

# CT&M CONCEPTS

ASSOCIATION FOR EDUCATION IN JOURNALISM & MASS COMMUNICATION

## Rocky Mountain rendezvous



Photo by Jeffrey Beall

Above, Denver's Mile High skyline invites visitors to the annual Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication conference. Below right, one of Denver's many skyscrapers towers behind the Holy Ghost Church.

### Papers requested for 2010 AEJMC conference in Denver

**MICHEL HAIGH**  
PENNSYLVANIA STATE UNIVERSITY  
CT&M RESEARCH PAPER CHAIR

April 1, 2010 is the deadline for submission to the 2010 AEJMC Convention. The CT&M Division invites submissions of original research papers pertaining to the study of communication processes, institutions, and effects from a theoretical perspective. CT&M welcomes both conceptual and data-based papers and is open to all methodological approaches. Please refer to the Summer 2009 CTM Concepts Division newsletter for a complete list of topics and papers presented last year to get a better idea of "fit" of paper (<http://aejmcctm.blogspot.com/>). Authors of the three top-scoring faculty or faculty/student papers will be recognized in the convention program and at the CT&M members' meeting in Denver. We strongly

ly encourage submissions by students. Winners of the Chaffee-McLeod Award for Top Student Paper will be awarded \$250; two additional top student papers will also receive cash prizes. Please limit papers to no more than 25 pages (double-spaced) in length, excluding tables and references.

1) All papers must be submitted online through the All-Academic Web site: <http://www.allacademic.com/one/aejmc/aejmc10/>

2) Keep in mind that identifying information goes beyond "cleaning" the appropriate tabs in the file. Remember acknowledgements can identify a paper (these should added after the review process) or literature reviews

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Photo by Jesse Varner

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# Budget and Web site updates; preconference workshop planned

I want to thank all of you who have shared your views on CT&M's brand, mission, and future. I received a number of extremely thoughtful e-mails and blog postings, which I will synthesize and share at our next business meeting. I am taking the opportunity of this newsletter to update you on a number of issues of importance to CT&M at this point in time.

Last fall, I alerted all of you to CT&M potentially problematic financial situation. The 2009 fiscal year closing at the end of September left CT&M with a deficit of \$494. I am pleased to say that we are now out of the red, and that we were able to cover Taylor & Francis's last bill related to the journal *Communication Methods and Measures*.

However, although we are doing our best to build financial stability, we are still in a precarious situation. As you may recall, Taylor & Francis is billing us based on our active membership. Since members do not all renew at the same time, we may not have enough cash to cover a bill at a certain point in time. It is therefore extremely important for all of our members to renew as soon as they get the renewal form from AEJMC headquarters. Please do so if at all possible!

It is clear that CT&M needs to generate revenues if it wants to continue supporting its jour-

nal and serving its members. A simple way to do so may be by increasing member dues, and this is something we will be discussing at our next business meeting in Denver. Other creative ways could include encouraging donations or organizing revenue-generating events.

We will be experimenting with the later in Denver. I am excited to announce the first CT&M-sponsored pre-conference workshop. With Taylor and Francis generous financial support, students and faculty will be able to take advantage of **Andrew Hayes'** expertise in mediation analysis, for the modest sum of \$20 (for students) and \$30 (for all others). Please see the advertisement on page 5 for more details, and watch out for more details from our program chair **Hernando Rojas**, who is coordinating the event.

We are also working on new Web site for CT&M, which we will be presenting in Denver. We are planning on including key features of interest to our members, so your input will be extremely valuable at this point. Please drop an e-mail to either **Hernando Rojas** (hrojas@wisc.edu) or me (dbrossard@wisc.edu) if you wish to share your views on the site, and, of course, any other issues related to CT&M.

