

Southeast Colloquium hosted by Virginia Tech

Paper submission deadline December 5



Fall colors at Virginia Tech in Blacksburg, Virginia (Photo: Virginia Tech)

Southeast Colloquium Research Chairs:

- Newspaper & Online News Division: Jeffrey C. South, Virginia Commonwealth University, jcsouth@vcu.edu
- Law & Policy Division: Courtney Barclay, Syracuse University, cobarcla@syr.edu
- Magazine Division: Erin Coyle, Louisiana State University, ekcoyle@lsu.edu
- Open Division: Dana Rosengard, Suffolk University, drosengard@suffolk.edu
- History Division: Harlan Makemson, Elon University, hmakemson@elon.edu
- Electronic Division: David Free, University of Texas at Austin, dfree@austin.rr.com

The AEJMC 2012 Southeast Colloquium will be in Blacksburg, Va., March 8-10, hosted by the Department of Communication at Virginia Tech.

The deadline for research paper submissions is 5 p.m. Dec. 5, 2011. Papers should be submitted electronically to the division research paper chairs (*see list of names and emails on the left.*)

More information can be found at the colloquium announcement page - www.comm.vt.edu/southeast_colloquium.html. Online registration is also available through the above website.

The colloquium will begin with a reception Thursday evening and will end before lunch Saturday. The \$115 registration fee includes the reception, meeting breaks, and lunch and dinner Friday. The convention rate for rooms in the Inn at Virginia Tech is \$109 per night (plus 5 percent tax and \$3 per night parking fee).

Full research paper guidelines and additional details will be posted soon on the AEJMC Web site. Further information is available from Prof. W. Wat Hopkins, whopkins@vt.edu.

LeadTime

LeadTime is official newsletter for the Newspaper & Online News Division of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication. AEJMC is a nonprofit, educational association of journalism and mass communication educators, students and media professionals.

The Newspaper & Online News Division examines key concerns facing journalism education, the newspaper industry and society; topics include ethics, new technology, readership, minority recruitment and the media's role in society. It publishes *Newspaper Research Journal* and a newsletter.

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Journalism as plural

Diversity embraced by division

On the first day of every Mass Comm 101 class, I preach to students that the word "media" is plural. I tell them: "When someone says, 'Media is...,' then you can safely assume that person is either wildly uninformed or making an intentionally misleading statement."

The entire structure of an Intro to Mass Comm class is designed to show the plurality of aims of various mass media enterprises, including the plurality of aims, goals, styles and values of journalistic enterprises.

So, if "media" is a plural word, then maybe the word "journalism" should be plural, too.

The AEJMC has acknowledges journalism's wide differences in delivery channels, techniques and audiences through at least six groups:

- Our brand-new name, the Newspaper and Online News Division, belatedly acknowledges the reality that news organizations use a delivery device that isn't a printing press. At our annual meeting in St. Louis, Newspaper Research Journal co-editor Sandy Utt told division members that many of the manuscripts she receives are focused on online news delivery, and that maybe even the journal's name should change to reflect that change.

- The Electronic News Division, formerly the Radio Television Journalism Division, changed its name at the same time and for the same reason as our division.

- The Scholastic Journalism and Magazine divisions, and the Civic and Citizen Journalism and Community Journalism interest groups—address specific journalistic practices, channels and audiences.

Together, these divisions and interest groups cover much of the ground that is contemporary journalism. We cover even more when we team up to co-sponsor panels at AEJMC conventions. (In St. Louis, we co-sponsored with the Scholastic, Magazine, and Community groups.) We cover still more when we co-sponsor with other groups, as we did last year with the Law and Policy and the Media Management and Economics divisions.

We understand the plurality of journalism, but many journalism consumers do not recognize the differences in its audiences, techniques, channels and goals. A stark reminder came in 2005, when a survey showed that 1 in 4 people thought Rush Limbaugh is a journalist. We see new reminders daily, when messengers are shot because the public cannot or will not distinguish between news and commentary, or little-"t" and big-"T" truth. And we see reminders when politicians and others in power exploit



HEAD LINES

Chris Roberts
Alabama

Who was Curtis MacDougall?

Student paper award named for influential professor

John Carvalho
Auburn

For years, I had been typing the words in various contexts: “MacDougall Student Paper Award.” In paper calls, in program copy, in annual reports. And finally I asked myself, “Who is this MacDougall dude?”

