Greetings to all members of the Visual Communication Division. Our planning for the 89th Annual Convention in San Francisco went very well: The convention is now fully programmed all the way through Saturday. This means that there were many inspiring panels that no longer fit the Wednesday to half-Saturday mold. AEJMC has grown so much that Saturday is now a full convention day.

Many thanks to all of you for submitting panel proposals to make the winter meeting a success. I would like to especially thank Loret Gnivecki Steinberg and Edgar Huang for their hard work scheduling all the thought-provoking sessions.

Thanks to our web master Randy Livingston and his dedicated efforts, the VisCom website now has a new look (see Road Test, page 2).

Please visit our web site (http://www.mtsu.edu/~aejmc/) to get updates about all issues pertaining to Visual Communication. There is a portion of the website devoted to Calls for Work, VisCom Quarterly, resources and links to various journals relevant to our discipline, a link to the VisCom listserv and archives, list of VisCom officers, access to the AEJMC web site, as well as current and archived issues of our newsletter.

Our goal is to provide valuable information to members. Contact me (mseelig@miami.edu) or Randy (rlivings@mtsu.edu) with any content that you think our members would find interesting.

Janis Page has moved our newsletter from print to PDF format. Remember, this allows more opportunity for contributions. I encourage all members to share ideas, articles, visuals, and other issues of interest with Janis for inclusion in the VisCom newsletter. Send to janizpage@mediawerks.org.

Thank you all for your hard work and continued dedication to making the Visual Communication Division a strong and vital part of AEJMC.

I look forward to seeing you all in San Francisco.

Michelle
Visual Communication/Communication Technology & Policy Divisions

Call for
2006 "Best of the Web" Design

AEJMC's Communication Technology & Policy division and Visual Communication division encourage FACULTY and GRADUATE STUDENTS to submit Web sites that enhance or promote education in JOURNALISM or MASS COMMUNICATION. Web sites can be in one of four categories:

- Department or school
- Teaching
- Journalism
- Creative

Guidelines and the entry form can be found on the competition web site at: http://www.jou.ufl.edu/aejmcweb/ (Dates may be old but the process is the same. We are updating the site.) All entries must be made online.

SITES CAN BE ENTERED BEGINNING IN JANUARY, AND ENTRIES MUST BE SUBMITTED BEFORE MIDNIGHT ON APRIL 1, 2006

For questions about submissions, contact co-directors:

Roxanne M. O'Connell, Roger Williams University
Phone: 401.254.3249  Email: roconnell@rwu.edu (preferred) or CTEC co-chair (TBA)

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Road Test:

The AEJMC VisCom web site has been completely revamped for 2006. Dyno tests show an increase of 40 horsepower and a significantly improved low-end punch. Our test drivers reported superior driver comfort and dead-on maneuverability. The instrument panel is functional, well illuminated, and designed to reduce eye strain during late-night endurance runs. The driver is enveloped in luxurious burgundy leather. Sparkling gold accents and elegant pinstriping add bling to the thing. With all these amenities, you almost forget that you’re driving a full-on race machine. However, a light tap on the accelerator reminds you that there’s plenty under the hood.

VisCom’s roster of champion race drivers have worked closely with R&D to once again deliver an outstanding race-ready unit for the masses. As the 2006 race series progresses, weaknesses in the super-lightweight, all-aluminum frame may be revealed, but right now, it’s all cake!

http://www.mtsu.edu/~aejmc/

- Randy Livingston
Middle Tennessee State University
Visual Communication Division

Call for 2006 Creative Projects Competition
San Francisco, California

If you’re an educator involved in creative work that doesn’t fit the traditional research mold, consider the VisCom Division’s “Creative Projects” competition. It’s an excellent opportunity to have your efforts recognized by peers in a juried forum. You would present the work to AEJMC colleagues at the national convention in San Francisco during a 3:15 - 4:45 p.m. session on Friday, Aug. 4.

What gets submitted and accepted? The format is non-restrictive, but needs to include a visual component to share at the presentation. Accepted projects in the past have included web projects, historical studies, photojournalism exhibits of original work, book proposals or published work, explanations of summer grants or activities, creative DVDs, commentaries on teaching effectiveness and examples of innovative student projects and accomplishments.

