MEMBER NEWS

Dr. Allison Eden, Assistant Professor in the Department of Communication at Michigan State won the Faculty Impact Award for the college of Communication Arts and Sciences.

A new book on "Making Human Rights News: Balancing Participation and Professionalism (Routledge) has been edited by John C. Pollock and Morton Winston, both at The College of New Jersey, the latter a former US Chair of Amnesty International.

“Making Human Rights News” explores the impact of new digital technology and activism on the production of human rights messages. It is the first collection of studies to combine multidisciplinary approaches, “citizen witness” challenges to journalism ethics, and expert assessments of the “liberating role” of the Internet, addressing the following questions:

1. What can scholars from a wide range of disciplines – including communication studies, journalism, sociology, political science, and international relations/studies – add to traditional legal and political human rights discussions, exploring the impact of innovative digital information technologies on the gathering and dissemination of human rights news?

2. What questions about journalism ethics and professionalism arise as growing numbers of untrained “citizen witnesses” use modern mobile technology to document claims of human rights abuses?

3. What are the limits of the “liberating role” of the Internet in challenging traditional sources of authority and credibility, such as professional journalists and human rights professionals?

4. How do greater Internet access and human rights activism interact with differences in press freedom and government censorship worldwide to promote respect for different categories of human rights, such as women's rights and rights to health?
Much research on digital journalism has focused on “online”, rather than distinguishing between platforms and devices. Yet digital journalism and news, once associated with fixed desktop computers, has become entrenched in mobility and connected to mobile devices. Trending research topics such as data journalism, social media, audience analytics should thus be studied in connection with mobile devices and mobility. This special issue addresses this in the salient case of news.

The mobile device is a “miniaturized mobility”, tailored to fit with contemporary patterns of mobility (Elliott & Urry, 2010). Within the broader realm of digital journalism, we find news produced by mobile journalists (MoJos) as well as citizens using their networked smartphones (Burum & Quinn, 2015; Westlund, 2013), news distributed via mobile networks and platforms (Villi & Matikainen, 2015), and consumed by mobile audiences on mobile devices in diverse spaces and times of the day (Wolf & Schnauber, 2015). Newsrooms have adapted to accommodate new technologies of mobility: smartphones and related technology (smart watches and augmented-reality glasses), while novel forms of newsroom have also sprung up. What impact has this had on how reporters source newsmakers and stories, and how they construct news packages? What role do mobile devices have in different forms of journalism, and how is news for mobile devices brought alive and consumed in the form of text, audio and video?

Commercially, the move from print to web was long foretold; news’s move onto social media accessed via smartphones was less expected, and has resulted in news organisations struggling to maintain control over distribution of their content. This has impacted on the advertising revenue model which has supported production for the past century. Conceptually, too, news has moved from being fixed to fluid, a flow of updateable information rather than a regularly issued product. Changes in production are also affected by changes in how, where and when news is consumed in the niches of life (Struckmann & Karnowski, 2017). A recent US-based study suggests people turn to their mobile devices for news snacking (Molyneux, 2017). Are such patterns found elsewhere, and how does it correspond to how often people turn to their mobile devices for news, and via other platforms and news media? If so, what effect does that have on news’s civic informational role?

This special issue of Digital Journalism invites scholars to explore the intersection of news and mobility as it concerns production, distribution and consumption of news. The news/mobility intersection also raises issues for scholars in how to study such a rapidly evolving target. What epistemologies and methods are best suited to understanding this changeable industry? Both well-argued conceptual pieces, and theoretically informed empirical contributions are welcomed using all research methods, and from scholars working in journalism studies, media, mobilities and related areas, from all parts of the globe, in two broad areas:

News production and distribution
- Newsroom adaptation to accommodate new news mobilities.
- Para-journalism and independent practitioners bypassing traditional news channels (including partisan news, misinformation, fake news, and issues of verification).
- Studies into the business of mobile media services (payments, advertisements, m-commerce) for news.
- Emerging narrative formats afforded by mobile technologies.
- Mobile infrastructure’s impact on news production/distribution.
- Personalising and customising the mobile news experience.
- Mobile devices in citizen journalism (and relating to witnessing, emotions, authenticity, live reporting, social media).

News consumption
- Impact of mobile news channels on news consumption behaviour
- Impact on civic engagement and political decision making.
- How smart phones, smart watches and augmented-reality glasses weave news consumption and sharing into everyday life.
- New literacy skills to navigate and interpret mobile news.
- New conceptualisations of news as fluid rather than fixed.
- New affordances of mobile news technologies.
- Mobile news consumption in space and time.
- Multi-method analyses of mobile news consumption (eg mixing survey, interviews or diaries with passive trace data).
Northwestern University in Qatar (NU-Q) saw the publication of a study on the correlation between both the season and hemisphere where you are born and media preferences later in life, as well as naming a new director for executive education.

In a study published in the journal *Communications*, NU-Q Professor Klaus Schoenbach examines possible correlations between both the season and hemisphere in which one is born and media preferences later in life. The study focused on the Middle East and North Africa region, where summers are almost unbearably hot, forcing people to stay inside or to cover themselves up – that is, more like during northern winters. It found that Individuals with more – but also relatively hotter – summer months directly after birth more often prefer entertaining genres such as comedy and drama, both on TV and online. “This study provides new evidence of how temperaments come about that lead to specific media behaviors, thus helping to expand and refine mood-management theory,” said Schoenbach.

NU-Q also announced the appointment of Jairo Lugo-Ocando, distinguished scholar, global media expert, and institutional leader as director of it executive and graduate education. Lugo-Ocando will be responsible for the conceptualization, development, and execution of the program as well as teaching courses either in communication or journalism in line with the needs of the school. A tenured associate professor at the School of Media and Communication at the University of Leeds, Lugo-Ocando’s background includes appointments as head of the University of Sheffield’s Global Journalism MA program, director of the University of Stirling’s journalism program, editor-in-chief of Venezuela’s *Diario La Verdad*, and freelance writer/stringer for several news organizations such as the United Press International, Miami’s *El Diario*, and others in Venezuela, Peru, and Colombia. He received his PhD from the University of Sussex and an MA from Lancaster University in media studies and international relations.