Thanks to all for your support to CT&M!  
Dominique

## CT&M well-positioned to study changing methods

MICHAEL DAHLSTROM  
IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY  
MEMBERSHIP/RECRUITMENT CHAIR

I recently canceled my landline and have since endowed all of my telephone needs to my low-end Verizon cell phone. While the purpose of this decision was to save money on bills, I have since come to realize the symbolism of this act with challenges facing media research and why CT&M may be the division best poised to respond.

The first challenge is that the foundation upon much of which media research is based is sandy soil. Media technology and public expectations regarding the media are in constant flux. On one hand, this provides opportunities to examine the generalizability of our findings, yet, on the other hand, it requires a constant assessment if our methods and measures continue to be relevant under new circumstances.

I don't know what list my name was on, but I received telephone surveys on my landline about once a week. Being the conscientious media researcher, I usually participated. Yet since my cellular revolution, the surveys have ceased. Tele-

phone surveys have long been a staple of media research, but this method ignores cell phones for several reasons (see [http://www.pollster.com/blogs/cell\\_phones\\_and\\_political\\_surv.php](http://www.pollster.com/blogs/cell_phones_and_political_surv.php) for a nice overview of the issue). How relevant does this method remain in today's media environment? The demands for accurate methods must address changes such as this, as well as other developments, such as the rise of Facebook as a survey tool, the availability of broadcast media on the Internet and the decline in circulation of print newspapers.

Of course, a problem only remains until someone decides to turn it into an opportunity, which is what I feel CT&M has done. By evaluating and developing new methods and measures for media research, CT&M has set itself apart by offering the tools to both address and take advantage of the changing media landscape. Yet, this brings me to the second challenge facing media research.

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# New journal editor seeks suggestions

It is amazing to me that it has now been over three years since the membership adopted Communication Methods and Measures as its official divisional journal at the annual business meeting in San Francisco (see CT&M Concepts, Fall 2006). That same year was also the division's 40th birthday, and a time when we reflected on where the division came from and where it is headed. Conversations with members as well as recent articles in Concepts (e.g., Fall 2009) are tinged with anxiety and uncertainty as to what the future has in store for us. It is clear that we are entering a state of transition as a division. Substantial change is likely to happen in some form or another.

One change we already saw since our 40th birthday was a change in the ownership of the journal, as Taylor and Francis acquired Lawrence Erlbaum Associates. Another change that I warned of in my last Concepts contribution (Summer 2009) is a change in the editorial composition of Communication Methods and Measures. I have proudly served under the leadership of the Managing Editor, **Dave Ewoldsen**, for over four years, and I was humbled when he and the division leadership nominated me to take his place when he steps down at the end of this year.

I recently spoke to the publisher and, assuming the terms of the contract are spelled out to everyone's satisfaction, I will be taking over as Managing Editor of Communication Methods and Measures effective 2011. As most transitions do, this one will take time, planning, and careful thought. One change I will be implementing

is a reduction in the number of associate editors from the current four to three. That decision, however, was a fairly easy one to make. More difficult will be deciding who will fill the associate editor positions. Thus, I ask for your counsel. Please send me (to hayes.338@osu.edu) the names of anyone who you think could serve the journal and our division well in one of these important positions. Feel free to nominate a colleague, or someone who you have never met but whose work you admire, or even yourself.

I believe it is important that the editors of the field's journals be active researchers who publish widely, who have "street credibility," and who are willing and able to make hard and unpopular decisions. Equally important are a selfless commitment to scholars in the field, and a dedication to ensuring that only the highest quality work gets published. I look forward to hearing from you. And while you are at it, please send along to me your thoughts about the journal itself—how you think it is doing, changes you'd like to see, and so forth.

Although the CT&M division is in a period of transition, I am happy to report that one thing that has not changed one bit is our publisher's commitment to the division and the journal. Taylor and Francis perceive CT&M as crucial to the success of Communication Methods and Measures, and they plan on continuing to support the division in every way that they can. I look forward to being able to announce in future newsletters and at the business meeting in Denver some of the forms that continued support will take.