Your chances of having a project accepted are increased by including a one-to-two page explanation of the work, stressing its significance to the study of visual journalism. Did you receive outside support to pursue this project? Does the work examine cutting-edge technology that will enhance your teaching abilities? How does this project fit in with your own interests and goals as a visual educator?

In addition to adding a refereed-acceptance line to your vita, you’ll be increasing the VisCom Division’s presence at the national convention. The session often attracts a room full of 50 educators. Normally there are 15 submissions and five of the projects will be selected via blind peer review for 15-minute presentations.

◆ — — —NEW REQUIREMENT THIS YEAR— — —◆

To submit your project, package it so that duplicated material fits into four 9“x12” envelopes. After the submissions are gathered, they are all repackaged and shipped off to three judges. Large and unusually shaped packages have presented problems in the past. Therefore, instead of an elaborate 11“x14” leather-bound portfolio of archival photographs, send 8.5“x11” inkjet or laser prints. Instead of a rolled tube with a large poster announcing your film course’s festival, send an 8.5“x11” version. Also, if submitting CDs, try to use cross-platform common programs.

➢ Send four copies of your project (three without identification) to the address below. On the cover sheet of the one project with identification, include your name, complete contact information and a 75-word abstract summarizing the project. This copy of the project will be retained by the contest coordinator.

➢ The postmark deadline is Saturday, April 1.

Notifications will be emailed to all applicants before May 15. Material will not be returned.

Good luck!

Send to:
Assoc. Prof. John Freeman
Creative Projects Chair
College of Journalism and Communications
University of Florida
3070 Weimer Hall – P.O. Box 118400
Gainesville, FL 32611
Email: jfreeman@jou.ufl.edu
Phone: (352) 392-0430
CALL FOR NEW EDITOR for the
Visual Communication Quarterly journal

The VCQ editorial search committee is now accepting applications for editor of Visual Communication Quarterly, the official journal of the Visual Communication Division of AEJMC. The term of the editorship runs January 2007-December 2009, and the new editor will work with the current editor to begin reviewing articles in May 2006.

The editor works in close partnership with the editorial board members, the VisCom Division officers, and Lawrence Erlbaum Associates. The new editor should be committed to rigorous scholarship and creative work, have a strong academic record, and have the ability to coordinate and manage projects, as well as a track record for meeting deadlines.

VisCom division members interested in the position should provide evidence of experience and ability to edit and produce four issues annually. The editor’s institution must agree to provide administrative support, which at a minimum will include postage and other incidentals to usher manuscripts through the review process, and optimally would include administrative time (usually in the form of a graduate assistant) and office space. The editor will also receive a stipend from the publisher.

Interested VisCom members should send a letter outlining the reasons for seeking the editorship, and describing relevant experience, skills and interests that make them an appropriate candidate. In addition, they should send a current CV and a letter from their institutions assuring administrative support.

DEADLINE FOR APPLICATIONS:
April 3, 2006

The VCQ editor search committee will review the proposals from candidates, and the applicants will be notified by April 30, 2006.

Send applications to arrive no later than April 3, to:

Dr. James D. Kelly
jkelly@siu.edu
Associate Professor
School of Journalism
Southern Illinois University
Carbondale, IL USA 62901-6601
voice: (618) 536-3361
fax: (618) 453-5200
“Journalism,” stated Washington Post publisher Philip Graham, “is the first draft of history.” Certainly, initial reports, wrong though they often are, contribute to creating lasting impressions of events defined by a news story. Yet, practitioners and historians of media know how often that draft must be revised and changed as new information becomes available and old frames change. But what about image? What do we know and what can we say about the production, processes, content, styles, aesthetics, politics, and effects of singular icons and the wider news stream of pictures that shape and define famous events?

This special issue of Visual Communication Quarterly invites researchers to investigate the images of and imaginings about Hurricane Katrina, possibly the largest natural disaster in American history. All research methods and topical orientations are welcome, as are visual arts or documentary projects. The goal is to provide multiple vectors for understanding what we saw of Katrina, why and how we saw it, and how it affected our lives, our mass media, and our country.