So I did some checking with our division long-term members, and some research on my own, and came up with the following:

Curtis MacDougall was a professor of journalism at Northwestern University for 29 years. Former division chair Randy Miller pulled a quote from an old Leadtime that also gave MacDougall credit for starting the division.

“The division got started at the 1965 AEJ convention at Syracuse. This was the year that AEJ reorganized into divisions, and the early divisions included History, Mass Comm & Society, and Communication Theory and Methodology ... None of these were media but rather were areas that cut across media, but Curt didn’t see that side of it and felt there ought to be a Newspaper Division. He was incensed that there wasn’t.

“The rule then ... was that to start a division, you had to present a petition with signatures of 25 members to the Executive Committee. So Curt put out a sign-

up sheet on a table at the entrance of the building where we had meetings, and I think he got the 25 signatures the first day he put it out.”

Sandy

Utt, editor of Newspaper Research Journal, noted that MacDougall was included in a “roll call” of Chicago Headline Club members who were active in the early days of Sigma Delta Chi, now the Society for Professional Journalists. As editor of the Evanston News-Index, MacDougall wrote an essay in 1936 defending a bold innovation: the signed editorial.

She also found MacDougall’s textbook, *Interpretative Reporting*, available on Amazon. First published in 1938 and weighing in at 682 pages, the book was a popular journalism text through the 1950s and 1960s, by which point MacDougall was a faculty member at Northwestern University.

He also wrote a popular book, *Hoaxes* (1940), that was the snopes.com of its time. A companion title, *Superstition and the Press*, was published in 1983.

His other books include *The*



MacDougall

Press and its Problems (W.C. Brown, 1940); *Newsroom Problems and Policies* (Macmillan, 1941); *Covering the Courts* (Prentice-Hall, 1946); *Understanding Public Opinion: A Guide for Newspapermen and Newspaper Readers* (Macmillan, 1952); and *Gideon’s Army: The Decision and the Organization, a history of the 1948 Progressive Party* (Marzani & Munsell, 1965). He also edited the compilation, *Reporters Report Reporters* (Iowa State University Press, 1968).

He is a member of the Medill School Hall of Achievement. His biography there also notes an active political career. He ran for Congress as a Democrat in 1944 and lost in the heavily Republican 10th district. He also ran unsuccessfully for the U.S. Senate in 1948 as a Progressive and for Congress again in 1979, though he failed to win the Democratic primary. He died in 1985.

A final note: Miller says that it’s ironic to name a research award for him, because MacDougall was hesitant to including research panels in the Newspaper Division. Credit another long-time member, Guido Stempel III, with changing his mind. Maybe it’s a warning to our student members at the beginning of their research careers: Keep your research grounded in the kind of professional issues that Curtis MacDougall dedicated his life to teaching and to writing about.

China trip an exploration of media; might lead to exchange program

By Jin Yang
Memphis

David Arant, the chair of the department of journalism at the University of Memphis and I, associate professor at the same program had an invitation from the Northwest University in Xi'An, China to visit them in October. The purpose of the visit was to explore the possibility of establishing an exchange program between the Northwest University and the University of Memphis.

The first stop on our trip to China was Beijing, a city full with vibrancy, dynamics, colors but layered with ancient mystery, rich heritage and omnipresent historical marks. While the Beijing visit was only three days, we were overwhelmed and enchanted by the city's landscape, culture and of course its population. However the highlight of the tour of Beijing was a two-hour visit to the China Daily, the largest national English language daily newspaper in China.

Wang Hao, a member of editorial board of the China Daily and Su Qiang, deputy director of International news department met us on a sunny Tuesday morning in their spacious conference room. Both Wang Hao and Su Qiang speak fluent English and we talked in English at the China's largest English newspaper headquarters.

We learned that the China Daily is growing, not shrinking, with a domestic circulation of 300,000 and



Jin Yang, David Arant (professors from the University of Memphis) toured the newsroom of the China Daily with Su Qiang (deputy director of international news department of the China Daily) as the guide. To their near left, there was a sign in Chinese reading European Edition. To their far left, there was a sign in Chinese reading American Edition. (Photo: Jin Yang)

an overseas circulation of 300,000. Its news editorial staff member exceeds 400. What is amazing is the fact that the China Daily hired 60 senior journalists from the United States, Britain and other countries. For instance, their senior copy editor Bill once worked at a Los Angeles newspaper as an editor. We were told that Bill has been working with the China Daily for about two years. While we were there, Bill went back to the states for his vocation.