**ANDREW HAYES**  
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CT&M LIAISON TO COMMUNICATION  
METHODS AND MEASURES AND FUTURE  
MANAGING EDITOR, CM&M

## Methods: New technologies, techniques require changes

### Continued from page 2

Media researchers often sink into this foundation of sandy soil, slowing their adoption of newer methods and measures.

Why did I keep my landline so long? For the last year the only activity that warmed the receiver were those weekly surveys; I had long since switched my allegiance to the cell phone but never felt it necessary to make the larger change. I kept the landline out of habit, or maybe because nothing had come along to justify the time it would take to fully switch over.

A similar example from media research involves mediation tests. Baron and Kenny proposed a test for mediating variables in a well-known 1986 article that has since received 12,963 citations as of this writing. Since that article, stronger tests of me-

diation have been developed, such as the Sobel test, test of joint significance or the bootstrapping method. Yet the Baron and Kenny approach remains, in my experience, the most commonly used method for testing mediation.

I have had a reviewer ask to see the Baron and Kenny results in addition to an alternative method and I have had a colleague argue for using Baron and Kenny merely so we wouldn't have to risk explaining a different technique to an editor. Why does the 1986 Baron and Kenny method remain entrenched in the methods sections of many? My guess is out of habit, or, like my landline, because nothing had come along to justify the time it would take to fully switch over.

Again, I feel CT&M, and specifically

its journal, Communication Methods and Measures, provides one of the only publications targeted directly at the appropriate use of measures and methods in media research. As such, reading this journal may offer enough empirical justification for researchers to hike themselves out of the sand and walk to the next methodological beach.

Media research faces the dual challenges of a changing media environment and a comfort with aging methods and measures. Of all the divisions in AEJMC, I feel CT&M may be in the best position to address these challenges. I never thought canceling my landline could lead to such insight, yet I am now excited to see what revelations lay behind switching to a front-load washing machine.



# Methods: The Brussels sprouts of teaching?

**JASON REINEKE**  
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CT&M TEACHING STANDARDS CHAIR

During a recent and wide-ranging discussion on the state of health communication and opportunities for future research therein, a colleague expressed frustration with a certain segment of food product advertising. She pointed out several examples of advertisements where the message was, essentially: vegetables are gross, horrible, foul things, but they're good for your children, who really ought to eat them, so buy food product X, because its processing and flavor disguise the presence of vegetables in one way or another.

Of course the root problem of kids not wanting to eat their vegetables isn't really solved by tricking kids into eating them. It's solved by changing the perception that vegetables are "gross" and that "good" food is composed processed fat, salt and sugar. And these commercials only reinforce that perception. But, then again, we also have to ask if, at least in some cases, the ends justify the means. In the absence of a more thorough solution, isn't it enough to get the vegetables into the kids' stomachs, even if they don't end up there untainted or for the right reasons?

As I'm in the midst of yet another semester teaching quantitative research methods, I find myself struggling with a similar conundrum. What is the most ethical and effective way to teach scientific methods and statistics in a discipline, and indeed a society, where the most popular perception often seems to be that both are "gross"? Should we mush them up and mix them in with a bunch of junk so that they becomes less offensive to the popular palate with the understanding that we're neither solving the root problem nor delivering the substance in its purest form? Or should we exert much greater effort with one of the goals being to condition our students to acquire a taste for what many of us believe to be one of the finer things in life, with the understanding that some, and perhaps many, will simply turn away and refuse to eat at all?

We do our students a disservice if we dumb the material down or dress it up too much. But we also do them a disservice if we present it in such an arcane and dry that many will give up on trying to understand it and fall back to simply trying to pass the class – that's not teach-

ing. So how do we best serve our students? Of course I can't tell you what the best way to teach your class is. But what I try to do to is always remember the things that got me interested in science and statistics as a graduate student, and use those ideas as the basis for my teaching with the goal of the resulting interest taking hold with my students as well.

