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BAMJ Award Winners to be Celebrated at American University Bliss Newsroom

**By Dylan McLemore, Division Head
University of Central Arkansas**

I've always said that the best part of our division is the tight-knit bond of our community. When you become active in BAMJ, it's never long before you feel like you're part of the family. I think that's why our annual awards mean so much. The Edward L. Bliss Award for Distinguished Broadcast Journalism Education and the Larry Burkum Service Award have become signature honors in our field not only because they recognize exemplary achievements over careers as broadcast educators, but because they are chosen by and celebrated by the close colleagues and friends that comprise this BAMJ community.

Inside this edition of *Static*, the 2023 Bliss and Burkum award winners will be revealed, just a few hours after a surprise announcement in Las Vegas at the Broadcast Education Association's annual convention. I hope you'll reach out and congratulate our deserving recipients.

We'll honor them again at the AEJMC annual conference in Washington, D.C. Mark your calendars for Tuesday, August 8 at 7:00 p.m., as we visit the house that Ed Bliss built – the



News You Can Use



BAMJ scores big with a variety of panels at AEJMC this summer - Page 10

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newly renovated Media Production Center at American University.

Because there is no convenient Metro option, and taxis or ride shares are prohibitively expensive, BAMJ has arranged round-trip charter transportation between the conference hotel and the American campus. The cost will be \$20 per person and can be paid as part of your conference registration. This represents a minimum savings of 50% over hailing your own Uber or Lyft – and potentially much more depending on demand at the time. If you prefer to pay your own way, the event itself is still free to our members.

More good news on the conference front: BAMJ shared in an association-wide increase in paper submissions. Great thanks to research chair Volha Kananovich and everyone reviewing papers in this exceptionally busy month. Your service will be recognized in the summer edition of *Static*.

Finally, a special thank you to graduate liaison Samantha Kocan for leading a virtual panel in March on preparing for academic job interviews. It was attended by many of our



graduate student members, as well as some non-member students who we hope will be joining our ranks.

If you teach or advise grad students involved in AEJMC, please let them know they can now join BAMJ for free. We'd love for them to meet all of you and share in this special community we've built.

Broadcast Journalism Education's Highest Honor: The Bliss Award Goes to Dr. Laura Smith of the University of South Carolina

**By B. William Silcock, Bliss Award Committee Chair, Emeritus
Assistant Dean Walter Cronkite School of Journalism & Mass
Communication**

The Broadcast and Mobile Journalism (BAMJ) Division of the Association of Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC) announces the 2023 Edward L. Bliss Award for Distinguished Broadcast Journalism Education goes to Dr. Laura K. Smith, Senior Instructor at the University of South Carolina's College of Information and Communications. A panel of former Bliss winners unanimously selected Professor Smith, a consummate broadcast educator, based on letters from students, colleagues, and documents supporting an exemplary record of teaching, research, and service.

This year's Bliss competition was highly competitive. Still, Professor Mary Rogus, recently retired from Ohio University (2014 Bliss Winner), found Dr. Smith's teaching effectiveness worthy of what is recognized as broadcast journalism education's most distinguished honor. "One of the many things that struck me about Dr. Smith in reading her nomination packet was that every letter (student and colleague) talked about how she meets each student where they are and helps them find their path to success. That dedication reflects everything I've ever read about Edward Bliss as a professional and educator."



Dr. Smith joins Professor Mary Rogus and a small but growing number of women educators, including Associate Professor at Loyola University Chicago Dr. Lee Hood on the Bliss list of honorees who commented on her leadership skills. "Laura's boundless energy and enthusiasm are infectious. She is a powerful advocate for her students and a passionate practitioner of outstanding broadcast education," added Professor Hood (2018 Bliss Winner). Another colleague, Dr. Nancy Dupont from the University of Mississippi made history in 2021 when she won both the Bliss and BAMJ's Burkum Award (for service to journalism and journalism education) in the same year (2021).

Dr. Laura K. Smith
2023 Edward L. Bliss Award Winner, BAMJ Division of AEJMC

Smith's passion was recognized by two other judges, both former news division heads (B.E.A. & AEJMC) and Bliss winners. Dr. Bill Davie (2013 Bliss Winner) of Louisiana at Lafayette found Smith's teaching connected well with her research. "When you review documents of Dr. Smith's career as a teacher and scholar in multimedia journalism, you recognize an expert veteran of local television newsrooms who is keenly aware of what her mentees and colleagues need to know what it takes to win in a highly competitive business," Davie said.

