

12th Annual International Symposium on Online Journalism

Day 1, April 1, 2011: ISOJ Opening Session

Keynote Speaker:

- **Rosental Calmon Alves**, Knight Chair in Journalism and UNESCO Chair in Communication, School of Journalism, University of Texas at Austin — *Moderator & Symposium Chair*
 - **Glenn Frankel**, Director, School of Journalism, University of Texas at Austin
 - **Amy Schmitz Weiss**, Assistant Professor in the School of Journalism & Media Studies of San Diego State University — *Symposium Research Chair*
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Rosental Calmon Alves: ...online journalism. It is incredible that it is the 12th. Some think about the future of digital news that started last century. It started in 1999. And we are very happy to have this event growing and growing and almost making Austin for a couple of days, sort of, not only the world capitol of live music, but also the world capitol of online journalism. You see how modest we are. So, thank you very much for coming. We have people from all over the world here. We have people from more than 15 countries. People who really had to come, literally from the other side of the planet to attend our symposium. We thank all of them very much.

We thank also the Knight Foundation for helping us and *The Dallas Morning News*. The Knight Foundation and *The Dallas Morning News* have been the main sponsors that made [it possible to] have this conference in this beautiful conference center, and [we were] charged just a small fee compared with what it really costs. So we are very thankful to Alberto Ibarguen and the Knight Foundation and Jim Moroney, especially, and *The Dallas Morning News*.

I want to invite the director of the School of Journalism, Glenn Frankel, to welcome you on behalf of our School of Journalism, our College of Communication, and the University of Texas.

[Applause.]

Glenn Frankel: Yes, it's working now. Welcome to Austin. Indulge me for a minute, because I want to say something about Rosental.

Rosental Calmon Alves: Uh-oh.

[Laughter.]

Glenn Frankel: I'm the new Director of the School of Journalism. I've been

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here since August, so I guess I'm beginning to be the new old director, but really at heart I'm just an old-fashioned reporter. And one of the things I like to do when I get to a new place like Austin is try to figure out who's really in charge, who's the person to see, who's the one who can really make things happen, and in this place, at this time, Rosental is such a man. You know, you can see his bio. Everybody here knows him, I'm sure. He spent 27 years as a top journalist in Brazil. Then he changed careers. He was chosen—what was it—in 1995 to be the Knight Chair in International Journalism here at [University of] Texas. There was something like 200 applicants for that. Some of you may be here today, I don't know. All I can say is I'm awfully happy Rosental got the job. There really isn't anyone quite like him in Austin, and for that matter, in the world, I think. He's got that sort of beautiful sensibility that you find in the very best journalists. He's intellectually curious, yet he's also, you know, rigorous and skeptical, but at the same time he's sort of wonderfully relaxed and humorous, you know, about the world and about life and all the crazy people in it. He's also fearless when it comes to assessing and really embracing new ideas and new technology.

He's led the way at our school into the digital era. Rosental was the one who first came up with the idea of multimedia journalism, of teaching it, and then of making it a required course. Right now, we're in the process of revamping our undergraduate curriculum. We're tearing down the old walls between, you know, print, broadcast, photojournalism, [and] multimedia, and much of that started with him. So this symposium in many ways epitomizes what Rosental is all about—bringing together the sharpest minds, the newest ideas, and subjecting them to scrutiny, journalistic scrutiny, academic scrutiny, [and] celebrating old values and new possibilities in really the most collaborative fashion. I mean, it's just wonderful to see people here, the people outside. It's going to be a great symposium.

This is the International Symposium for Online Journalism. And I'm emphasizing that last word because sometimes it gets overlooked in the conversation about the future. Journalism can be many things, but at its best, I would say, it's a process of gathering information in an evenhanded, independent, rigorous way, processing it critically and fairly, and then making it accessible—and this is an equally important part—making it accessible to the largest number of people. Good journalists are like good teachers, and great news stories are like great teaching opportunities.

We've gotten a reminder of this recently—a great reminder in recent weeks on the streets of Cairo and all across the Middle East. Our new digital tools have served us very well in helping to capture the story, giving us access to the forces and the people involved, and communicating with them as well as with each other. And these tools have also helped provide context and critical thinking as well. We've learned a lot about the Middle East in the last few weeks: about its history, about the role of the United States, about the impact of the Arab-Israeli conflict, the roots of political Islam, the sort of

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fundamental flaws of these nation states. It's been a great teachable moment. It's been all about the combination of new tools and old values.

And that's really what journalism does at its best—it connects things. It connects people, ideas, communities. It's very opportunistic. And I mean that in the best sense of the word, because it seeks to take full advantage of every tool that we can invent. And I challenge you today to keep journalism at the heart of your discussions here. We need to forge and preserve that partnership between the old values and the new tools, because really neither one can survive without the other. By that, I mean without the amazing new tools that the digital revolution is producing, we won't be able to reach people. But without original content that's fresh and powerful, and compelling and exciting, we won't have anything to communicate with those new tools.

So I know, you know, in a lot of ways I'm preaching to the choir here. A lot of you in your daily lives and your daily work are all involved in this. But please keep it in mind today and tomorrow. This is our moment to reimagine and reinvent, and for that matter, recommit ourselves to one of the most valuable tools and methods that we possess in a free society, and that's the journalistic method.

So welcome to Austin. I know you're going to have a great conference. There's just a wonderful lineup of people, and [people] running it and doing it, and [I] look forward to being part of it. Thank you very much.

[Applause.]

Rosental Calmon Alves: Thank you so much, Glenn. And thank you for this surprising, uh, whatever, wonderful words exaggerated about me. I'm not that good. [laughter] He's a good friend. But we are really happy to have him here as our new director and, you know, he's doing a great job. I was happy that he mentioned the new curriculum and how the School of Journalism is changing.