I have to admit that when I entered graduate school in a social scientific program with a bachelor's degree from a production-oriented mass communication program, at first I was a little lost and a little turned off by how unfamiliar it all was. If you had told me then that I'd love teaching research methods someday, I think it is safe to say that I would have met your prognostication with more than a little skepticism. But as my teachers began to encourage me to think about conceptualization, the components of social life, how we measure them, and how we do the careful science of analyzing their relationships, I realized that I wasn't just gaining some new knowledge and skills. The way that I saw the world was also changing in new and fascinating ways. How can a person not get excited about that and want more of it? That's what I try to remember and try to connect with methods and statistics that I teach every time I lecture.

And it really is a lot like vegetables. When I was young, like a lot of American children, I thought that fast food was the best thing there was to eat. But the older I get the more I appreciate healthier food and, surprisingly, not just because I feel better physically, but I've actually come to prefer the taste, as well.

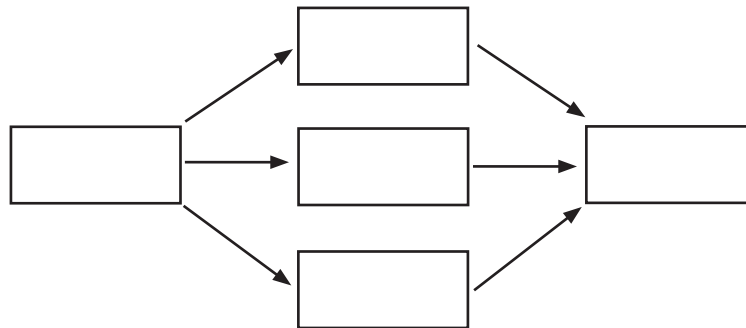
Like many graduate students, when I took my first methods and statistics classes I too thought I was the first one to come up with that tired old line about how I got into communication so I wouldn't have to do math. But as I've pursued a career in scholarship, it's become hard for me to imagine a better career than one in social science. I only hope that my teaching gives students an opportunity to acquire that taste, too, and shows them an example of how fulfilling it can be to do so.

# “Beyond Baron and Kenny: Modern Mediation Analysis”



A pre-conference workshop with  
**Andrew F. Hayes**

Over the years, methods used to test causal process models have grown in sophistication, yet frequently, the analytical choices communication researchers make when testing intervening variables models are out of step with advances in the statistical methods literature. This workshop updates the field on some of these new advances.



Andrew F. Hayes is one of the leading communication scholars in the areas of research design, psychometrics, and data analysis. He is internationally renowned for the statistical analysis of moderation and mediation effects and resampling methods of inference. More information about Hayes is available at: <http://www.comm.ohio-state.edu/ahayes/>

**Cost:** This pre-conference session is open to all AEJMC members, with a discount for graduate students:  
Student members: \$20. Non-student members: \$30.

**When:** Tuesday August 3 from 1 to 5 p.m.

**Where:** Denver Annual AEJMC meeting

**More:** If you are interested in preregistering contact Hernando Rojas, CT&M Vice Head at [hrojas@wisc.edu](mailto:hrojas@wisc.edu)

**Sponsors:** CT&M and the Taylor & Francis Group

# Reviewing process feels like ping pong

**BRYAN DENHAM**  
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GUEST CONTRIBUTOR

*Editor's Note: The following is a commentary submitted by the author, and does not necessarily represent the views of the CT&M Executive Committee. Commentary submissions of possible relevance to the membership are welcome and will be run as space and other considerations permit.*

Like many CTM members, I often begin the publication process by submitting an article to one of the top journals in the field. Should the submission not receive a favorable review, I read the referee comments, make whatever adjustments appear necessary, and either re-submit the piece or send it to another publication.