Professor of Practice of the College of Journalism and Mass Communication at the University of Nebraska Ken Fischer (2017 Bliss Winner) also noted Dr. Smith's strong ties to the professional world that she expertly uses to prepare her students to enter. "She not only educates her students at the University of South Carolina. Professor Smith educates all of us. Her workshop sessions at various conferences make the rest of us better teachers. I used some materials that came from Dr. Smith. The academy is lucky to have someone like Professor Smith, who could easily be a News Director, General Manager, or Vice-President of Training in the industry."

The (BAMJ) Division Chair, Dr. Dylan McLemore, was delighted to learn of the Bliss Committee's decision. "Laura is not only a mentor to her students but to all of us who have followed her example in association and division leadership. The officers, chairs, and committee members she has encouraged and assisted across AEJMC and the Broadcast and Mobile Journalism Division are a testament to her service to our scholarly community." Professor McLemore added that this year's Bliss Award presentation to Dr. Laura Smith would be historic. A special off-site ceremony will take place in the Edward L. Bliss newsroom of American University in Washington, D.C., at 7 p.m., Tue., Aug. 8, during the annual AEJMC Convention.

The Distinguished Broadcast Journalism Education award was named for Edward L. Bliss, Jr., an author of six books, news producer, and editor for C.B.S. News. He was known for his work with Edward R. Murrow and Walter Cronkite and ended his career as an educator at American University. In the Ed Bliss Memorial newsroom, Dr. Laura Smith's name will be added to a special plaque for the winners.

Past winners of the Bliss Award (formerly Distinguished Broadcast Educator Award) are Jack Shelley, Iowa State (1983); Ed Bliss, American (1984); Dick Yoakam, Indiana (1985); Henry Lippold, Wisconsin-Eau Claire (1986); Rod Gelatt, Missouri (1987); Mitchell Charnley, Minnesota (1988); Don Brown, Arizona State (1989); Irving Fang, Minnesota (1990); Ernest F. Andrews, Syracuse (1991); Al Anderson, Texas (1992); Michael Murray, Missouri-St Louis (1993); Joseph R. Dominick, Georgia (1994); Joan Konner, Columbia (1995); Gordon Greb, San Jose State (1996); Travis Linn, Nevada-Reno (1997); Vernon Stone, Missouri (1998); Elmer Lower, A.B.C., N.B.C. (1999); Ken Keller, SIU-Carbondale (2000); Lincoln Furber, American (2001); James Hoyt, Wisconsin (2002); Phillip O. Keirstead, Florida A&M (2003); Thomas Griffiths, Brigham Young (2004); Peter Mayeux, Nebraska (2005); Bill Knowles, Montana (2006); Jim Upshaw, Oregon (2007); Glenn Johnson, Washington State (2008); Sam Swan, Tennessee (2009); Phillip Jeter, Winston Salem State (2010); C.A. "Charlie" Tuggle, North Carolina (2011); Robert Papper, Hofstra (2012); William R. Davie, Louisiana at Lafayette (2013); Mary Rogus, Ohio (2014); Mark Harmon, Tennessee (2015); Gary Hanson, Kent State (2016); Ken Fischer, Oklahoma (2017); Lee

Hood, Loyola-Chicago (2018); Kent Collins, Missouri (2019); Max Utsler, Kansas (2020); Nancy DuPont, Mississippi (2021); and Bob Gould, Michigan State (2022).



A gathering of present and past BAMJ leadership congratulating Dr. Smith upon winning the 2023 Bliss Award. See in the photo left to right: Harrison Hove, immediate past Chair of the BAMJ Division; Ken Fischer, Bliss Winner 2017; Lee Hood, Bliss Winner 2018; Laura Smith, Bliss Winner 2023; Bill Davie, Bliss Winner 2013; Bill Silcock, Chair Bliss Awards Committee

Heather Birks wins 2023 Burkham Service Award **By Laura K. Smith, Chair BAMJ Burkham Committee**

Each year, the Broadcast and Mobile Journalism Division seeks to recognize someone who epitomizes service – service to our students, our division, our colleagues, our stakeholder groups and partners, and/or our profession. Heather Birks checks every box. This year, our committee was unanimous in its decision to honor Heather’s indefatigable dedication to broadcasting and journalism education with the 2023 Larry Burkum Service Award.

Whether at the start of their careers or seasoned industry professionals, in the United States or abroad, her global impact has been truly remarkable. Most of us know her as executive director of the Broadcast Education Association, where she’s been at the helm since 2006. But that’s just the tip of the iceberg.

