Join us in Washington
Have we got a convention for you!

Although we have a variety of activities that connect us as VisCom members -- VCQ, the mid-winter conference, our ListServ, the website and newsletter -- the annual convention remains the largest and probably the most important.

When have a number of reasons to come together each August: to stay on top of issues and research in our field, to share ideas about teaching and professional work, to connect with others whose principal relationship with the world is also visual, to reconnect with friends and colleagues who live in other parts of the country, to learn new skills, to meet new people... to be inspired, energized, informed...

Your list may be shorter, longer, different, but if you’ve ever participated in any of our annual conventions, I’m confident that you have your own list of reasons that those few days are important to you.

We’re hoping to add a few more this year. We’ve been working hard at developing programming that will not only serve the needs of our division, but will also create better links with other divisions and other areas of journalism and communications.

We know well that visual communication touches everyone’s work in some way, but sometimes we have to point that out to non-visual people. Sometimes we need to be reminded how non-visual people see and think about the images we make. The convention is a great place for that kind of conversation and discovery, too.

Whether or not you’re presenting a paper or participating in a panel, I hope you’ll introduce yourself to someone you don’t know and reintroduce yourself to someone you haven’t seen for a while. I hope you’ll come to the VisCom members’ meeting on Friday evening (and bring a friend!) as well as the VisCom luncheon on Saturday.

(continued on page 15)
The 2006-7 school year is a fading memory and many of us are in that golden window of time – next year’s syllabi don’t have to be pinned down yet and we’re knee deep in ideas and work that give our classes meaning and substance. Maybe this would be a good time to look at teaching.

In this issue of Viewpoints, several colleagues have contributed their thoughts about engaging their students. Some talk about how they move learning outside of the classroom - and the work that

The hope is that each of us will glean information and insight that will expand our own teaching possibilities. Whether or not you’d like to do something just like the projects described, I hope you enjoy seeing what they do, take away some thoughts for next year and think about what you’d like to share with your colleagues in a future newsletter, panel or the VisCom website.

For the winter issue of Viewpoints, our focus will be graphic communications and any visual communication that is not photographic.

Start thinking about what you might share with other VisCom members… which ideas, student projects and issues of representation…

A Berlin Experience

In two weeks, students learn something about multimedia story-telling and a changing world

John Freeman

They say you can’t go back, but I did. Nearly 35 years after graduating from high school in Berlin, Germany, as a military “brat,” I returned to the city that sparked my interest in photography.

But this time I wasn’t a student watching darkroom prints spring to life in trays of chemicals – I was a professor leading a group of 15 students armed with digital cameras and laptops. We were in Berlin to capture the spirit of the reunited city and I was loving it.

The nostalgia of riding subways and smelling grilled sausages in the air and hearing that guttural German language came flooding back. Later, I would tell colleagues the study-abroad course was the best thing to happen to me in 25 years of university teaching.

A sabbatical during fall 2004 had provided the daydream that led to my inaugural trip the following summer. Designing the course also dove-tailed with a push at the university for more international involvement. The 2005 trip was my first look at the city without The Wall separating the two sides. Since then, I’ve repeated the two-week, three-credit hour course in 2006 and 2007. The city remains in constant change as reunification continues, so each visit provides a new backdrop of characters and material.

Our goals each time have been about the same: to produce a website of words and pictures that convey a sense of history mixed with freedom and innovation as Germany’s capital recaptures its prominence in the world. Each student focuses on one person or theme and writes a 250 to 500-word story, plus everyone submits 10 stand-alone photos that are edited into a gallery of singles. Some students work alone, while others go off in pairs. A few research their topics before arriving, but others discover a story on-site. An excellent public transportation system and our unlimited-rides passes make getting around easy.
In May 2007, I ratcheted the course up a big notch by also introducing sound-gathering. We used Olympus digital voice recorders, the school’s Canon Rebels, and for software, Audacity and Photoshop. Working in our hotel lobby on laptops, we edited the pieces into one-minute “Soundslides” shows. I uploaded each project to the UF website before the two-week visit was over.

I’ve been fortunate that we have not encountered any major problems during the three trips. No one has lost a passport or become lost or sick. Because I didn’t want to seem selective or elitist, I opened the course up to beginning journalism students and even non-majors. For about half of the students each year, it’s their first photo course. This May the program cost each student $1,500 plus airfare (about $800) and between $250 and $500 for meals and incidentals. For a major European city (3.4 million people), Berlin is surprisingly inexpensive.

We stay in a budget hotel in the former Soviet sector each time, where the dorm-style rooms don’t have TVs or phones. Although I thought it might seem crowded, having three to four students to a room has led to instant friendships and a good team atmosphere.

