



ESIG Looks To 2007 Conference, Beyond

By Ron Leone ESIG Head

With the December planning meeting in our rearview mirror (see **John Chapin's** report about our successful programming efforts), we now look to the future and our plans for the 2007 conference in Washington, D.C., and beyond.

This year marks the beginning of electronic submissions for all AEJMC divisions and interest groups through a dedicated Web site. While we expect some bugs that will need working out, it will streamline the paper submission and review processes, something from which we'll all benefit.

On a related note, we also need as many judges as possible. And, while we know many people are already referees for other divisions, we promise not to overburden you with papers if you make time for ESIG too. E-mail **Tony Ferri**, research chair, at drums@unlv.nevada.edu.

A sincere thanks to **John Chapin** and **Brad Yates**, the vice head and vice head-elect respectively, for their work at the planning meeting in December. They both were great, and I know that next year's round of programming will go smoothly with the two of them running the show.

I want to take a moment to discuss having a vice head-elect. It's a position that some divisions and/or interest groups have filled for a while now. Last August at the Council of Divisions meeting,

the idea was floated out as one that other divisions and interest groups should consider for a number of reasons. First, it helps with the actual job of planning the conference. Second, it gives the person who'll be in charge of making deals next year a taste of what it's like. The final reason discussed was that it promotes continuity in leadership.

At that time I was a bit skeptical, because I felt three people were too many to have at the meeting, and the position required a three-year commitment beyond being research, PF&R and/or teaching chair. But, now that it's been six months since ESIG elected **Brad Yates** as its first vice head-elect, I think the idea is a good one. As Brad, John and I have moved through different leadership positions and participated in conference planning, I think we're establishing the sense of continuity

Are You The One That They Want?

By Jim Sernoe PF&R Chair

I don't watch or follow "American Idol" and its approximated 6,218 spin-offs.

But I'm trying to decide what I think of the phenomenon, and it goes beyond a simple "good" or "bad" analysis.

On one hand, shows of the "Idol" ilk are pure camp. But on the other hand, they have changed

discussed at the Council of Divisions meeting. I hope it continues under John's guidance after I step down later this year.

I mention this now because it's not too early to start thinking about participating in ESIG's leadership. It's a great interest group representing a broad range of researchers, topics and methodologies. So, if you're thinking about running for a chair position, consider ESIG.

Finally, much information related to electronic submissions will most likely be disseminated through the listserv. If you haven't signed up, I'm including instructions, courtesy of **Carole Bell**, again:

Send an e-mail to listserv@unc.edu with "subscribe aejmc_esig" in the body of the e-mail.

Or go to <http://www.iejmc.net/es/listserv.html> on our ESIG Web site and fill out the online form. ★

how the contemporary pop culture star is created.

Let's start with the camp.

Bad singers, annoying children with no talent, entrepreneurs who need to find different professions, and stars who can't dance populate the talent-reality roster. Some people attain their 15 minutes precisely because they are bad (Wil-

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acters in Mystery Science Theatre. There's more than one Irish pub and everyone dances the perfect jig. Virtual people throw parties for Mardi Gras and Halloween. Or they can sit in Fred Flintstone's car at the drive-in in Bedrock and watch out-of-copyright cartoons.

Third, instructors can create their own entertainment experiences with their students. Together they can take the theory, apply it and see the results. Students and their professor can rent space for a social club, or rent a night club for a night. They can contact an organization and arrange to host a discussion on a relevant topic. Participants can build just about anything in SecondLife. And students just may gain a new perspective on entertainment. It's user-generated content on steroids; nothing happens in SecondLife if the residents don't plan and build it. And the residents retain the intellectual property.

Basic accounts are free and so is the client software you need to download from the SecondLife

Web site (<http://www.secondlife.com>).

Many resources exist to help educators get started and be active. Linden Lab makes available what it calls "Campus: SecondLife with a wiki" for updated information at <http://secondlife.com/csl>. A mailing list for educators using SecondLife (SLED) is also available; it is high traffic and generally high quality and one of the best sources of hands-on information from other educators and librarians using SecondLife with their students.

Elsewhere on the Web, educators have tagged related Internet resources on the social networking site del.icio.us (<http://del.icio.us/secondlife/education>). Colleges and universities can even buy their own island (basically access to a server) for a discounted price. The New Media Consortium bought many islands to make available to colleges with innovative plans for using the space. ★

Sources

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Sege, Irene. (2007, January 20). Online Creatures, great and small. Boston Globe. Retrieved Online January 22, 2007 from http://www.boston.com/news/globe/living/articles/2007/01/20/online_creatures_great_and_small/

Resources

SecondLife homepage and announcement blog – <http://www.ithaca.edu> and <http://blog.secondlife.com>

New World Notes (a blog with event announcements and updates) - <http://nwn.blogs.com/nwn/>

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Teaching, Entertainment & SecondLife

By Kim Gregson Teaching Chair

SecondLife, a virtual world created by Linden Lab (<http://www.secondlife.com>), has been featured in a variety of media over the past year, including as cover stories in Business Week and a guided tour in Wired. It's gone from approximately 3000 people online concurrently in 2005 to almost 30,000 concurrent users in the first weeks of 2007. More than three million accounts have been created and the number is climbing faster than people using SecondLife imagined even last year.