For decades, she’s brought academics and professionals together in service to our industries and the communities they serve. As ASU professor emeritus Bill Silcock so perfectly put it, “Heather understands and engages in the vastly changing ‘alphabet soup’ of global journalism higher educational organizations.” To name just some of her career highlights:



Heather Birks, BEA Executive Director, gives a congratulatory hug to Dr. Laura Smith, winner of the 2023 Bliss Award. Moments before this photo was taken, Laura had announced that Heather will receive the 2023 Larry Burkham Award from the BAMJ Division. Laura is chair of the Burkham committee.

- Through the Radio Advertising Bureau, manages the RAB Student Scholars program, providing hundreds of students the opportunity to meet with top executives in the radio industry. As such, she was recently selected (2018) as one of Radio Ink's Most Influential Women in Radio
- Before leading BEA to the next level, served in NAB's Education Foundation for a decade and deserved much credit for the Service to America Awards and the Broadcast Leadership Training Program, a 10-month program designed to enable talented senior level broadcast executives who aspire to advance as group executives or station owners
- Has long played an integral role on the Council of Communication Associations
- Helped organize two international workshops for media educators at annual conferences of the Broadcast and New Media Research Association of China
- As a member of the World Journalism Education Council, attended and/or organized panels and educational opportunities at all five WJEC congresses (Singapore, South Africa, Belgium, New Zealand, and France) and will do it yet again in 2025 in Perth, Australia

According to Nebraska's professor of practice Ken Fischer, who nominated her, "Heather does not consider other mass communication organizations as competitors. Instead, she welcomes the new relationships they bring." In fact, relationship building is Birks' forte. Bill Davie, associate professor and BORSF Regents Chair of Communication the University of Louisiana at Lafayette, says her ability "to forge the type of relationships essential to the BEA's trajectory of growth by relying on her secure corporate and academic alliances" is paramount to her success. "No wonder her service to the BEA's board has produced stability and growth despite undeniable tumult in the broadcast industry and its competitive platforms of digital media. This record of service shows not only her foresight as

an administrator, but also her capacity for creating innovation with a clear vision of the future,” says Davie.

Mary Rogus, associate professor emerita at The University of Ohio, calls Birks an idea person. “An idea pops into her head or is suggested and she jumps on it, expands it, and makes it work to the benefit of all of us. Even before the pandemic, she realized the organization needed to serve its members, and broadcast education, beyond the annual convention. As university budgets limited travel funds, increasingly BEA came to us with much more frequent and useful communication, social media, online resources, (BEA’s) ‘On Location’, mini-conferences and an international conference. That work has made a huge difference in our ability to remain relevant in the classroom to the current media industry.”

As a necessary sidenote, Rogus says no tribute to Birks would be complete without talking about her effervescent, energizer bunny, warm personality. “It doesn’t matter if you’re meeting her for the second time or renewing a decades long friendship, Heather knows your name, something about you, and makes you feel as if you are the most important person she’s interacted with that day. Her enthusiasm is catching.” Silcock agrees: “Heather inspires diverse new ideas without offending anyone. She dares young faculty and older scholars to dream (like her) of innovative new ways to extend membership events and benefits beyond four days every April in Las Vegas. Her energy is boundless.” In considering individuals who have demonstrated extraordinary service to the academy and to industry, BYU associate professor Dale Cressman says he cannot think of anyone more deserving of this award.



This year’s Burkum Committee concurs. Three faculty judges – each a former division head and/or Burkum winner – selected Birks for her outstanding service.

“If you could paint a picture of a person who does it all – it would be Heather,” says Laura Smith, former head of the BAMJ Division and current chair of this year’s Burkum Award committee. “For far too long, she’s quietly gone about her business by connecting us, speaking up for us and making us all look good while she rotates around the edges of the room. She is a beloved bright, shining star. I look forward to being in her orbit whenever, wherever I can.”

Debora Wenger, associate dean and professor in the University of Mississippi's School of Journalism and New Media, won the Burkum award in 2018. Of Birks, she says: "Heather may not have professor in her title, but she has done an inordinate amount of good for broadcast education. By raising the profile of our discipline, recognizing student and faculty excellence and serving as a champion for what we do within the industry, Heather has enabled us to remain a vital part of the broadcast media ecosystem."