Learning about culture has become an unexpected outcome of the trips. Because I give the students a long leash, they’ve experienced new lifestyles and freedom, which Berlin is all about. I don’t do bed checks and I have learned to not plan any group activities before 11 a.m. The tours and meetings I do plan are all fun as well as learning situations.

An eight-mile bike ride we take each year sets the tone for covering a lot of ground in two weeks. Professional contacts made with The Los Angeles Times and TIME magazine bureaus have been invaluable. On the final night, we celebrate with a group dinner at the revolving restaurant inside the TV Tower that can be seen for miles.

They say you can’t go back, but I did – three times so far. And I’m eagerly planning the fourth trip in the Berlin program for May 2008.

http://www.jou.ufl.edu/people/faculty/jfreeman/Berlin2007/Berlinslide-shows.htm

John Freeman is Associate Professor of Journalism at the University of Florida.
Gordon Parks was the best photojournalism professor I ever had. A self-taught photographer, he never finished high school. But Gordon taught me and inspired a generation of photographers from his Book of Life. He was a content specialist extraordinaire – and more!

When I embarked on full-time teaching six years ago, it was Gordon’s constructivist teaching style that I most wanted to emulate. Throughout our 35-year friendship, Gordon always had time for young photographers seeking advice and inspiration. He particularly encouraged me to push the boundaries of vision and creativity.

Later this year at San Jose State University, I will exhibit a selection of my documentary images along side Gordon’s in a show titled, Moments Without Proper Names. Currently I am in Washington, D.C., for a 10-week photojournalism faculty fellowship at National Geographic Magazine. Sixty-five years ago Gordon was awarded a fellowship from the Julius Rosenwald Fund. He chose to serve his apprenticeship at the Farm Security Administration in Washington, D.C. Many of us know the racism and bigotry Gordon absorbed during his tenure. And we have seen many times his signature photograph, American Gothic, of Ella Watson, the charwoman, standing in front of the American Flag. I’m spending my summer walking the streets of Washington, D.C., with my camera deconstructing American Gothic. Classism, I argue, has replaced Racism.

Like Gordon, all of us photo instructors are content specialists – or damn well should be! I discovered early on that knowing the material is not enough!

Students, I believe, want to feel a connection with the teacher and the subject. The better connected, the more students are willing to invest in their education.
Getting students to participate in the education process and therefore take ownership of their learning is far more rewarding than standing in front of students regurgitating content from a textbook or listening to how the instructor covered a presidential campaign 25 years ago.

What then works?

I get students out of their comfort zones! Over the past few years I’ve led student expeditions to New Orleans and coastal Mississippi to produce post-Katrina stories and to South Africa to report on life in a post-apartheid society. This past March, I took 50 San Jose State journalism students to New York on a networking and fact-finding trip. We visited the Time Warner headquarters, the New York Times, AP, and a host of magazines, public relations and advertising companies. The photojournalism students took a side trip to Washington, D.C., where we visited National Geographic Magazine and the washingtonpost.com headquarters in Arlington, Virginia.

Next spring the photojournalism students are planning a trip to Cuba. During summer 2008 we hope to kick-off a multimedia expedition that will have us circling the world over three years.

Research by Dr. Franita Ware at Spelman College in Atlanta, suggests students who attain a culture of achievement exceed the high expectations of the culturally responsive teacher, and therefore appear highly motivated to independently demonstrate academic excellence.

My students are blossoming! Thanks, Gordon.

(D. Michael Cheers heads the photojournalism program at San Jose State University. He’s taught at Auburn University in Alabama, and at The University of Mississippi, in Oxford.)
Research Paper Competition Report 2007

The Visual Communication Division received an exceptionally strong field of research this year on topics that embraced the past and the future, visual rhetoric, politics, war, and animation. The Division received thirty-four research papers and accepted 15 for presentation, a rate of 44 percent. We received many strong papers and those of you familiar with our open research competition know there is no distinction made between faculty and student papers during the judging. A total of 14 faculty only submissions, 11 student only submissions, and 9 submissions co-authored by faculty and students were received this year. Unfortunately, as chair of the paper competition I had to make some tough decisions. Overall, eight faculty papers, four student papers, as well as three co-authored faculty and student papers were accepted. Research paper sessions are included at the end. I want to take this opportunity to encourage all our submitters to review judges’ comments and revise papers accordingly for consideration in The Division’s journal, Visual Communication Quarterly. Lastly, thank you to all the paper judges for your hard work and thoughtful critiques.

Michelle Seelig, Research Chair

Visual Analysis and Meaning
Thursday, August 9, 8:15 to 9:45 a.m.