Besides the flagship China daily, China Daily Media Group, the media corporation of the government, has 12 print publications: China Daily U.S. Edition, China Daily Hong Kong Edition, China Daily European Weekly, China Daily Asian Weekly,

21st Century, 21st Century English Language Teaching Review etc. China Daily U.S. Edition that was founded in 2009 publishes 16 pages Monday to Friday in the U.S. Its target audiences are the United Nation headquarters, government agencies of the United States and Canada, universities, think tanks, major financial institutions and many multinational companies.

We learned quite a lot about the China Daily in terms of its overseas bureaus, government-supported operations, advantages of having strong funding and no big domestic competitors, but what impressed us most was a profile of their work force: journalists.

Their journalists or reporters have
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Emerging news ecosystems explored by panels' scholars

Wilson Lowrey
Alabama

Are emerging news ecosystems flourishing or floundering? According to a panel of scholars at the 2011 convention, it depends on what you mean by news ecosystem.

A panel of media sociologists, media economists and industry researchers offered mixed findings on the state of news ecosystems – those complex, interdependent environments inhabited by troubled traditional media and emerging news forms like citizen sites and blogs. Panelists included Chris Anderson of CUNY, Jesse Holcomb of the Pew Research Center, Ann Hollifield of the University of Georgia, Seth Lewis of the University of Minnesota, and Wilson Lowrey of the University of Alabama.

Holcomb took a dim view of the health of the new news ecosystem, citing Pew Research Center's 2010 analysis of a week's worth of news in Baltimore. According to Pew's findings, channels for news distribution in Baltimore were fairly diverse, but legacy media supplied most of the information for the news system. Emerging media (mostly online) produced almost no investigative, watchdog stories, even as traditional news outlets did less investigation themselves.

Hollifield also painted a gloomy picture, pointing to economic challenges. Yes, new growth in the ecosystem offers some hope for innovation and for inclusion of new voices, but hypercompetition and corporate restructuring are eating away at newsroom resources. Journalists have little time and incentive to take on the burden of meshing with emerging media while they're also trying to do fundamental journalism – like checking facts and watchdogging the powerful.

But are there other ways to think about

ecosystems, beyond traditional geography and definitions of news? Anderson said researchers should let ecosystem boundaries evolve, rather than determine them ahead of time based on urban borders and assumptions about what constitutes "real news." He suggested researchers do this by using news messages as a starting point for analysis. By tracking paths of messages across networks of diverse media outlets, entirely new ecosystems emerge, and messages may even change forms and purposes. These paths reveal new ecosystem patterns that our old frames blinded us to.

Lewis reminded us that we need to think too about normative professional boundaries when we study changing ecosystems. Old norms die hard, but powerful players like the Knight Foundation can do a lot to prepare the ground for acceptance of new practices and norms. The problem is moving from new ideas to new "institutions." Sustainability is a challenge in a fast-changing, resource-poor environment.

Lowrey also talked sustainability, from a macro level. For a new news form or practice to take root and spread, it needs a financial foothold, public legitimacy, and a wide understanding about its form and purpose. Growing legitimacy spurs mimicry (and vice versa), and stable "populations" start to form. The emergence of news blogs, aggregation sites, and political fact-checking sites are a few recent examples of this process.

Holcomb said of the Pew Research case study that there are challenges in the approach, and it may not apply everywhere. But he said researchers of media ecosystems need to experiment. His optimism for the Pew study – "it may be a model for future study in other locales, and perhaps on a larger scale" – seems justified for the other approaches discussed in this session as well.

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all been screened for one essential skill in interviews before being brought on the team: mastery of English and so quite a number of the hired hold B.A. degrees in English. For those who have journalism degrees, their English have to be excellent. On-job training or workshops are offered to all who have been hired in terms of professional preparations. In fact, Wang Hao has had the chance to study journalism at the University of Tennessee. And Su Qiang has been trained at the University of Hawaii.

However, reporters' benefits and salary are not comparable to those who work at the foreign joint adventures and companies. There is a serious loss of reporters to business especially those who have earned three or more years of working experiences at the China Daily. The reason is simple: joint-ventures and foreign companies are in a high demand of English proficient talents, and reporters who work at the China Daily have a very good command of English language. As a result, most reporters currently working at the China Daily are young, comparatively speaking, at an average of 30 years old.

One of the questions we had for Wang Hao is in regard to the government censorship. We were curious to know how a government-owned newspaper sets up its policy about the content. Wang Hao told us that there are no explicit rules and policies regulating the stories and content. However, it seems true that everyone is aware of the bottom-line and everyone uses common sense to avoid covering sensitive issues and getting themselves into troubles. Out of staying polite on our first visit, we did not try to push on the censorship topic.

