

STATIC

The Newsletter of the AEJMC Electronic News Division | Volume 54, Number 3 | Fall 2016

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Unique election drives research

*Indira Somani, Division Head
Howard University*

The presidential election of 2016 is one I will never forget. From the SNL skits with Alec Baldwin as GOP Presidential Candidate Donald Trump, and Kate McKinnon as Democratic Presidential Candidate Hillary Clinton, to the protestors at each of the candidates' rallies, this election has drawn out more mud-slinging than I can remember in my lifetime. It has been so unpredictable, I really can't foresee the outcome for the highest seat in office. In the last debate (Oct. 9, Washington University, St. Louis, Missouri), I was pleased to see it end in a manner with each candidate being asked what they respected about each other.

With AEJMC's 2017 conference almost nine months from now, the media coverage of this election will be discussed among scholars and journalists, not just at the conference, but for years to come.

More from the Division Head, p. 3



Chicago 2017 planning underway

*Tony DeMars, Vice Head & Program Chair
Texas A&M University-Commerce*

Programming a convention is an interesting process. For those who don't pay that much attention to what goes into getting the Electronic News Division represented at the convention, here's a quick overview of the process.

At the time of our current newsletter, it's too soon to tell you what we have selected for the Chicago 2017 convention. But, we're already in full programming mode. Some annual conventions may not start programming until about seven to nine months out, but for AEJMC, we start almost as soon as one convention is over. So, in September we did a call for panel proposals and immediately started putting those into an internal online system that allows us to 'make deals' with other Divisions and Interest Groups.

Programming, p. 5

What is a political gaffe anymore, anyway?

Lindsey Conlin, Research Chair
University of Southern Mississippi

After the 2012 presidential election, myself and two colleagues did a content analysis of news coverage of political gaffes in U.S. presidential elections between 2000 and 2012. We analyzed coverage of stories such as Joe Biden saying there hasn't been a lot of hope or change, or Mitt Romney saying he likes to be able to fire people.

After the current election cycle, will we, as researchers, even be able to study political gaffes in this way? If Donald Trump has built an entire campaign on "saying what he thinks" and the public responds positively to it, are his missteps and outrageous statements gaffes?

How will we study this election cycle? What research will communication scholars be able to produce that addresses the media circus surrounding this election? Will we be able to understand the political climate that lead to Trump getting away with things that are infinitely more reprehensible than earlier candidates were laughed out of their candidacy for? Will it even be fair to compare other U.S. elections to this, when gaffes no longer scare away voters, but are rather seen by supporters as "not being a traditional politician?"

The political gaffes committed in this election cycle, rather than deterring voters, have entrenched people deeper and deeper into partisan positions. Both sides—instead of defending their own candidate—point fingers at the other, claiming that the other party's candidate is a far worse and more dangerous choice. Rather than being superfluous and sometimes comical instances within a political campaign, political gaffes are now the main issues in the election, far behind intelligent debate and contemporary issues. It will be interesting to see how communication researchers respond to this unorthodox and strange election cycle. If Howard Dean's awkward yelp at a rally in 2004 could end his campaign, what does it mean when Trump says and does things that shouldn't even be put in print?

Connect with Electronic News

Twitter: [@AEJMC_End](https://twitter.com/AEJMC_End)

Facebook: Search "[enewsddivision](https://www.facebook.com/enewsddivision)"

Listserv: aejmc.us/end/listserv

New END website is live

Becky Nee, Vice Head-Elect / Webmaster
San Diego State University

The Electronic News Division website (<http://aejmc.us/end/>) has been redesigned and streamlined.

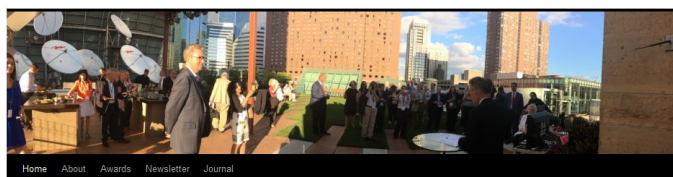
In addition to a home page that features the most recent news and posts, the website has four main categories: About, Awards, Newsletter, and Journal.