The Epideictic Function of Visual Rhetoric, Jim Benjamin, University of Toledo

Children’s Recognition of Alcohol and Tobacco in Disney’s Beauty and the Beast and 101 Dalmatians, Andrea Schuch, University of South Florida

Hooray for VegasWood: Las Vegas Through a Hollywood Windshield, Paul Martin Lester, California State, Fullerton

The Nicholson Photographs: A Caseworker’s Visual Record of Rural Clients in the South during the Depression, Patsy Watkins, University of Arkansas

Top Student and Faculty Papers in Visual Communication
Thursday, August 9, 11:45 to 1:15 p.m.

Animated editorial cartoons: Is Ben turning over in his grave, Karon Speckman, Truman State University and Kalen Ponche, Truman State University *First Place Faculty Paper

“X”-ing Out Enemies: Time Magazine, Visual Rhetoric, and the War in Iraq, Richard Popp, Temple University and Andrew Mendelson, Temple University **2nd Place Faculty Paper

Henri Cartier-Bresson reinterprets his career in magazine photojournalism, Claude Cookman, Indiana University ***3rd Place Faculty Paper

Looking for you: An analysis of video blogs Margaret Griffith, Temple University **** Top Student Paper

Visual Imagery, Politics and War
Sunday, August 12, 1:30 to 3 p.m.

A battle of visions: Dramatic images of the Missouri 2006 senatorial campaign, Janis Teruggi Page, University of Florida and Margaret Duffy, University of Missouri School of Journalism

Anthony Suau’s Fear This: The Subjectivity of a Photojournalist’s Photobook, Timothy Gleason, University of Wisconsin Oshkosh

Ideological Analysis of Iraqi Civilian Casualties as Portrayed in Time Magazine’s First Year Photographic Coverage, 2003, Sun-A Kim, University of Missouri School and Zoe Smith, University of Missouri School of Journalism

“Snowflake” White and Politically Right:” Photographic Framing in News Media Coverage of Stem Cell Research, Nicole Smith, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill

Visual Communication Scholar to Scholar Session: Changing the Way We Communicate
Friday, August 10, 1:30 to 3 p.m.

“Change the way you communicate!” Visual communication through camera phones and Nokia.com, Jonathan Lillie, University of Hawaii - Manoa

Nielsen versus Nielsen: A Usability Analysis of Television Homepages, Norman E. Youngblood, Texas Tech University and Amanda McDemond, Texas Tech University

Pictures and Pixels: Digital Photographic Archives at Photographic Agencies, Keith Greenwood, University of Oklahoma
National Press Photographers Summit

Growing connections between teachers and photojournalists in the field

Convergence, multi-media and the migration of broadcast and print media to web-based platforms dominated discussions at the annual National Press Photographers Association summit in Portland, Ore., in early June.

The multi-media sessions were all packed, with participants spilling into the hallways outside the meeting rooms. The print sessions drew mostly less than a dozen people, when in previous years the attendance rates between print and Internet sessions were nearly the opposite.

Change, and fast change at that, is upon us. Indeed, Direc Halstead, publisher and founder of the Digital-journalist.net, and a long-time Time magazine photographer, predicted that still, print-based photojournalism would be obsolete five years.

Technological and business convergence have reached the tipping point, creating a centrifugal force pulling media outlets and business interests together. That gravity is pulling at academe as well, and the force will only become stronger in the next few months and years.

There are few opportunities available for the professionals in cross training for new technologies, certainly not enough to meet the demand, and even less hands-on training available to scholars and teachers.

But we can at least all learn together, and from one another. The Viscom division, together with the Communications Technology, Magazine and Radio-Television divisions and the Community College Journalism Association, will be sponsoring a series of pre-convention panels, Wednesday, Aug. 8, which will bring industry leaders from the Washington Post, Baltimore Sun, National Geographic, the Los Angeles Times and other outlets to discuss what they’re facing in the multi-media world, and what they’re doing about it.

While panelists from top media organizations can help us face issues we can face in our scholarship as well as give us guidance in what and how we teach, media professionals are also there to learn with and from us. Our scholarship can put their work in context. The issues we face in the classroom are the same ones they will face with both new employees and old professionals training on new outlets and platforms.

Our one-day series of discussions is only part of a web-fueled natural academic/media convergence. At the NPPA summit, academics were both leaders and learners. Rich Beckman of the University of North Carolina led one of the most popular multi-media convergence sessions, based on his studies on the needs of new media. Julianne Newton of the University of Oregon helped organize a social reception for attendees and a presentation of the best student and professional broadcast, print and web journalism in the Northwest.