We have a surprise today here. You know, this symposium started in 1999 as a very small gathering. Some of you here came to most of it and you saw how it was growing. It was just a one-day symposium with speakers from the United States in 1999. In 2003, it became international. I started using my own international origin to make it more global. And then in 2004 or 2005—I don't remember exactly—it became also not only a professional, industry-oriented symposium, but it became also a research conference. So we did something that is quite extraordinary for me, because I don't know any other conference that's puts together the bridges [for] the industry world and the academic research world. And I do believe that we have never needed more academic research in journalism ever in the history of journalism as we need now, now that things are changing so fast, etc. So I'm very proud of having here the two arenas—the academic world and the

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industry. And I think both have been clearly benefiting from each other here. You know, I always remember the editor of NYTimes.com here in the first or second year that we had the researchers talking to the researchers, [saying], “You know, you should... Here is a list of things that you should do research [on], because you’re doing research on these things that nobody cares [about]. Here is what we care [about.]” And he made a list. And then I saw people coming, submitting papers to this very competitive blind review process that we have, and with some of those ideas, which I found extraordinary. So now we have a surprise.

This is the surprise. In just a couple of days, almost a couple of days, we put together a journal. From now on, we’re going to have not only our rigorous blind review process and presentation of papers, research papers, with the industry together here, but the authors will be published in a journal. The interesting thing... and I’m going to let the chair of the research component of this symposium talk more about the journal, but I just want to make you know that this was published with a system called Book Brewer, which is led by Dan Pacheco, who was one of the speakers here a few years ago, and was a winner of the Knight News Challenge. And he put together a system that you can create your own book online and then have it published in eBook format for Kindle, for iPad, etc. So this little journal that we published is already available for your iPhone, for your iPad, for your Kindle, etc., and for print on demand. In only 48 hours, we had a few copies delivered here.\

So I’m going to pass to Amy Schmitz Weiss. Amy is a graduate from here—Hook ‘em Horns—as a PhD, and she has been working as my TA and as the soul of this symposium for many years, and then she became the chair of the research component. She’s a professor at the university, San Diego State University, but still works with us and is my co-editor of the journal that we are inaugurating now. Amy, please.

[Applause.]

Rosental Calmon Alves: Thank you.

Amy Schmitz Weiss: Good morning, everyone. It’s such a pleasure to see everybody here so bright and early on a Friday morning. Welcome, everyone, to Austin and to the International Symposium on Online Journalism, the 12th year of this wonderful event. As Rosental was mentioning, we have this special announcement this morning of the first inaugural edition of the ISOJ Journal. You can find it up on the website on the home page on the right under ‘ISOJ Journal’ to take a look at downloading your eBook version. There’s a variety of different options in terms of how you can download it if you want to use it for your Kindle or for your Adobe Reader on your laptop, as well as for your smartphones. So lots of options here to take a look at in terms of downloading it. Download the actual files over here on the right. And then your variety of options to download it and to view it via these different platforms is on the left. It’s our great honor to be able to launch this

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inaugural edition of the journal that captures some of the research that's been done over the years since 2004 of the research from the symposia.

This particular issue features particular topics relating to newsroom innovations as well as hypertext, the role of hypertext in online journalism, the role of linking in blogs, as well as looking at the role of citizen journalism. So it covers a lot of different areas from a lot of great scholars that have been coming to the symposium over the years, which includes Chris Anderson, Nuno Vargas, João Canavilhas, as well as Juliette de Maeyer, and our own UT graduate Sharon Meraz is also featured in the inaugural edition. We will be having a future volume coming up with additional articles from previous symposia as well and looking forward to launching another volume and issue next year. So we invite you to download and take a look at the ISOJ Journal.

And in terms of the research component for today and tomorrow, it was a wonderful process to receive so many submissions this past year. We had over 50, which is a record. Every year the caliber of research goes higher and higher. And so it makes the selection process and the peer review process of the papers more and more difficult and challenging, but that's wonderful, because it speaks to the global reputation of this conference. And so making the choice of the 20 that you see here today in the program was quite a difficult task, but we're honored to have the researchers and scholars here with us today and tomorrow to talk about their research that looks at newsroom innovations, to looking at the role of Twitter in today's news landscape, going all the way to looking at public engagement with the news and also the evolving characteristics of what's happening in online journalism today.

So we welcome you and we hope you enjoy your next two days here of the ISOJ. And two things to mention to you just in terms of those of you who are Tweeting, Facebooking, or using any kind of geolocation messaging systems.

We have the ISOJ hashtag, so just make sure that you use the ISOJ hashtag that you see. Just the hashtag and ISOJ. And then also, we are also on Gowalla, so you can do a search on Gowalla. We're also on Facebook. And then you can also check out the website to see the constant stream of news updates being done by Rosental's class. So, welcome. Thank you.

Rosental Calmon Alves: All right. And you see that this Twitter thing was what dictated actually the name of the journal, right? People were telling me,

"Don't use the hashtag, because, you know, it's going to be a fad. It's going to..." I said, "Well, if the fad goes away, I'll take it out." [laughs/laughter] "I mean, no problem." I mean, but I think it's really great because it's also the first time that we are using ISOJ or ISOJ as the name of the event, because we always referred to it as a symposium, etc., and now we are really adopting that. And that actual name came from Twitter actually. You know, a

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couple of years ago when, you know, Alf and others were Tweeting desperately, we had more than 4,000 Tweets last year. And I'm very concerned that we may not have 4,000 this year, so Tweet a lot. [laughter] research panel].