Members can find legal documents and annual reports under the about category. The awards tab has guidelines for the Bliss, Burkum and research paper competition. Recent winners in these categories are also featured. The latest issue of Static and archives appear under the newsletter tab. Information about the Division's journal, Electronic News, is posted in the journal category along with special paper calls.

We will be asking for volunteers to help us cover our Division's panels and activities at AEJMC in Chicago. We plan to keep the website updated regularly during the conference. In the meantime, please submit posts, photos, or any other materials you'd like to see on the website to Becky Nee, mee@mail.sdsu.edu.

Electronic News Division

A Division of AEJMC



The masthead for the new END website.

Survey seeks input on membership value

Kate Keib, Membership Chair/Graduate Liaison
University of Georgia

I am Kate Keib, the new Membership Chair for 2016-2017. In addition to being the END Graduate Liaison, I will be working to increase our membership.

I need your help – can you answer just two questions? [Click on this link](#) and tell me why membership in END is valuable to you.

This year, I will be focusing on outreach so that we can drive up our numbers, but more importantly, our engagement in the division. Thank you in advance for being a part of this effort!

Note: If the link does not work, copy-and-paste this address into your web browser- <https://goo.gl/forms/jSDJlgpzAn6fPdMT2>

Notes from the division head: Listserv, awards and pre-conference workshops

Indira Somani, Division Head
Howard University

As we dove into this academic year, one of our first efforts was to understand how people best get information from END. Through Survey Monkey, we learned that people do not want information solely posted to Facebook. They would like to receive information in their inbox as well as on a Facebook group. Of the 32 responses to the survey, the majority wished to allow access to the listserv to anyone – regardless of END membership. Here are the results in full:

Should we continue using a list serve as part of END?	Who should have access to the list serve?	When the division sends information, or you want to share information, which platform would you prefer:
37.5% No	59.4% Any AEJMC member, not just END members	34.4% Facebook group
62.5% Yes	40.6% END paid members only	21.9% Listserv/ email blast
		43.8% Both Facebook Group and list

We are in the process of moving the listserv to another university. Tim Bajkiewicz of Virginia Commonwealth University has agreed to manage the listserv. At present Denise Dowling at University of Montana cannot manage it anymore.

Moving it to another listserv will allow the email function to continue as we currently use it. Some members shared with me that Google groups allowed for multiple administrators to edit and use the platform to communicate with the membership. Furthermore, it eliminated past issues we faced with the listserv being housed at one institution, with admin rights only at that university. But, we all know Tim as he was a past division head (13-14 academic year) and organized the Montreal END business meeting and dinner, and I feel confident in having Tim manage our listserv.

From Minneapolis to Chicago

END will begin its 51st year, after an amazing 50th anniversary celebration in Minneapolis this past summer thanks to outgoing Division Head Bill Silcock. I truly appreciated working with Bill to understand his vision for the 2016 conference, and I look forward to planning the 2017 conference in Chicago with Tony DeMars of Texas A&M University-Commerce, our new Vice-Head, and Rebecca Nee of San Diego State University, our new Vice-head elect. Both have already been diligently reviewing panel proposals and making partnerships with the other Divisions for next summer.

At the 2016 conference, I liked how we split the Bliss Award and Larry Burkum events from the business meeting. I plan to do that again. Meanwhile, please contact Bill Silcock at Arizona State University for more details on how to nominate for our Bliss Award (bsilcock@asu.edu). While the Bliss award recognizes the powerful teacher-scholars in our division, the Burkum Service award looks for the unsung heroes. Tim Brown at University of Central Florida will lead that search to name next year a Burkum service award. For more details on how to nominate for our Burkum Award please contact, timbrown@ucf.edu.