To some extent, electronic article submissions have complicated this process. As an example, about two years ago, I submitted a paper electronically to one of the stronger journals in the field, anticipating a revise-and-resubmit, at best. Sure enough, two reviewers recommended an R & R, and in my revisions, I followed their advice closely.

Enter problem number one: With online manuscript reviews, referees can indicate (i.e., "click") whether or not they are willing to review a revised version of an article – even when they indicate revise-and-resubmit. In my case, it appeared that only one of the two reviewers recommending R & R considered a revised version worthy of additional review, and thus a third reviewer came into play – with his or her own set of criticisms.

I responded to those comments, some of which contradicted those of the reviewer who read the initial draft and "stayed on" as well as those of the reviewer who dropped out. I made some adjustments, concerned that the paper might be losing its "identity" in the process. Nevertheless, I sent it back for a second review.

This time, upon reviewing the referee comments, I noticed that the remarks from Round II applied to an article written by another author. I pointed this out to the editor, who then secured the correct reviews before encouraging me to consider another outlet. I followed his advice.

At the second outlet, three reviewers examined the article, two of whom recommended revise-and-resubmit. A third reviewer recommended publication and disappeared from the process. I once again made revisions to the paper and sent it back to the journal. Two of the original referees and a third reviewer – a new referee – examined the revised article, with one of the two original reviewers indicating that edits had been sufficient and one calling for

greater clarity. Although the new referee recommended rejection, I received correspondence that only minor edits were needed before the article could be accepted.

I made what I assumed to be the final edits and submitted the paper once more. Apparently, the editor did not feel comfortable making the call, and he sent the article back out to the relative newcomer, who again recommended rejection. The editor was now in a quandary: What does one recommend with three somewhat favorable, if uninspired, reviews and one reject surrounding a paper that had, in truth, lost its way?

Well, after a nine-month process with the second journal, the editor could not see sufficient merit in publishing the article. While I normally would have been somewhat perturbed, I cannot say that I necessarily disagreed with the outcome, as the paper had become weaker than the sum of its parts. What struck me was how arbitrary the scholarly review process can be.

In thinking about the processes through which the article had traveled, a discussion of exemplification theory by Dolf Zillmann (1999) came to mind. Zillmann pointed out that when news companies link independent events together in order to identify a purported trend, the news agencies necessarily focus on the similarities between events – not on the differences, or error. Such reporting creates compelling narratives, but with each added event come more sources of error. If the facts of each story are 90 percent dissimilar from those in the other news articles, what exactly is the trend being reported?

And so it (partially) goes with manuscript reviewing; with every new reviewer comes not only a new perspective but also a new source of "error." When an author makes changes recommended initially by two referees, the addition of a third along with subtraction of the first or second stands to generate recommendations for the recommendations. Such advice can confuse the efforts of an author and undermine the review process, the overarching purpose of which is to help strengthen the scholarly effort.

I therefore offer the following bits of advice for those who serve as manuscript referees:

- If you agree to review an article, accept the task as both a scholarly exercise and learning opportunity.

- Very few articles warrant outright accep-

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# Panel to explore funding opportunities in field

In my last PF&R column, I pondered on the identity and impact of communication as discipline. An upcoming PF&R session in Denver will be devoted to the discussion of what makes our field unique and how we can enhance the impact of the field of communication. In yet another Denver PF&R session, CTM and AEJMC members will have the opportunity to discuss one solution to broadening the impact of our discipline – conducting externally funded research with social implications.

Communication researchers engage in both theoretical and applied research. We as an academic community are particularly concerned about communication issues in applied domains with important social implications (e.g., health communication, risk communication). Expertise in communication sciences is increasingly sought after in practical settings where effective communication constitutes the key to achieving social and economic goals (e.g., provider-patient communication, public health campaigns, social marketing campaigns).