We were all on the same page and in the same room. Also in attendance at the NPPA summit were Kenny Irby of the Poynter Institute, Brian Johnson, former Viscomm head, of the University of Illinois, David Nolan of Texas State, Brad Thompson of Linfield College and other scholars and educators.

Two years ago, the NPPA Flying Short Course began working with colleges and universities as hosts, drawing in college and high school students to work with veteran professionals, mid-career journalists in need of training, and younger people starting their careers. This year, the NPPA will sponsor a Northern Short Course at the Rochester Institute of Technology and Flying Short Course stops in San Jose State and two other colleges yet to be determined.

As vice president of the NPPA and chair of the organization’s strategic planning committee, I am looking for ways to promote alliances, friendships and conversations, cross-pollinations, scholarly and professional productivity, workshops, creative works and any other opportunities in which the professionals and the academics can work and learn together.

Please feel free to contact me at jzibluk@astate.edu, or members of other professional organizations or media outlets on any need you may have. We’re all facing the same issues, and if we’re all in the same centrifuge, it’s nice to know who’s in there with us.

Jack Zibluk is associate professor of journalism at Arkansas State University, and vice president of the National Press Photographers Association.

photo - newsroom, Washington Post, 2001 (Steinberg)
Confessions of a Webmaster

as website technology evolves, webmasters should be out of a job

Randy Livingston
(images provided by R. Livingston)

Web sites aren’t what they used to be. Since the infancy of the Web, sites have evolved in appearance and technology. More importantly they have grown to serve us better—purpose and audience/user expectations have changed. Effective Web sites are now more than just online brochures.

David Siegel, author of the widely-read Creating Killer Web Sites, categorizes Web site evolution by generation. He describes first generation sites as linear, plain pages with limited layout options that were primarily tools used by scientists to share information. Second generation sites introduced icons, buttons with beveled edges, bulleted lists, and tiled background images. Third generation sites are more visually sophisticated and aim to attract and communicate to an audience in accordance with specific branding and marketing objectives. Fourth generation Web sites might include some form of database dynamism, offer some user-customization, and/or utilize rich media in some way.

By virtue of interactivity and being dynamic and highly visual, the Web delivers information in an appealing way and is an effective branding tool. A site’s reliability, attractiveness, intuitiveness, and professionalism all serve to form mental constructs that produce a perception of quality—positive or negative. However, the evolution of Web design has left us with the expectation that a truly effective site will do more than simply provide information and establish identity. It will serve a purpose greater than that of an online brochure.

This brings us to the fifth generation Web site. Among other things, a fifth generation site provides various, easy-to-use tools for two-way communication and collaborative development. Such a site has no Webmaster (or perhaps the role of Webmaster is redefined) but rather is developed and maintained by the group or community that claims ownership and who also relies on that site to perform various tasks.

However, most Web sites still don’t work this way. They aren’t products of such democracy (by the people, for the people). Why is that? Because, beneath the surface of the World Wide Web, there lies this dirty little secret language—Hypertext Markup Language.

Typically, the key providers of Web site content do not understand HTML code nor do they possess the skills to effectively use tools like Adobe Dreamweaver to create and publish directly to the Web. A Webmaster is therefore usually necessary to take information and translate it for the Web site. This can create a bottleneck and inhibit its regular content updates which leads to stagnancy, i.e., a Web site that no longer serves its users in any meaningful way. A Webmaster is also needed to prevent formatting, style, and organizational inconsistencies that lead to a messy, unprofessional looking site that reflects poorly on the organization and perceived quality.

Along comes CMS (Content Management Systems)—one dandy three-letter acronym and all the rage in a fifth generation world. CMSs automate the integration of content, workflow, and publishing and make collaborative Web development by a group of normal (non-geek) folks possible. Unfortunately, there is usually a hefty price involved with any kind of CMS. The great news is that a much less expensive, fifth generation, “CMS-like” solutions are...
now available as a result of technologies such as .Mac Groups and the ingenuity of the good people at Apple Computer. Apple advertises .Mac Groups as a way for small groups, teams, families, etc... to come together. However, just like high-end CMS tools, it’s really a system that lets end-user content be managed through a browser interface (using no specific platform).

The average small organization (like AEJMC VisCom) now has cheap and easy access to a kind of CMS. The implications here are profound. They can begin to manage the complex organizational web of information and knowledge by putting ‘experts’ directly in control of the content they manage. This can be accomplished without compromising the integrity of the brand or wasting time educating dozens of members on site design rules and methods.

Over the past 12-13 years, I have created many different kinds of Web sites for small and large organizations of all kinds. I’ve also served as Webmaster for many of these (and still do). As I’ve witnessed Web technology evolve, and as a user of various Web sites and/or Web-based tools, I’ve come to expect more—a better way (as we all do). I’ve also come to recognize common problems and limitations in resources among these many different groups.