Somani

Pre-conference proposals

I hope to have another pre-conference workshop in 2017, and will graciously start taking suggestions soon. Those ideas should be sent directly to me, indira.somani@howard.edu. What's great about having the 2017 conference in Chicago is that it is home to many journalism programs, both undergraduate and graduate. The Medill School of Journalism at Northwestern University, the Loyola University Chicago School of Communication, DePaul University's College of Communication and Columbia College stand out with some of the best journalism programs in the country. Chicago also hosts a variety of journalism outlets from The Chicago Tribune to the Chicago Defender and all of the networks have O & O (owned and operated) stations, plus network bureaus.

Journalism educators can combat use of stimulants as “study aids”

Peter Morello, Teaching Chair
University of Missouri-Kansas City

A day before Mid-Term Exam Week at my university, NBC News aired a segment from its series on college life called “Campus Undercovered.” The report focused on a disturbing increase and acceptance of “academic doping,” prescription drug abuse on campuses that in some ways parallels doping in sports. Students, interviewed by NBC News, admitted to using stimulants they call “smart drugs.” These medications are prescribed by doctors for patients with attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder.

According to WebMD, a recent study by a Massachusetts hospital found “nearly two-thirds of college students had been offered stimulants for non-medical use, and 31 percent had used them over a four-year period.” On many campuses, the rates of abuse are even higher. The stimulant drugs of choice as a “study aid” include Adderall, Ritalin and Vyvanse. Although beneficial for those who suffer from ADHD, these stimulants are often taken in large dosages, snorted and consumed mainly by students who do not have this disorder. One student in that NBC report admitted he may continue to use “smart drugs” while in college.



Irish Examiner

During a Media Ethics course I teach, my students examined the segment that had aired on NBC. My original intention was to focus on that broadcast report as an example of advocacy journalism. I had also wanted to discuss the ethics of questioning students on national TV about the abuse of these stimulants.

Initially, students seemed not to identify with the story, and there were few comments. The NBC News report covered students at Boston University, Vanderbilt, Harvard and other highly selective schools. After we screened the segment, one student commented, “We don’t have that kind of problem here.” I asked her if she was certain. Another student then raised his hand and bluntly asked, “Are we in a safe place in here?” After I assured him and his classmates they were, the floodgates opened.

Almost half of the students in my class admitted to have used stimulants to help them study. Most, who took the medication, said they got them from friends who had prescriptions. One student later told me he preferred Dextroamphetamine, which he called the “BMW” of stimulants. He also said that particular drug cost about \$30 for one tablet or capsule.

Stimulants, p. 5

Programming takes shape for 2017 convention

Continued from p. 1...

At a minimum, we would get four programming slots and four research paper slots at the convention. But we want to be on the program more than that. So, instead of ‘paying one full chip’ for a sole-sponsored session, we try to match END program proposals with ones from the other groups and pay a half-chip each. Sometimes they’re great matches; sometimes it takes some work to merge them.

That where we are right now. END has already made nine firm co-sponsorship deals—much better presence on the program than the four sessions we could have sole-sponsored. That also means with about 17 panel proposals submitted to END this year, we are a bit above a 50% acceptance rate of ones submitted to our division. So here’s the math: those nine panels cost us 4-and-a-half ‘chips.’ We will program at least two research sessions that each cost one-half chip. That means we have now committed to 5.5 of six chips. The challenge? We still have some really good proposals submitted to our division that we don’t have deals for yet. With some luck, and with continued contacts and dealmaking, we could spend our other half chip on one of the great remaining, as-yet-unscheduled panel proposals, or that might be a third research panel. Our deadline is in early November to complete that work, then it’s time for trying to get the best slots (Day 2 and Day 3) at the convention. Research papers? You know the deadline for those is April 1, 2017, but we will have already allocated the presentation slots they go into.

Bottom line, it all works to allow our one division, out of about 30 divisions and interest groups of AEJMC, to represent the ideals related to the world of ‘Electronic News’ at the annual convention. To make that work, it takes active END members and good END leadership, and we have both. Thanks to all of you who participate in this process.

Stimulants as “study aids”

Continued from p. 4...