According to Hubert "Hub" Brown, dean of the University of Florida's College of Journalism and Communications, who won the award in 2016, "We are so fortunate to have Heather Birks as a partner in our teaching, research, and service mission. There is no one like her. She maximizes the connection between the academy and the profession on our behalf, and she brings tremendous energy and ideas to that partnership. It is difficult to imagine our institutions occupying their unique position without Heather's help."

Other recent recipients include: Jill Geisler, Loyola Chicago (2022), Nancy Dupont, Ole Miss (2021), Bill Silcock, Arizona State (2019), and Joe Foote, Oklahoma (2017).

If you would like to nominate someone for this award in the future, [criteria](#) include strong evidence of significant service contributions to journalism education and to the electronic news industry. Larry Burkum served the Broadcast and Mobile Journalism Division (then the Radio-Television Journalism Division) as secretary, newsletter editor and webmaster from 1995 to 2005. He was presented the inaugural Burkum Award at the 2005 AEJMC convention in San Antonio.

Educators and Generative AI

By Gina Baleria, Assistant Professor Sonoma State University

At this point, chances are good you've heard about Chat GPT, and likely even had students submit an assignment or two (or three... or four...) using this new experimental tool. In my case, a couple students submitted a news article that fit the specs for a Chat GPT creation - as the story, which was about a campus bike theft, was written as if it were a consequential, deep, and significant national or international news story. When Chat GPT is asked to mimic news, in this case, it appears to be drawing from national and international outlets, rather than local, everyday examples.

These AI models have been sprung on us by the tech industry, and we must quickly start grappling with the risks they pose, while at the same time beginning to understand how we can use AI tools well moving forward (as well as hoping some regulatory agency takes on the urgent task of applying bumpers to such technology as it develops and we adapt to it). More specifically,

as journalism educators, we need to understand how these AI tools impact how journalism is done and how it is received and perceived by audiences.

Reuters describes generative AI as a tool that uses data to learn how to create content - including text, images, and computer code - instead of simply categorizing or identifying data. One of the most concerning things about generative AI is that it can mimic any style and tone. At the same time, it's pulling information from the same place as search engines. As we know, some of our search results are credible... and some are not. Thus, AI can seamlessly mix together factual information and non-factual information in ways that humans cannot easily parse without significant research. Who among us has the time to do that kind of research with every online query? That mixture, coupled with a confident tone and style mean that generative AI can do great damage to people's understanding and knowledge of facts, information, events, and ideas.

Even more concerning is that many people, our students often among them, think that what generative AI generates for them is final, complete, and ready to submit. When, as with any other type of research-based writing, they need to do some critical assessment, fact checking, re-working, and editing to achieve a final product. For example, in a [recent episode of 60 Minutes](#), generative AI stated that 3% of the ice in Antarctica is made from Penguin urine. A quick fact check will reveal that penguins do not urinate, and that the waste they do produce is solid or semi-solid, and closer to 0%.

While there are other deep concerns, there are also possibilities. Already, generative AI can provide well structured templates for various writing purposes, such as a professional email, or recommendation letter. Again, these need to be edited and formed, but the structure of the template can be helpful. Generative AI can also return search results in formats that can be extremely helpful, such as lists of sources on a given topic and aggregation of contact information for those suggested sources.

With these possibilities, more concerns do arise, including whether the search engine that generative AI is drawing from offers sources that are diverse and varied in perspective. This concern stems from the fact that AI is not "other" - it is created by humans - in this case [humans who are often white and male](#) - and is thus imbued with the same biases, assumptions, and misconceptions that these humans may have. We have already seen how these biases have led to the [technology having trouble recognizing people with darker skin](#), in addition to other biases related to gender, ability, and other demographics. This can [perpetuate and even strengthen these biases in society](#).

So, now that generative AI is here, we must advocate for reasonable regulations to help manage its use. In addition, as journalism educators, we must guide our students in their use of it, so we may help them recognize that generative AI is not a shortcut. We can help students learn how to effectively use this tool and understand the role they still need to play when using information from this source. Student journalists must continue to put information and content generated from AI through a journalistic process, just as they would any information they engage with throughout their newsgathering.



BAMJ schedule preview at AEJMC this summer in Washington D.C.
By Danielle Deavours, Assistant Professor, Samford University

Monday 10:30 a.m. to Noon

BAMJ research paper session

Monday 2:30 p.m. to 4 p.m.