It's not as big in terms of concurrent users as World of Warcraft, which can have millions of people online at once, and had more than 6.5 million active subscriptions in July 2006. It's not even as popular as Club Penguin, a virtual world that targets children 8 to 11, that had four million users in December 2006.

However, SecondLife's range of activities and venues of interest to those teaching about entertainment makes up for the lack of concurrent users.

First, instructors can examine mainstream media experiments in new media. For instance NBC recreated Rockefeller Center for the lighting of the Christmas tree in December 2006. When the tree was lit in real life (and experienced by most people on television), the virtual tree was also lit. People in SecondLife skated on the ice rink, wore their best winter clothing, danced, listened to music, and enjoyed the event with friends and friendly strangers from around the world.

The Dutch firm Endemol brought its Big Brother television program into SecondLife in December 2006. SecondLife residents entered a contest to win a spot in the Big Brother house created in the world. For a month, they did tasks, talked to people passing by, and recruited votes that determined whether they got to stay or go at the end of the week.

Reuters has an embedded journalist and a magnificent building with an auditorium the organization used in January for live interviews with policy makers, businessmen, and celebrities at the World Economic Forum summit in Davos, Switzerland.

Wired magazine sponsored a talk at the SecondLife International Space Museum with a journalist researching the disappearance of the high quality tapes of the Apollo moon landing for an upcoming Wired article.

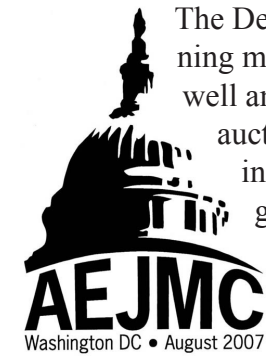
Residents gathered at more than 10 sites around SecondLife to watch the premier of a Sundance sponsored movie called Four Eyed Monsters; the filmmakers were actually at the screening room built by the Sundance Channel to take questions from other residents.

Second, instructors can examine the many entertainment activities created by non-corporate entities. Everyday residents can attend dances, art shows, fashion shows and discussions on religion and philosophy; listen to live streaming music with DJs; and participate in trivia contests. Residents get together to watch movies and make sarcastic comments, like the char-

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ESIG Offerings Planned for 2007 D.C. Convention

By John Chapin Vice Head



The December planning meeting went well and the chip auction results are in. ESIG's program during the 2007 conference will be among the best.

Thursday, August 9

3:15 p.m. Mini-Plenary session
Leads: Media Management & Economics
Co-sponsors: Law & Ethics

Friday, August 10

8:15 a.m. Poster Session

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liam Hung, where are you?).

I recently was forced to watch "You're the One that I Want," the competition for roles in the revival of the musical "Grease." I say "forced" because sometimes in relationships we make these kinds of compromises, although the period of my good boyfriendhood lasted 20 minutes — two candidates for Danny and two for Sandy — before I couldn't take any more.

I'll spare everyone the gory details, except to say that all four competitors were incredibly attractive and had great stage presence. But only one could sing, and her voice was more appropriate for a jazzy-blues album in the style of Etta James than for the role as Sandy. Worse yet, the judges, including the woman of my teenage dreams, Olivia Newton-John, lavished these mediocre candidates with high praise. The studio crowd went wild — multiple times.

The pain, I tell you, the pain.

11:45 a.m. PF&R Session Journalism Ethics Goes to the Movies
Co-sponsor: Ethics

5 p.m. Top Research Papers in ESIG

6:45 p.m. Business Meeting

Saturday, August 11

3:30 p.m. Teaching Session
Should Funny Come First? The Ethics of Political Humor on Television
Co-sponsor: Ethics

5:15 p.m. Research Session (with Communication Technology) Title

But on the other hand, "American Idol," "Nashville Star" and others have democratized the entertainment industry, at least a little bit. They have allowed average Americans who couldn't under other circumstances get near Sony Records a chance to make it in the big bad music world. They have allowed Sandy- and Danny-Wannabes — many of whom might not have the nerve or the finances to live in New York City for six years waiting for a role in the chorus — at least a shot.

Kelly Clarkson was just an average young woman from Burleson, Texas, before she won the inaugural season of "American Idol."

Then there's the first winner of "Nashville Star," Buddy Jewell, who had been puttering around Nashville since he was 21, doing the usual demos, back-ups and barroom gigs. He had been turned down many, many times by the

not determined yet. Combines Communication Technology's proposed New Directions in the Study of Video Games' Content and Effects, with ESIG's proposed, Video Games in the Curriculum
Co-sponsor: Communication Technology

Sunday, August 12

10 a.m. PF&R Soaps, Telenovelas and Reality Shows: What is the World Coming to?
Co-sponsor: Minorities & Communication ★

major for many, many reasons, few of which had anything to do with talent. At 42, he won the title, and within months had several hits on country radio.

And the list goes on. At last count, Billboard magazine listed at least 100 singles, albums and videos by these non-traditional stars that have gone to No. 1 on its various charts. Fantasia, Kellie Pickler, Clay Aiken, Josh Gracin and dozens of other winners and finalists have had major hits in a wide range of genres.

Granted, "Idol" isn't the first talent show on which a star was discovered. Both Frank Sinatra and Gladys Knight will tell you that.

But the times have changed. I'm sure a good journal article or an AEJMC panel lurks somewhere in all of this, but I'm not the one to pursue either. I'm too busy with my own ascent to stardom.

Look out, Oliva Newton-John. Here I come. ★