I questioned students about their reasons for taking medications without a prescription and their concerns about addiction. One said he had taken Adderall in the past, and “it made studying so easy” that when he finished his own work, he “was so fired up” he actually started helping other students in the library prepare for their exams. However, He did say he stopped after his anxiety levels “spiked,” and that it took three weeks of withdrawal before he began to feel “normal again.” Another student remarked that the NBC News report served as an effective warning, but it offered no real solutions.

As journalism educators, we can choose to ignore the widespread misuse of stimulants by students, as the NBC News report claimed happens at most universities, or we can choose to form a first line of defense in combating this abuse. An important step is for instructors to have candid discussions about stimulants with their students. (Students must be informed their confidentiality would be respected, and they would face no consequences.)

Another approach is to work to increase campus-wide awareness. Several broadcast and print student reporters, who were also in that ethics class, told me of their intentions to cover the growing use of stimulants at our university as “study aids”. They agreed not to mention the in-class discussion itself, but they would seek comments from students around campus. I suggested that all interviews with students remain anonymous. In some cases, even if a student would agree to go on record about the misuse of stimulants for study purposes, it may not truly be “informed consent”. In addition, comments from health care professionals, would help students become more aware of the negative long-term affects of stimulant medication without doctor supervision. Students could also be informed of specific on-campus resources available to them.

Although finding effective solutions to the misuse of stimulants are complex, the ultimate aim would be to students in the near future screen an NBC “Campus Undercovered” or another network report that focuses on the significant drop in the rate of stimulants used as a “study aid” on college campuses across the country.

STATIC

is the newsletter of the Electronic News Division of the Association for Education in Journalism & Mass Communication.

It publishes three times annually (Fall, Winter & Summer).

Static accepts articles focusing on the division, as well as anything related to the professional or academic sides of our field.

Comments, questions, or article submissions should be directed to

Dylan McLemore, END Newsletter Editor, dylan@dylanmclemore.com

Electronic News Division elects new officers

Dylan McLemore, Newsletter Editor
Central Arkansas University

Members elected officers for the 2016-2017 academic year at the Electronic News Division business meeting, held during the 2016 AEJMC annual conference in Minneapolis.



Indira Somani
Division Head
Howard University



Tony DeMars
Vice Head & Program Chair
Texas A&M University-Commerce



Rebecca Coates Nee
Vice Head Elect / Webmaster
San Diego State University



Lindsey Conlin
Research Chair
University of Southern Mississippi



Victoria LaPoe
Prof. Freedom & Responsibility Chair
Western Kentucky University



Peter Morello
Teaching Chair
University of Missouri-Kansas City



Kate Keib
Membership Chair / Graduate Liaison
University of Georgia



Dylan McLemore
Newsletter Editor
University of Central Arkansas



Bill Silcock
Immediate Past Head & Bliss Chair
Arizona State University



Sonya Duhe'
RTDNA Liaison
Loyola University New Orleans

To contact your END officers, visit our webpage, aejmc.us/end

Burkum, Bliss recipients honored



Hub Brown, Syracuse (Left), with the 2016 Larry Burkum Service Award. Gary Hanson, Kent State (Right), with the 2016 Ed Bliss Award. *Photo courtesy Indira Somani.*

RTDNA meets in NOLA

Sonya Duhe'
Loyola University New Orleans

As your RTDNA Liaison, here's an update on the recent board meeting, which was held during the 2016 Excellence in Journalism conference in New Orleans:

- There were 1,059 registrations for EIJ 2016.
- 10 Murrow meet-ups were held this past year, eight Ed-talks produced and four webinars.
- A bipartisan effort passed this year on FOIA reform, 50 years after the first FOIA act.
- The FAA passed drone regulations allowing the flight of small drones commercially.
- Involved in major initiative with NAB called Reporting on Race in America with coverage guidelines expected in 2017.
- In 2017, EIJ will be in Anaheim; 2018 EIJ will be in Baltimore.

For newly elected board of directors and region directors, go to https://www.rtdna.org/content/board_of_directors

Research brief: Native American journalism

*Victoria LaPoe, Professional Freedom & Responsibility Chair
Western Kentucky University*

This spring, my undergraduate research assistant, Jocelyn Porter, and I surveyed journalists covering the Native American community. While the sample size was small (N=29), it raised some interesting questions for future research.