I have been using .Mac Groups for my media design classes and for three distinctly different organizations for over a year now. One of these is a group of seniors (the youngest being in their 60’s). It is fair to say that this age group is not known for their computer skills and yet they have quickly taken to their .Mac Group. As their “Webmaster” I’ve not had to intervene nor have I been asked for any assistance for quite some time now... and they are really making the most of their site... many of them!

Most, if not all of you, now reading this are not so far removed from the digerati. Albeit, I’m convinced that a solution like .Mac Groups would serve AEJMC VisCom very well in the immediate future. The Viscom Web site should not continue as a third generation site.

Webmasters are much like the Catholic priests during the 16th century Protestant Reformation who fought the idea of translating the Bible from Latin (the language of the educated elite) into common languages that the majority of people could read and understand. As long as the Bible existed only in Latin, then the clergy held onto their purpose and power—translating (and mistranslating) the contents of the Bible for the masses. The Protestant zeal for translating the Bible and getting it into the hands of the laity was empowered by the invention of movable type. Just as this technology advanced the culture of Biblical literacy, so too can CMS advance the culture of the World Wide Web.

This is my confession and my appeal; please fire me, your highly-paid Webmaster... or at least ask me to earn my pay by setting-up a system which uses a language you know and understand. (No. I really don’t get any form of compensation from VisCom, AEJMC, or its affiliates. But, I’m loving every minute of it!)

Randy Livingston is Assistant Professor in the College of Mass Communication at Middle Tennessee State University. He is also the Visual Communications Division Web Master. Randy is co-author of The Adobe Illustrator CS3 Wow! Book, coming from Peachpit Press this fall.
Travelblogging Ireland

Two teachers, fifteen students and twelve days in the west of the Emerald Isle

My colleague, Kate Mele, and I had been planning this short course for the past eighteen months and here we were, two days after commencement, landing at Shannon Airport to get over jet lag before collecting our students at the end of the week.

We were excited, and apprehensive. We had taught in Ireland before, but always in Dublin keeping our teaching and excursions within a two-mile radius. This time we were going to be shepherding our students on and off buses, trains, boats and ferries through four counties while we taught them how to photograph and write about people and their place—this was Special Topics in Global Communication: Travelblogging Ireland.

Our goal was to have the students take the art of travel writing to the web. Travel writing has several forms—we wanted to teach the kind of writing that was not targeted at marketing a destination but rather focused on describing a personal journey and the resulting observations of universal themes and particular distinctions.

Our models consisted of Pete McCarthy’s McCarthy’s Bar and a folder of selected readings from the Oxford Companion to Travel Writing and a range of Irish and American authors from the past three hundred years. Each piece was chosen based on our itinerary so that students could make a comparison of “then and now.”

To their credit, all of our students were reasonably well behaved and finished their assignments on time—although not without a bit of prodding and the occasional threat to leave them behind if they were late to the bus one more time.

The most challenging issue with this kind of short study abroad is that, unlike a semester-long program, the short course is often regarded as a site-seeing trip—a vacation of sorts. We often had to remind students that they were scholars, not tourists. They were here to work and grading would be on the quality of their output. Teaching in Ireland, where students were of legal age to drink, posed its own set of problems. However, it also provided us with an opportunity to examine social norms and cultural distinctions close-up and in context.

We used these opportunities, no matter how minor, as teaching moments for broadening our students’ awareness.
Kate and I teach very differently, and perhaps that’s why we work so well together. She uses a writer’s approach of composing and editing in iterative cycles while I encourage a creative project angle of collecting material and then alchemically pulling things together into a whole. Both of us try to teach students to seek the thread that weaves its way through a narrative, whether it be textual or visual. Kate’s task was to get them to think descriptively. Mine was to get them to see, hear and feel—to use their senses in a way that makes their images more interesting and their writing more authentic. And I think we managed to do this well, as a trip to TravelBloggingIreland.blogspot.com will attest. All in all, it was a rewarding experience. We developed strong bonds with our students as fellow explorers and a deeper understanding of teaching in a “traveling” classroom.

Roxanne O’Connell is Assistant Professor of Visual Communication in the Department of Communications at Roger Williams University.