From the free copy of that day's China Daily, I quickly

surveyed page one's content. A big photo from Agence France-Press on an Egyptian mourner about the loss of life in protests took about a quarter of the page. Three other headlines occupied the rest of the page: China's sovereign wealth fund buying shares of four major state-owned banks to stabilize the market, harsh harvest for Xinjiang cotton growers and China's warning of a trade war if the U.S. Congress passes a bill pressuring Beijing to appreciate its currency of yuan. On the editorial and opinion page, I found two articles that were very interesting. One was about RMB bill threatens trade war and the other about Steve Jobs, a real hero in cyber world.

The trade war article was penned by Dan Steinrock, who is a visiting fellow at the Shanghai Institutes for International Studies and a research director of an independent think tank based in the U.S. The Steve Jobs article was written by Esther Dyson, who is CEO of EDventure Holdings and an active investor in a variety of start-ups around the world.

I suddenly realized that the world is getting smaller not because we can visit and talk to local people more easily but because the issues people around the world talk and care about seem to be more common and concentrated. When we left the U.S., the Steve Jobs stories were all over the media. When we arrived in China, we were still reminded of the Steve Jobs' legacy. That 13-hour airplane trip didn't take us far enough. That is unimaginable 100 years ago! Ironically, being global seems to be "being small" not "being big."

In regard to the relationship between the two countries, we learned from our visit that it is unrealistic to expect no conflicts of national interests and trade wars. However, something positive and beneficial to both countries is U.S. journalistic professionals marginalized and laid out in U.S. due to its economic crisis, dramatic cuts and closure of many newspapers may find great opportunities



misunderstandings for their own purposes. (We can talk about selective exposure, selective retention and hostile media theory, but we'll save that for the Intro to Mass Comm class.)

Journalists, of course, don't help themselves. Foolish mistakes, laziness and overt sins further narrow the tight window of credibility that journalists have with the public. Mixing fact and opinion with no clear delineation or explanation doesn't help, either. And though news organizations buy ink by the barrel and have plenty of online bandwidth, many do a lousy job explaining themselves and their motives.

So what does all this mean to journalism educators? I'd argue that we should be teaching more than just our own students. We should help university administrators appreciate that they're players in the sandbox where our students learn their craft, just as student government is for political science majors and the lab for chemistry majors. And explosions, whether in the student paper or in a chemistry lab, are going to happen and can be teachable moments.

Moreover, we should take every opportunity to explain to outsiders the news (and other) values of journalism, the distinctions between news and opinion, and the limits of journalism.

Heck, I'd make every U.S. taxpayer read Koch & Rosenstiel's "Blur: How to Know What's True in the Age of Information Overload" and take a multiple-choice test.

I love teaching journalism students, but I also feel an obligation to teach Intro to Mass Comm to students across my 3,000-student college. And I've been working to make MC 101 a core curriculum offering at my school, hoping that we can teach media (and journalism) literacy to students who may never create a mass media message but will continue to consume mass media all their lives.

Or, better yet, maybe we can find a way to make "journalism" a plural word.

Division, society to offer award

Andy Bechtel
UNC-Chapel Hill

The Newspaper & Online News Division is teaming up with the American Copy Editors Society by establishing the ACES Award For Research On Editing.

"We hope to bridge the gap between academia and working journalists," said Teresa Schmedding, president of ACES. "Research in editing is even more crucial as the media landscape changes as managers are faced with tough decisions -- decisions that shouldn't be made based upon instinct or past practices. We need the strong data that comes from research to guide us."

The award is sponsored by ACES and administered by the Newspaper & Online News Division.

Here's how the award works: Professors and graduate students will be invited to submit research papers for submission to the annual AEJMC conference, held in August of each year.

The division will assign judges to select the best research paper that focuses on story editing, headline writing and other areas relevant to editing.

The winner will present the research at the AEJMC conference.

The winner will also receive a \$100 prize and complementary registration to the ACES conference

for the following year.

The idea of paper competition about editing generated a great deal of interest at the most recent AEJMC conference, said John Carvalho, a journalism professor at Auburn University and head of the Newspaper Division of AEJMC.

"Our goal is that our academic research also benefit the profession," he said. "Partnerships with groups like ACES help us focus our research in specific areas, like copy editing, that encourage high levels of professionalism."

A formal call for research papers will go out this fall, and the first ACES award will be given at the AEJMC conference in Chicago in August 2012.