Broadcast and Mobile Journalism and Communication Technology Divisions
Installing Updates: Reconciling Research on Virtual Reality and Immersive Media
Over Time

Moderating/Presiding

James D. Ivory, Virginia Tech

Panelists

Andrea Stephenson Won, Cornell

Sun Joo Ahn, Georgia

Jeremy Bailenson, Stanford

Sriram Kalyanaraman, Florida

Nicholas Bowman, Syracuse

Communication and related fields have explored social and behavioral dimensions of virtual reality and other immersive media technologies for decades, often with mixed (And sometimes disputed) results. Meanwhile, the technology and user experiences of such applications have evolved extensively, leading to possible questions about when research on older iterations and prototypes applies to our current immersive media experiences and when it does not. This panel

will explore insights from active and experienced researchers working with virtual reality and related technologies regarding how we should interpret, apply, adapt, and extend the existing research on rapidly changing (and more popular than ever) immersive media tech.

Monday 4:30 p.m. to 6 p.m.

Broadcast and Mobile Journalism and Media Ethics Divisions

How Will Local Journalism Change as Metaverse, Mobile 5G and Decentralized Web 3.0 Take Shape?

In Particular, What Might be Ethics Guardrails for Both Community and Local TV Media?

Moderating/Presiding

Subbu Vincent, Santa Clara

Panelists

Don Heider, Markkula Center for Applied Ethics

Retha Hill, Arizona State

Robert Hernandez, Southern California

Community media consumption, real-time video emergence, local civic organizing, and acts of democratic and disinformation agency, all tend to happen on mobile first. With 5G speeds being 10 times more than 4G, and low latencies allowing substantially more real-time interaction on demand, new metaverse apps are already taking shape. In due course, new participatory models for news making and journalism are likely to emerge. Some models may even pay better for local journalists using decentralized web and crypto tokens. It is also possible that new local news experiences including in broadcast form will become profitable on the metaverse, including local advertisers. But oftentimes, questions of ethics are raised only after the fact or after a crisis has emerged. Discussing hypothetical scenarios of news breaking, and participation in the news gathering in these new media environments will help more than hurt. Especially to avoid the perils of journalism's encounters with social media that led to many after-the-fact ethics advisories to be issued. This panel will outline a few questions and scenarios to discuss.

Tuesday 8:30 a.m. to 10 a.m.

Broadcast and Mobile Journalism Division and Community Journalism Interest Groups

Teaching Journalism Students to Tell Stories from Their Own Communities

Moderating/Presiding

Jennifer C. Thomas, Howard

Panelists

Sonja Williams, Howard

Sherri Williams, American

Jeremiah Patterson, American

Oscar Guerra, Connecticut

Many journalism & communications students do not see their stories in mainstream media, and if they do, the stories often don't represent their authentic experience. This panel would explore how to teach journalism students to push back on mainstream narratives and discover how to tell their own stories from perspectives not always represented in mainstream media.

Tuesday 10:30 a.m. to Noon**Broadcast and Mobile Journalism and Media Management, Economics and Entrepreneurship Divisions****News Flash: What Journalism Organizations Must Do Now to Hire Our Grads**

Moderating/Presiding

Iveta Imre, Mississippi

Panelists

Travis Ruiz, Nexstar Recruiter

Liz Zamora, Gray TV Recruiter

Bree Sison, Anchor, *WRVR Richmond*Maureen Linke, Editor and Project Manager, *Wall Street Journal*

Deb Wenger, Mississippi

This panel will include the results of a new survey and in-depth interviews with recent journalism graduates that explore what's affecting their decisions to take or forgo newsroom jobs. Session attendees will gain fresh insights regarding the role of low salaries, tough shifts, and intense pressure in exacerbating the challenges for journalism employers, and what strategies they can employ to hire and retain the new generation of journalists. Panelists will include journalism educators, newsroom recruiters and early career journalists who will discuss new initiatives that seem to be working and discuss the path forward for the news industry.

Tuesday 4:30 p.m. to 6 p.m.**Small Programs Interest Group and Broadcast and Mobile Journalism Division****From Classroom to Newsroom: How Podcasting, Social Media and Emerging Technology****Are the Hope for Reaching the Next Generation with News**

Moderating/Presiding

Tamara Welter, Biola

Panelists

Pierce Singgih, Associate Producer, WSJ Podcast *The Journal*

Gary Emerling, Assistant Managing Editor, *U.S. News & World Report*

Sarah Pineda, former Engagement Producer for NPR; Instagram Social Media manager, Washington Post

This panel will share experiences from major newsrooms that have shifted to address the changes in the audiences, while also sharing strategies used in the classroom to help prepare those journalists who will continue to help shape the future of the journalism industry.