Our Reading List

- “Travel writing and its theory” by Mary Baine Campbell (Cambridge Companion to Travelwriting)
- “Travelwriting and Ethnography” by Joan Pau Rubiés (Cambridge Companion to Travelwriting)
- “The Isles/Ireland: the wilder shore” by Glenn Hooper (Cambridge Companion to Travelwriting)
- Dispatches from Blogistan: A travel guide for the modern blogger (Paperback) by Suzanne Stefanac
- McCarthy’s Bar: A Journey of Discovery in Ireland (Paperback) by Pete McCarthy

http://travelbloggingireland.blogspot.com/

Visual Communication Luncheon

A celebration of distinguished contributions in scholarship, service and teaching

Saturday, August 11, 12:15-1:30

2007 Logo Competition

Tiffany Matthews

Middle Tennessee State University
Faculty Sponsors: Edward Applegate and Randy Livingston

1st place
Teaching and Working in a Multimedia World

1:00pm-2:30pm  Industry Leaders Confronting Convergence
Both the status quo and the future of media convergence concern newsroom leaders today. What are the industry’s expectations of future journalists? Leaders in the field will discuss the big picture, how their operations work now, and how they expect those newsrooms to work in the future.

Linda Epstein, photo editor, McClatchy–Tribune Washington Bureau
Gail Fisher, senior photo/illustrations editor, National Geographic; former multimedia photo editor, LA Times
Seth Gitner, multimedia editor, The Roanoke (Va.) Times
Scott McKiernan, director and founder, independent photo agency Zuma Press
Deborah Potter, executive director, Newslab; former CBS News correspondent
Ju-Don Marshall Roberts, managing editor, washingtonpost.com

2:45pm-4pm  Practitioners and Pioneers in Media Convergence
What are current best practices for multimedia journalism? How is it done, and how is it organized in today’s media organizations? Practitioners will discuss projects and strategies, as well as what skills they need new hires to bring to the table.

Travis Fox, videographer, Emmy Award–winner, washingtonpost.com
Lauren Eshkenazi, senior Web producer, The Baltimore Sun
Maria Godoy, online producer, National Public Radio
Brian Storm, president and founder, MediaStorm, New York (http://mediastorm.org/)
Don Wittekind, University of North Carolina, formerly graphics editor at the South Florida Sun-Sentinel

4:15pm-5:30pm  Experience from On-Campus: Multimedia Reporting
Experiences and lessons from campus multimedia reporting. Panelists will share their experience of teaching and practicing media convergence. This session will include take-home lessons that participants can incorporate into other classes, such as writing, editing, photo, and broadcast.

Gary Hanson, Kent State University
Chris Harvey, University of Maryland
Edgar Huang, IUPUI
Mindy McAdams, University of Florida
Rick Musser, University of Kansas
Mary Spillman, Ball State University

5:45pm-7pm  Dinner break on your own

7:00pm-8:15pm  Finding Balance: Teaching Software vs. Critical Thinking
How should we balance the teaching of new technology with critical and creative thinking? This Socrates Café-style roundtable will be a spirited discussion on the impact of new media in our classrooms. How do we prepare our students for technological change and adoption when the software release we may be teaching today is obsolete by the time students graduate?

Joel Geske, Greenlee School of Journalism & Communication, Iowa State University
Edgar Huang, IUPUI
Larry Pryor, Annenberg School of Communication, University of Southern California
Carol Schwalbe, Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication, Arizona State University
Michelle Seelig, University of Miami School of Communication

8:30pm-10pm  Resources for Teaching Multimedia Skills
Presenters will share their valuable experiences of teaching multimedia using available resources: “Pocket Journalism,” Soundslides, “10 Steps to Better Interactive Graphics,” blogging, and Flash. Attendees will receive handouts to take home the skills they need to teach their own students.

Clyde Bentley, University of Missouri, Columbia
Larry Dailey, University of Nevada, Reno
Shahira Fahmy, Southern Illinois University, Carbondale
Doug Fisher, University of South Carolina and Newsplex
Cindy Royal, Texas State University, San Marcos

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PANEL AND OFF-SITE: A LOOK AT NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC

August 9, Thursday

1:30pm-3pm Visual Storytelling at National Geographic

*a panel at the convention site*

Sarah Leen, illustrations editor for National Geographic Magazine, will present spreads from “Malaria” (July 07) and discuss the story from a photo editor’s perspective. Tyrone Turner, a photographer for National Geographic Magazine, will present spreads from the magazine’s follow-up of “New Orleans” (August 07) and talk about the process for a photographer. Elaine Bradley, a design editor for National Geographic Magazine, will talk about design issues. Rob Covey, the managing editor and creative director of NGM.com, will talk about the Geographic’s website. Please check your convention book for location.

The first 40 people will receive a copy of the August issue of National Geographic.

OFF-SITE

August 10, Friday

8:00am-10:30am Offsite visit to National Geographic

The Magazine and Visual Communication Divisions cordially invite you to join us for an off-site visit to National Geographic on Friday, August 10. We’ll meet Ann Williams, a long-time staff writer for National Geographic Magazine. Together with the editor and researcher, Ann will give us an overview of the editorial process for the King Tut story—coming up with story ideas, planning fieldwork, working in the field with photographers, writing features and captions, and working with editors, researchers, and designers.