Twenty-nine journalists who report on the Native community in some capacity responded to the survey. The respondents work in various media formats such as digital media, newspapers and television.

The survey questions addressed topics regarding the direction in which the journalism profession is heading, analysis of mainstream and Native news coverage of specific events, the impact of digital media on Native coverage and overall experience of reporting in the Native community.

In general, the respondents felt like the journalism profession is heading in the wrong direction. One respondent provided evidence for this opinion referring to changes in where people get their news and quality of information.

“I think the availability of partisan websites allows people to pick and choose their news,” the respondent said. “Also, the immediacy and competitiveness that is needed in this instant world sometimes leads to a lack of fact-checking.”

The survey used the Animas River contamination on the Navajo reservation as a case study for the respondents to consider coverage by mainstream and Native media. In general the respondents were not satisfied with mainstream news coverage of the Animas River contamination and gave it an average of three on a scale of one to ten.

The follow up question to the coverage ranking allowed respondents to provide a more detailed explanation of what they believe should be included in the Animas River Coverage. One respondent said that there should be more context to the overall river contamination not just this specific event.

“More explanation on the history of contamination on the Navajo Nation, which explains why tribal officials have been reluctant to use water from the river,” the respondent said.

The survey included a question about challenges facing Indian Country overall with regard to media coverage. Respondents said the lack of interest about the Native community among the non-Native population and the struggle to get the mainstream media to include Native voices in their coverage was a major challenge.

A respondent said “Making our voices heard and being able to tell our stories our way,” was the most important issue.

Survey respondents pointed out differences in the Indian Country news coverage between mainstream and Native media organizations. Overall, they acknowledged that Native media tend to do a better job of providing the Native perspective in coverage compared to mainstream media, but Native coverage is not always objective.

“Native media is more focused and tends to stick to a subject more and relies less on authority when covering news,” one respondent said. “Native media can affect change amongst people more, help uplift and inspire more.”

Another survey question addressed the objectivity element for Native journalists who cover the Native community. The respondents explained their approach to ensure all news consumers are included when they report.

“Utilizing non-Native sources in conjunction with Native sources and receiving opinions on both sides of the issue are methods I use to ensure fair representation,” one respondent said.

The respondents provided insight to problems journalists of all backgrounds have when they report in Indian Country, such as finding sources and getting the information they need.

The survey also addressed the growth of digital media and the effect it could have on journalism, with a focus on Native community reporting. Respondents overwhelmingly said that digital media allows more Native voices to get out. Many respondents indicated specific positive changes that have already and will result from increased digital media use.

“Journalists likely will see more Natives engaging in social media and seeking to tell their own stories,” one respondent said.

However, the respondents did acknowledge some difficulties that are a result of digital media such as the content online tends to “dumb down” important issues in a basic explanation that may not completely encompass the topic.

One person addressed the various impacts of digital media in his/or her response.

“Digital media has opened up news coverage in Indian country, resulting in new resources and opportunities that include blogs, websites, etc.,” the respondent said. “Unfortunately, there is a lot of bad writing out there.”

The survey provided insight to the perspective journalists who cover the Native community referencing the obstacles they face with reporting and how the mainstream media covers the community.

Future research on this topic could look into the interaction between Native journalists and tribal government as well as ways that the Native media can communicate what is happening in their community to non-Native audiences.

LaPoe and Tristan Ahtone, an independent Native journalist and Native American Journalists Association board member, presented the survey results on September 18 at the annual NAJA Conference, which this year was held as part of SPJ's Excellence in Journalism conference in New Orleans.

50th anniversary celebration takes to the rooftop

The Electronic News Division met for its 50th anniversary celebration and award presentation Friday, August 5, on the rooftop of WCCO-TV in downtown Minneapolis. *Photos by Dylan McLemore, Becky Nee and Indira Somani.*



More photos available in our Facebook Group. Search for "enewsddivision."

