

2002 – International Symposium on Online Journalism

Opening Session

Panelists:

Rosental Calmon Alves, Professor and Knight Chair in Journalism,
University of Texas at Austin

Bruce Koon, Executive News Editor, Knight Ridder Digital

ROSENTAL CALMON ALVES: I'm a little late because I always have to follow my Brazilian time. To be a little late would be more comfortable. I'm very happy to have you back here today. I think we have a very good group. We are at the University of Texas at Austin. Very thankful for everybody that accept our invitation to come to Austin here today. Usually the Director of the School of Journalism is here to welcome everybody. Unfortunately he was not able to come this morning. But I'm sure that if he were here, Stephen Reese, my dear friend and colleague, he would say, you know this thing of having an endowed chair is the best thing of the University because you have some money so Rosenthal - he always says that when he opens my symposium here. When Rosenthal has some questions or doubts about his field, he just calls the best experts in the country to come here and bombard them with questions so it's really a privilege to have the resources of the Knight Chair in Journalism to organize a symposium like that.

Actually we are creating sort of an archive of these years of online journalism since this is the third symposium that we've organized here. It's a small event, but it's very intense and very rich in the knowledge that we discuss here. This year, we divided it into subjects that I think the moment has come for us to have more answers. I think the other two symposiums that we did before, we ended up very happy because it did not have answers, but we did have better questions. I hope this time - we are coming of age of this medium and I hope that by the end of today we'll have more answers.

The first panel about The Genre is really crucial because we are still debating in some areas if this is really a new form of journalism that came to stay. And we are going to discuss in The Genre how much this is really a new kind of journalism with its own characteristics, its own language, etc.

The second panel we're going to talk about The Audience. I think that one of the phenomenons of this time - the post Internet bubble phase - is that although the money is not there yet, the industry is not that mature, the audience is still growing. And besides that, the fact that the Internet generation is not here yet. The Internet generation - people who have not known the world without Internet - this new data-based culture that we are forming with our kids - they are still coming. But the audience is sort of a transitional audience - is still growing. And it's amazing the growth that we have seen in new sites, in online journalism specifically. And in this panel, we're going to debate also the credibility study done by our cosponsor, the

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Online News Association, and we're going to have an opportunity to talk about the differences between the perceptions of the public and the perceptions of journalists from the legacy media.

At the luncheon, we're going to have this wonderful opportunity to hear from our keynote speaker, David Card from Jupiter Media Metrix that is going to give us an overview. I think everybody knows Jupiter Media Metrix and its importance in the environment online.

In the third panel - I hope we'll have the best answers - is The Money. Where's the beef? How this can be a consolidated new medium if the business model is not there. And I think we're going to hear good cases of examples of things that are already working.

And in the fourth panel we're going to talk about The Future. And it's going to be sort of a wrap-up session of the other panels and the other discussions.

We are very pleased to have the Online News Association as a co-sponsor and a partner in our small symposium this year. I am going to pass now to Bruce Koon who is the president of the Online News Association to talk a little bit about the organization and also help me to welcome you.

BRUCE KOON: Thank you. Good morning everyone and thank you very much for having us here. We did want to extend our appreciation to Professor Alves. Those of us who have been doing online journalism for four or five years ago began to discover that the real learning and possibilities happened when you began to meet the people who were forging the way to try to find the answers for this great new medium. And I can't remember exactly the first conference you and I were at at that time. The more we began discussing the fact that we're all facing the same issues. We have these opportunities to share best practices and begin to speak with one another and that so-called network effect is probably going to make better online journalists, better communicators, better educators, better students and better general managers in this business. So when we have the opportunity and heard about this wonderful symposium here we thought - we asked what we could do to help. And we really appreciate your having us here today.

The Online News Association was actually formed in a similar fashion where a number of journalists came together and said the Internet is probably the most powerful communications medium to arrive since the dawn of early television. And those of us as journalists were very concerned about where the values that we bring to our craft and the legacy mediums of integrity, independence, fairness - how that's going to play out in a new world where the ad lines aren't clear, where the media was changing our structures. So, the Online News Association was formed in 1999 to begin dealing with those questions. We're a very young organization, but we're up to 700 members now and we hope to continue to - with your help and participation - come up with the answers - especially as this applies to the news of the future and the journalism of the future. Like every other new association, we have more information on our website, www.journalist.org, so I wanted to once again thank you

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and welcome you here today. We will also be having our third annual conference so - you're right, it all started meshing about the same time. We move ours around because we don't have a home base yet. The first one was in New York three years ago. We were in Berkeley, California last year and we will be returning to New York this October 18th and 19th. So again, you'll find more information at www.journalist.org. We do have a student membership as well as a professional and association membership. So I'm looking forward to meeting each of you and all of you and to a full day of great discussion.