Given the practical relevance of communication, many federal agencies are providing funding opportunities for research programs that address communication issues in socially relevant settings. In fact, communication scholars, particularly those working in the health domain, are more likely now than any time in the past to attract federal funding (Kreps, Query, & Bonaguro, 2008). Federal agencies such as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), National Cancer Institute (NCI), and the National Institute for Drug Abuse (NIDA) have consistently funded communication research in the past a few years. A number of recent initiatives put forward by these organizations are a strong

indication of the importance of communication research. For example, the NCI started a series of bi-annual surveys in 2003 (i.e., the Health Information Trend Survey or HINTS) to track the general public's cancer information seeking behaviors and needs for cancer communication. The CDC initiated an annual conference on health communication, marketing and media to provide a scientific and professional forum for researchers and practitioners to share insights, research findings, and best practices.

While the prospect of securing external funding for communication research appears promising, our field as a whole is still lagging behind in providing scholars with the necessary training and institutional support in order for them to be successful in getting external grants. Recognizing this, the International Communication Association (ICA) and the National Communication Association (NCA) have both sponsored sessions on funded research at recent conferences. The upcoming AEJMC conference will feature a PF&R panel to engage a discussion on how communication researchers can more effectively obtain external funding to support their research. The panel will also discuss how communication research can contribute to the well-being of individuals and society as a whole. You are welcome to attend this session to contribute your thoughts and also to hear what the experts have to say.

Reference:

Kreps, G. L., Query, J. L. Jr., & Bonaguro, E. W. (2008). The interdisciplinary study of health communication and its relationship to communication science. In L. C. Lederman (Ed.), *Beyond these walls: Readings in health communication* (pp. 3-14). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

XIAOLI NAN  
UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND  
CT&M PROFESSIONAL FREEDOM AND  
RESPONSIBILITY CHAIR

# Reviewing: Consistent reviewers, comments helpful

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tance for publication. To assist an author, offer a thoughtful series of comments / criticisms initially and then stick with those comments / criticisms throughout the process. While authors sometimes make decisions for the worse, the review process should not become a never-ending game of ping pong.

- If you indicate revise-and-resubmit, also indicate that you can review a revised version of the article; indicating you cannot only introduces more error into an already imperfect process.

- If the article should be rejected, encourage the editor to do just that – in a timely manner. No more than four weeks should be required to

review a submission.

- If appropriate, recommend other scholarly outlets that the author(s) might consider.
- Finally, stay on point. While you may have pursued the project in a different manner, focus on what appears in front of you, offering constructive feedback.

Quality reviewing is essential for the field to grow theoretically and methodologically, and each of us should make a conscientious effort to contribute thoughtfully to editorial processes.

Reference

Zillmann, D. (1999). Exemplification theory: Judging the whole by the sum of its parts. *Media Psychology*, 1, 69-94.





*Denver's City-County Courts Building, illuminated at night, is among the many government buildings in Colorado's capital.*

Photo by Jeffrey Beall

## Denver: Members should submit online by April 1

### Continued from page 1

review process) or literature reviews that refer to previous work by the author/s in ways that make obvious who the author/s is. Papers containing personally identifiable information will not be sent out for review.

3) To submit a paper, fill out the online submission form with author(s) name, affiliation, mailing address, telephone number, and e-mail address. A 75-word abstract is required. The paper title should be printed on the first page of the text and on running heads on each page of text, as well as on the title page.

4) There will be LCD projectors in all sessions, but no overhead projectors. To avoid losing time between presentations, everyone in the same session should strive to use only one

computer to which all presentations have been previously uploaded. If a presentation requires sound, bring your own equipment since this won't be provided.

5) If you do not plan on attending or submitting, it is still important to go into All Academic and fill out a reviewer profile.

Please refer to the AEJMC general paper call for this year's online submission guidelines. Please make sure there is no identifying information in the body of the paper or in the document properties. If you have questions, please contact **Michel M. Haigh**, CT&M research chair, at 814-863-3850 or by e-mail: mmh25@psu.edu.



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