Then we’ll head over to National Geographic Traveler. Dan Westergren, a photographer and Traveler’s senior photo editor, will give us an overview of the photo/design process—assigning photographers, planning fieldwork, editing photos, laying out a story, and working with the online folks.

Because of space constraints, we can accommodate no more than 40 people. Though free, you must sign up for this event.

We’ll meet at 8 a.m. in the hotel lobby. For those who like to walk, the Geographic is about a mile away. It might be hot and muggy, though. We’ll escort everyone else on the Metro, or you can take a cab. Participants will receive more specific directions.

If you’d like to join us, please send a message to Carol Schwalbe at cschwalbe@asu.edu
Students learn at least two things during the process of creating logo concepts in their first Media Design class at Middle Tennessee State University.

They discover that making a good, simple logo is somewhat more difficult than it seems. They also learn to love a tool that can be very intimidating—Adobe Illustrator.

If you’ve ever attempted to “draw something on a computer,” you can understand how students might get easily discouraged when they first try.

Even those who excel at drawing with pencil and paper, find a tool like Illustrator exceptionally frustrating. Indeed, it is a challenging process, especially if one begins with the idea that they must “draw something on a computer.”

MTSU Media Design students are asked to stay away from the computer altogether through the first 80% of their logo creation process. The reason being that the computer is a tool that is both frustrating and seductive. It is not an intuitive tool for most artists or creative people. It also does certain things very well.

This has potential to influence the creative process in a powerful, but, not-so-good way.

After years of teaching, and as a traditional artist and designer who has made the transition to digital, I’ve witnessed first-hand the negative forces inherent to creating with a computer.

Technology has not yet brought us to a place where we can ideate as quickly and easily (without cognitive overhead) using digital tools as we can with traditional media.

An idea is gestated in milliseconds and can only be delivered intact and in full health by way of pencil and paper.

One does not think much about the physical process of using a pencil. However, one quickly becomes encumbered with technical process when using a computer as a tool to create (at least at this point in time).

My advice to students is, “Make the computer work for you. Don’t fall into the trap of working for the computer. Do yourself a favor and fully develop your concept before going to the computer. In fact, consider what tools are really necessary to execute your idea. The computer may not be a tool you need at all.

A truly great concept is seldom conceived using a computer. Having said that, skillfully using the right software applications can profoundly enhance a solid concept.”

In the end, students have a great respect for the work required to create a good, simple logo. They understand, maybe for the first time, how syntax translates to the visual language. They learn to consistently deliver visual communication that is pithy and terse. Perhaps of equal importance, they learn to appreciate the strengths and limitations of all the tools in their toolbox.

Randy Livingston is Assistant Professor in the College of Mass Communication at Middle Tennessee State University. He is also the Visual Communications Division Web Master.

MTSU Media Design student, Tiffany Matthews created this entry in the 2008 AEJMC Convention logo competition using Adobe Illustrator CS2. Tiffany’s logo is the first place winner for the 2008 convention.

Vector paths and using the Pen tool in Adobe Illustrator can very intimidating at first. It’s not all like drawing with pencil directly onto a sheet of paper—not a good way to get ideas out of your head and make them quickly tangible.
VisCom Members’ Meeting
Friday, August 10, 6:45-8:45 pm.

Find out about plans for next year
Let us know what you think
Welcome new officers
Volunteer
Bring a friend
Make suggestions for programming
Ask questions
Meet new people
Bring your camera, your pens, your computer, your sketchbook...
Connect with people for dinner
Witness a real crowning
Find out how friendly we are!!

If you’re not sure you’d know anyone at the convention, you’ll find a visual aid... on page...... a list of this year’s officers and headshots so you can find us, talk with us, and let us introduce you to others.

None of us can possibly know every aspect of visual communication individually. And that’s why we come together to challenge, to learn, to encourage, to talk. The convention is jam-packed with events this year, from the preconvention workshop on Wednesday to the regularly scheduled programming Thursday through Sunday.

I hope we see you in Washington!

Loret Steinberg is Associate Professor of Photography at the Rochester Institute of Technology

The Newseum reception for AEJMC has been relocated... due to construction delays, there will only be short walk-throughs in part of the new space. The Freedom Forum will host the reception at the Canadian Embassy, 501 Pennsylvania Avenue

Thursday, August 9th 8-11pm
VisCom Needs YOU

Meet new people, make new friends

Some great ideas from last year just couldn’t be accomplished in the past ten months.