Wednesday 8:30 a.m. to 10 a.m.

Magazine Media and Broadcast and Mobile Journalism Divisions

Behind the Lens, Holding the Mic: Safety, Context, Rights, First Amendment: What Photogs and Broadcasters Need to Do Their Jobs Safely and Ethically and How We Teach Them

Moderating/Presiding

Carol Terracina-Hartman, Murray State

Panelists

Al Drago, White House photojournalist

Bradley Wilson, Midwestern State

Kyser Lough, Georgia

Chris Evans, Illinois

This panel brings together professionals and educators in the face of increased security concerns and greater needs for training to cover demonstrations, extreme weather, political rallies, gun violence – safely, with empathy, acknowledging legal access, and appropriately.

Wednesday Noon to 1:30 p.m.

Broadcast and Mobile Journalism and Newspaper and Online News Divisions

What Does It Mean to be a Journalist? Epistemology in the Practice of Digital Journalism

Moderating/Presiding

Gregory P. Perreault, Appalachian State

Panelists

Jen Judson, National Press Club

J. Israel Balderas, Society for Professional Journalists Director at-large

Maxwell Foxman, Oregon

Phoebe Maares, Vienna

Valerie Hase, Ludwig-Maximillan University of Munich

The goal of this panel would be elaborate the research connections of journalistic epistemology—using examples from the city itself—across the applied genres of journalism and to interrogate areas for future research in this area.

Wednesday 2 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Broadcast and Mobile Journalism and Communication Technology Divisions

Rethinking Journalism Automation and AI Adoption in Newsrooms: Comparative Perspectives from the Global North and South

Moderating/Presiding

Rana Arafat, University of London

Panelists

Seth Lewis, Oregon

Aljosha Karim Schapals, Queensland University of Technology

Felix Simon, University of Oxford

Sonia Jawaaid Shaikh, University of Amsterdam

Colin Porlezza, Universita della Svizzera Italiana

Michael Karlsson, Karlstads Universitet

Rana Arafat, University of London

This panel aims to enable a scholarly discussion to examine how newsrooms in different countries across the globe adopt AI technologies in news production and distribution and what implications this might have on professional journalism and press freedom. In particular, panelists will discuss the challenges of adopting AI technology in small and medium-sized local newsrooms where the lack of financial resources, digital skills, and journalistic training pose many restrictions on the application of AI-driven tools. This will help bridge the current gap in research that focuses mainly on investigating AI technologies in the large legacy media organizations that have innovation labs to develop automated news technologies such as BBC, the Guardian, and the Washington Post.

Wednesday 4 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.**Broadcast and Mobile Journalism and Minorities and Communication Divisions
Not VR Too! Avoiding Stereotypes in Multimedia and Immersive News**

Moderating/Presiding

Stephanie Dean, Montevallo

Panelists

Brendan Beal, Montevallo

Jennifer Woodard, Middle Tennessee State

Danielle Deavours, Samford

Ali Forbes, Texas State

VR is a technology that generates an immersive experience, engaging users in a multisensory sequence of events. VR technologies and platforms have been utilized to create sensory and immersive experiences for the creative and the cultural heritage industries, from film and gaming environments to interactive journalism. Because of the nature of the platforms used as well as the stark and immediate character of the technology itself, VR has also found use in therapy as it constitutes an experimental tool to elicit emotional responses from its users. For example, experiencing the fear and trauma of a victim of domestic violence if situated in the room with his or her abuser, or experiencing the panic of war within the users' own city and the helplessness of becoming a refugee when the user is placed in the role of the refugee. Many of these VR narratives, however, are recreating problematic tropes of minorities. This panel will explore how VR has been, and is currently, reinforcing stereotypes and "othering" minority avatars in interactive journalism. We will further discuss the affordances of interactive journalism as performed in VR in order to determine if and how prosocial attitudes may lead to longer term, or "sticky" social change. Beginning from the analytical lens of empathy, apathy, and voyeurism, we suggest that user agency must guide the virtual reality design process so that the user is given multiple scenarios of enacting change at various levels. By doing so, rather than merely experiencing "the other", the user may begin to rewrite their social scripts and practice prosocial behaviors; which are psycho-social indicators of longer term change.

Wednesday 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.

BAMJ research paper session

Thursday 9:30 a.m. to 11 a.m.

BAMJ research paper session

AEJMC Conference - Washington, D.C. - August 7- 10
See you there!

