

14th Annual International Symposium on Online Journalism

Day 1, April 19, 2013: Opening Session - 8:30-8:40 a.m.

Speakers:

- **Rosental Calmon Alves, Symposium Chair**, Professor, Knight Chair in Journalism and UNESCO Chair in Communication, **School of Journalism, University of Texas at Austin**
- **Rod Hart**, Dean, **College of Communications, University of Texas at Austin**
- **Amy Schmitz Weiss, Symposium Research Chair**, Assistant Professor, San Diego State University

Rosental Calmon Alves: In a day that is so newsy, you know, it's incredible what is going on. This has been a very sad week for us for what happened in Boston and what happened here in the town of West, in Texas. Like my daughter was saying, everybody, the world thinks that this is in West Texas. No, not in West Texas, in West, [a] town in Texas, which is very close from here, so I couldn't start this without saying a word of sympathy to all the victims of those very sad events. We have... We also had lots of flight problems, so, you know, this is happening in a week with lots of cancellations and people were stuck in airports. And we do have a ISOJ that is record breaking. We have more than 350 people registered. We have a wonderful overflow room with a nice view to the capitol, which by the way is higher than the capitol in Washington, D.C., right? And we are in Texas. But anyway, this is the Capitol Room next to where the coffee is. You cannot bring—as you have noticed—you cannot bring coffee or anything food like inside the auditorium. We are in one of the most beautiful museums that you can visit, the Blanton Museum. We are very proud of having this museum here on our campus. And people in museums are very disciplined and they know how to not let you bring coffee in here. [laughter] But if you want to watch and have coffee, the Capitol Room has a video feed from the conference here.

I have tons of people to thank, because this is a team effort. We have people from 30 countries—more than 30 countries—here. We have a few groups that are coming from other countries. There is one group from Korea from the Korean Press Association, or Press Foundation, that we are very thankful for them to come. Google has brought a group of Latin American journalists. For the first time in the history of the symposium, we have a translation to Spanish, so if you are a Spanish speaker, even if you speak English but you want to be more comfortable, use the translation, because it's very good professionals. I think one of them was in the presidential debate the other day, in the campaign. What else?

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Well, so, this is a very fast opening session. I'm going to invite my dean to welcome you and then Amy Schmidt Weiss, who is the chair of the research component of the ISOJ, to say a few words. So, Dean Rod Hart will address you now.

Dean Rod Hart: Thank you, Rosental, and welcome to Austin and to the University of Texas campus. I did in fact get a promise from Rosental that we would start on time. Here we have 350 of the brightest thinkers, the most on-the-edge, what's-new, happening people in the world. Two blocks away from here.... And so I'm honored to be here with all of you. Two blocks away from here there's a group about the same size. They're not nearly as interesting. It's a bunch of fat-cat Republican bankers and lawyers, who give large amounts of money to the university. And so I'm in this kind of bind, and I must tell you, I'm out of here. [laughter] But I really am honored to do anything that is connected with Rosental Alves. He is truly one of the stars in our College of Communication in the School of Journalism. It's an honor to have him as a colleague. And most of us are just amazed at this whirling dervish of talent that whisks through the hallway. [He] innocently and effortlessly appears ginning up all kinds of new projects and bringing people from all parts of the world together.

You're in Austin, Texas, which is increasingly one of the [most] high-tech cities in the nation. And so that's a particularly interesting place to be having an online journalism symposium. I hope while you are here you can visit the Belo Center for New Media. We are in our inaugural year. It's a gorgeous building just a little bit on the other side of campus. It's worth taking the walk there. I think you'll be very, very impressed.

Driving in this morning, [I was] listening to NPR, trying to understand what was going on in my hometown of Boston. At that time, they had tracked down one of the people. They had found out he was a boxer by looking at some online stories that had been written. They apparently got wind of one of them, because they robbed a 7-Eleven, and they were able to match up a video from the 7-Eleven to an online image from his driver's license, security cameras, and there was tweeting involved. And everything I've said to you could be absolutely wrong, and that's both the glory of an online world and the immediacy of the online world. And you might now be saying that everything I just told you that was told to me about 20 minutes ago is completely wrong, because you're online and you're verifying what's going on or may not verifying what's going on.

And so I think this conference is a wonderful and exciting one, but it's also about a very dangerous question, and that is, how do we maintain the traditional values of journalism in an age of such extraordinary disruption? And while all of us can get so impressed with the speed and dynamism and magic of that online world, those *whorey*, old values that those of us who love journalism cling to [have] also got to be part of a story. And I suppose I'm not telling all of you anything, but it is something that is not only an

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interesting intellectual subject, but it's also something that is vital to any of us who love democracy. And so, you are here doing important work and that work is never going to be more important than it is now and [in] the future. And so, I welcome you and hope your day is terrific. And I'm now going to go and see if I can try to raise some money. Thank you.

[Applause.]

Amy Schmitz Weiss: Hello, everybody. Welcome. It's so nice to see so many faces early in the morning. We hope you have a fantastic two days while you're here. Just to let you know about the research side, we've got 17 amazing papers, presentations, throughout the next two days. We hope you have a great time enjoying to hear what each of the scholars is going to be presenting about in terms of their work. And we have a special announcement at 11:30 that we'll tell you about then. So, I'll kick it off to have our next session.