Guest Editor:
David Perlmutter, LSU


All manuscripts will follow normal VCQ guidelines for submission. See details at: http://jcomm.uoregon.edu/~vcq/manuscript.html.

E-mail inquiries to the special issue guest editor:
David D. Perlmutter at ddp@ku.edu

Send manuscripts to:
Julianne H. Newton
School of Journalism and Communication
1275 University of Oregon
Eugene, Oregon 97403-1275
Better pedagogy:  
**IT’S IN THE CARDS**

You can bet on it.

The moment you point your finger, students feel that you’re picking on them. You might just need an answer to a discussion question. But, in their mind, you’re singling them out.

Random selection can help.

We’re not talking about the evolutionary kind of random selection. We’re talking about the kind of random selection that comes from cutting a deck of playing cards.

Playing cards? In the classroom?

Actually, cards can provide you a fair way to deal with student selection. They can also help you bring fun and innovation into your classroom routines.

Here’s how you do it:

You buy two regular decks of playing cards. Open the boxes and remove the non-regular cards (jokers, instructions, etc.). Arrange both decks by ascending numbers, in suits of clubs, diamonds, hearts, and spades. Do this for the number of students (up to 52) that you have in your class. For example, if you have 12 students in one of your classes, you’ll need the ace, two, and three of clubs, and the same cards in spades, diamonds and hearts (3 x 4 = 12). Do this for both decks.

When you start class, you keep a set of cards from one deck.

Distribute the cards from the other deck to your students.

Now you’re equipped to randomly select students for class discussion. The best part is that you can do this without students feeling that you’re picking on them.

Just shuffle and choose a card from your set of cards. The student with the corresponding card is the one you’ve chosen. And, without conversation, the student knows that this is a fair, random selection.

Because of its built-in objectivity, this technique might be especially useful during photography and design courses when you’re soliciting comments for peer review of students’ work.

While it’s useful to use cards to select students for answering questions, you can also use them for other pedagogical uses. They can also be useful for random group selection.

And they can be used for a kind of a human shuffle during group activities.

Here’s how to use playing cards to randomly assign groups:

Let’s say that you want to divide your 12-person class into 6 groups of two. Just tell your students to look at the number and color of their own card. Then tell them to partner with the person who has the same color and same number. For four-person groups, tell them to partner with all class member with the same number as their own.
Another use of the cards – especially useful with four-person groups – would be human shuffling technique called “one goes.”

You choose a card from your deck. Announce its suit. Students holding this type of card are to leave their original group and join another (you could use the cards’ numerical order to help determine which group they join).

Once they’ve arrived at their new groups, they share important points they learned from their original small-group discussions.

Of course, not all classroom activities require random selection. Sometimes intelligent design is better. For example, you might choose to form groups of students who have differing levels of experience with a software program like Photoshop. You may want to partner Photoshop gurus with students who’ve never seen the program. The cards can’t help with this part of the class. But they still might be useful for activities related to these groups. For example, you might use them to determine turn taking, determining presentation order and other classroom activities. In short, the classroom is one place where there are few rules for using decks of cards. So, be creative. Invent your own uses. You can use them to reduce student stress, reduce your workload and add fun to your teaching.

Now, deal!

*These ideas are based on the workshop “Linking Cooperative Learning to the Research on How Students Learn,” presented by Barbara Mills at University of Nevada, Reno, NV. (December 6, 2005).*

**Here’s a grading technique:**

When we mark papers and grade projects by hand, often comments get briefer and more difficult to read as we move through the stack.

In the case of electronic grading, the comments can get clearer and richer over time. This is especially true for teachers whose students submit work through online tools (like WebCT or Blackboard).

As you grade, type your comments into a word processor. Be especially careful with comments that you are likely to need again (as an example, feedback on exposure for photography classes or color theory for design classes). Then copy and paste your comments into the feedback area of the online tool. As you find student work needing similar feedback, simple modify your original statement, copy and paste your thoughts into the tool.

**Source:** The University of Nevada Excellence in Teaching Program and Dr. Steve Ehrmann, Workshop at University of Nevada, Reno, on February 3, 2006, “Shining Flashlight on Educational Uses of Technology.”