Last August, in San Francisco, there were many great ideas for creating new resources for our members, help us stay in better touch with each other, share resources and stimulate a broader dialogue between VisCom and other divisions and interest groups.

But, as you all know, we’re entirely a volunteer organization relying upon a membership that is increasingly juggling time constraints and energy throughout the school year.

It comes down to this -- we need more people to provide input and to share division work.

You might want to become more involved, but you’re afraid that you’ll find yourself overwhelmed … understandable and entirely familiar to us all. My pitch might sound corny, but committing some time to VisCom will help you connect with new members and develop better connections with kindred spirits.

It’s that time of year when we need to reach out and ask you how you might help us keep our division strong and build on what we’ve already accomplished.

No easy answers here, but I hope you’ll think about how you might add your voice and a bit of your time to a valuable effort.

Do you have a colleague or friend with whom you’d like to share some tasks? Would you like to be involved in a more defined way, with set goals and projects? Is this a time when you can consider becoming an officer?

Please think about how you might give some time to VisCom this year. We welcome your help, your voice and your ideas.

our DO list

Increase diversity in the division and in programming

Reach out to younger/new faculty and grad students

Develop an informal mentoring program

Expand the website - teaching section that would include resources, projects, new issues and ideas

links section to student and faculty work, other resources

....what would you like to add?
Get Involved

Many of you have great ideas on the direction of this division. Here’s your chance to get involved and make them real.

We’re now taking nominations (self-nominations accepted) for officers and committee members for the next academic year.

If you or someone you know are interested in taking a more active role in the VisCom Division, but have questions about roles and responsibilities of officers, please contact one of us listed to the right. We’d be happy to describe the tasks and responsibilities and to offer insight and suggestions as well.

When you nominate someone, please send a brief statement about the nominee’s area of interest and background, such as education and professional experience. If the nominee has worked as an officer in another division in the past, please include that as well.

The current Head and/or Vice-Head will contact you prior to the annual convention. After that, we will put together a slate of nominees for next year, to be presented at our annual members’ meeting in Washington, D.C. on Friday, Aug. 10th at 6:45 pm.

There will also be a call for any additional nominations at the meeting as well.

Finally, someone may not know of your interest in participating this year, so please do not hesitate to nominate yourself!

For more information, contact:
Loret Steinberg
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Edgar Huang
chuang@iupui.edu
Renee Martin-Kratzer
rmartinkratzer@jou.ufl.edu
Michelle Seelig
mseelig@miami.edu

*The 2nd vice-head, research, PF&R chair, and teaching chair need to attend both the executive VisCom meeting and training session scheduled for these executive positions. The 2nd vice-head is also required to attend the mid-winter planning meeting with the vice-head and division head, as well the mid-winter conference. If you are considering any of these positions, please plan travel accordingly. Some funding is available for those who qualify.

Call for nominations for VisCom 2007-8 officers

Positions available:
2nd vice-head*
Research chair
PF&R chair
Teaching chair
Creative projects chair
Best of the Web chair
Logo competition chair
Membership chair
Newsletter editor
Web master

What to include when nominating someone prior to the convention: (1) the area in which the nominee is interested, (2) nominee’s background and/or experience, and (3) contact information.
2007 Creative Projects Awards

**BOOKHeART: Taking Book Design into Our Own Hands** *(but mostly into our Eyes, Hearts and Minds)* **TOP PROJECT**
Julianne H. Newton, University of Oregon, and Rick Williams, Lane Community College

**God’s Table: A Video Editorial**
Brian K. Johnson, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

**Native American Rock Art Sites**
Howard Goldbaum, University of Nevada Reno

**The Reciprocal Nature of Professional Projects and Teaching: bringing your work to your students and your students to your work**
Jerry Swope, St. Michael’s College

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**Best of the Web**

**Department/School Sites**
First Place: *School of Journalism and Mass Communication*
Michael Scott Sheerin, Florida International

**Teaching Sites**
First Place: *Media, Power, and Culture Course Site*
Gary Hansen, Kent State
Second Place: *Advanced Online Media Course Site*
Carol Schwalbe, Arizona State

**Journalism Sites**
First Place: *A Living Legacy: Six Generations of the Dressler Ranch*
Howard Goldbaum, Nevada, Reno
Second Place Tie: *Children of the Borderlands*
Carol Schwalbe, Arizona State
Second Place Tie: *Atacama Stories*
Rich Beckman, North Carolina at Chapel Hill

**Creative Sites**
First Place: *National Geographic Photocamp*
Kim Grinfeder, Miami
Second Place: *Searching for an Ideal Streaming Technology*
Edgar Huang – IUPUI
We want to meet YOU

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PF&R Chair
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