promoting teaching in our interest group, most of which were related to conference panel proposals. After the conference, Dr. Hoag became research chair with Dr. Nemanic remaining as our well-organized teaching chair. Dr. Hoag assisted in setting up a blogsite to facilitate the syllabus exchange for courses on participatory journalism or courses with units on participatory journalism. This was a follow-up to the panel session.

*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.*

Our panels and initiatives have been established to encourage faculty and students at academic institutions to promote scholarship, awareness, critical thinking, curriculum development, and original research in participatory journalism. Our innovative panels attract top scholars, teachers and practitioners, and are presented to push the boundaries of participatory journalism research, teaching and practice. Again, this is a salient issue for PJIG because traditional journalism curricula tend not to offer courses specifically in our

area. As we did with the teaching panels, we want to raise interest across journalism programs in dedicating teaching units to participatory theory and practice.

Our group also annually sponsors a top student paper award to encourage graduate student scholarship in participatory journalism. In addition, each edition of the Participatory Journalism newsletter features information on teaching in the field.

### **Professional Freedom & Responsibility**

*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 session in Montreal on legal issues involving participatory journalism drew a large crowd as moderator Josh Stearns, formerly of Free Press, led a discussion with a four experts from Canada and the United States, including the Electronic Frontier Foundation. In San Francisco, we'll be sponsoring two more sessions that are both timely and place-based. One, for example, explores ideas emerging from Silicon Valley that may influence participatory practices in our field. We are sponsoring this panel by ourselves so our moderator, Seth Lewis, could assemble it. We first sought a co-sponsor but didn't find one. Rather than lose the chance for this panel, we decided to spend a 'chip.'

*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.*

After the convention we followed up with brief descriptions of sessions on our Facebook page. We didn't get involved in any PF&R activities separately. This is where we need to improve on our communications so that we might spur more initiatives. We all know the problem: We have pressing demands on campus. The long-term plans get postponed.

*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.*

We've always sought to link with professionals and originators in the field. We've carried this out well through the structure of conference panel sessions. Our menu of PF&R panels last and this year offers a strong example. We can and should do more away from the annual conference.

### **General Information**

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

We've covered this in our goals and other sections here. You can access our Facebook page [here](#) and a website [here](#).