- Larry Dailey
  Teaching Chair
  University of Nevada-Reno
Battling the technology thirst, making students life-long learners

How I teach software in visual production courses

If someone said that professors should spend a tremendous amount of time teaching students in a college English class how to use a pencil to write instead of what to write and how to structure the writing, you might think that person is crazy.

But what if someone said that professors should spend half of a semester teaching students in a video production class, layout class or photo-journalism class how to use software programs?

Both pencils and software programs are tools and means to ends, but nowadays, it seems that software tools have been emphasized both by some faculty and students to the point that much of the class time is spent on the “hows” of tool usage rather than the more important “whys.”

New technology has been updated so fast that both faculty and students have to learn and catch up. Narrow vocationalism with its emphasis on skills training is pervasive among campuses, especially in new media education. As job market today becomes increasingly competitive, students have myriad reasons to worry about their acquisition of job skills. Since new technologies update so fast, what a student has learned in class may well be obsolete after he or she graduates. How can professors give students something that they can solidly carry on for the rest of their lives? In other words, how should we balance the teaching of new technology and critical and creative thinking and balance meeting the immediate needs and passing on life-long learning skills? This is a challenge most of us face today.

Over the last four years, I have tried to sell Ernest Boyer’s concept of “enriched major” to my students. I’ve attempted to raise students’ tool-learning mindset to a much higher expectation for educational outcome, and have concentrated on teaching students to learn how to learn and how to think. Technology usually takes care of itself in such a teaching environment. I assign a couple of well-written technology books as background readings for students, set up deadlines for designated chapters for each week, and quiz on students’ reading outside of the class time to make sure they do read. In class, I go over the highlights of chapter(s) for the week and answer any questions students may have. For those few advanced students, they are encouraged to give a short presentation on how to use the software they are very familiar with. I also provide free online tutorial resources for students to do self-exploration on software.

“Teaching is not feeding ducks. Teaching is bringing the best out of a student.”
Continued from page 8

Self-learning, peer-learning, coupled with short in-class instruction, have maximized students’ learning experience and outcome, and well realized my teaching philosophy, which is stated on all my syllabi: “Teaching is not feeding ducks. Teaching is bringing the best out of a student.”

Many students have wrong expectations when they join a visual production class according to my pre-class surveys. They believe the professor would not ask them to write or write well, and they are here to learn software programs mostly. In my syllabi, I tell my students up front that they must write grammatically correct and legitimate English with an appropriate style. In their self-critiques, a must for every assignment, the writings must truly reflect their experience with the assignments and clearly answer the questions specified in each assignment sheet. Based on the findings of a comprehensive national survey my graduate students and I conducted regarding media convergence in 2003, I highly emphasize the importance of writing because that’s the foundation for being a good visual producer. If a student knows how to write, chances are he/she knows how to think.

In my visual production classes, students are not allowed to use any story, good or bad, as a dummy text to learn technology. Rather, they must learn to tell good stories through technology. In other words, I don’t need students to show me they know how to construct a video timeline, but they need to show me that they can construct an interesting story in a timeline. Back to the pencil analogy; I don’t want my students to show me that they know how to use a pencil, but show me that they can write interesting stories with a pencil. As a result, my visual production classes are more about learning how to think than learning how to use software. When a semester is over, students all become quasi-experts in using the software if they have done all the assignments and tutorials as instructed.

In other words, I do meet their initial expectation of learning software. But more importantly, a student is trained to be a thinker equipped with technology rather than a technologist who hardly knows how to use his/her brain, a producer rather than a technician though he/she has learned all that a technician knows, an artist rather than a craftsman who can produce beautiful art but does not know why he/she is doing what he/she is doing, and a self-driven life-long learner rather than someone who does not know how to deal with new situations with what has been taught.

- Edgar Huang
2nd Vice Head
Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis

IMPORTANT DATES
TO REMEMBER

Deadlines for Submissions and Applications:

- “Creative Projects” - April 1
- “Best of Web” - April 1
- New Editor, VCQ - April 3
- Summer 2006 Viewpoints - May 15
- VCQ Special Issue - June 15

PLAN TO ATTEND
The 89th Annual AEJMC Convention
San Francisco, CA
Marriott San Francisco
August 2 - 5, 2006