

Global Web Forum Archive; web forum ended on June 12, 2003

1. The Global Cafe
2. Public Journalism around the world
3. What the Public Journalism Network can do

### **1. The Global Cafe**

The Global Cafe is a place to informally socialize with your colleagues. Help yourself to the coffee and snacks!

Post a note to let others know you've arrived. And while you're at it, tell us a little (no curriculum vitae, please!) about yourself -- where you live and work, the kind of journalism, teaching or research you do.

And maybe write a bit about how you got interested in our core topics -- journalism and democracy, public or civic journalism.

And after you've posted, come back often so you can welcome and/or harrass the newcomers who follow you.

-- Cole Campbell

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### **Leonard Witt - May 20, 2003 4:14 pm (#1 Total: 13)**

Public Journalism Network President

Hello, everyone I am Leonard Witt. I am a former journalist and am now a professor at Kennesaw State University, outside of Atlanta. I am also the first president of the Public Journalism Network or PJNET for short.

I have had inquires about public journalism from journalists and scholars from around the world, so I figured why not have a global discussion. Cole Campbell has agreed to be the moderator. So that allows me to simply participate like everyone else. My own area of interest is how can we learn to report on people outside of our own social class. Who will provide a public voice for the disenfranchised? I would love to hear your ideas. Of course, I have a couple of my own.

### **Cole C. Campbell - May 20, 2003 4:36 pm (#2 Total: 13)**

Your friendly moderator

Hello to all.

I am Cole Campbell, the moderator for this forum. My job is to offer gentle encouragement to you who are reading this to participate. So please do.

I am an associate of the Charles F. Kettering Foundation, which studies democracy and has had an interest in journalism's relationship to democracy for more than a decade. I work on journalism and democracy projects (research mostly) for the foundation. I live in Chicago and work mostly from my home.

Before I started working with Kettering, I was the editor of the St. Louis Post-Dispatch in Missouri, on the banks of the Mississippi River. Before that I was editor of The Virginian-Pilot in Norfolk, Virginia, on the East Coast of the United States a bit below Washington, D.C.

I believe journalists need to rethink our conceptions of democracy, and especially our notions about citizens, if we are to serve democracy and citizens well. That's why I am drawn to the work of the Public Journalism Network.

I look forward to what everyone has to say.

**Paco Seoane - May 22, 2003 12:23 pm (#3 Total: 13)**

Congratulations from Spain

Hi all and congratulations for the initiative of building a global forum about Public Journalism!

I'm posting this message from Spain (Europe). I have a degree in Journalism by the University of Santiago, one of the eldest universities of Spain, with more than 500 years of history. It's placed in the town of Santiago de Compostela, in the northwest region called Galicia.

My professional experience is very little: I've worked as a grant holder at two regional newspapers and at one local radio. Now I'm taking the Ph.D. Courses at the University of Santiago's Faculty of Media and Communication and during this summer I will try to write a mini-thesis about the ten years of practice of Public Journalism. Of course, I recognize that such an enormous task is almost impossible without years of investigation and without living in the country where the movement was born, but I just want to clarify my own ideas rather than to make a definitive work about Public Journalism.

My interest in journalism and democracy began when I studied the Spanish Transition to Democracy, which could be placed in time between 1975 (the year that dictator Franco died) and 1982 (the year that the Social-Democratic Party won the general elections). During this period, the role of the press was very important, so important that researchers say that press became a true "Parliament of Paper".

In recent years I heard about the journalistic trend called Public or Civic Journalism and, when I read more about it, I felt as if someone had put in words what many journalists were thinking and didn't know how to express. And what were we thinking of? Well, it's too long to explain... but it could be summed up as a group of thoughts related to our role in democracy and the need of experimenting new ways of covering the news. What impresses me most about Public Journalism is the fact that, although PJ was born in the

US, a country with an old democratic tradition, it has apparently bloomed in countries that are fighting to consolidate their own democracies (Latin America, Eastern Europe...).

My knowledge about PJ comes from the bibliography that is available on-line (Merrit, Rosen, Glasser...) and from the Pew Center and Kettering Foundation publications. The main difficulty for all those who live outside the US is to see PJ in practice. I mean: I've heard and read a lot about Charlotte Observer and Wichita Eagle coverages... but I would like to see and read real pages taken from that newspapers!

Well... I think this is enough for the first message! Thank you and congratulations for the website!

**Cole C. Campbell - May 22, 2003 2:09 pm (#4 Total: 13)**

Welcome, Paco

It's great to have you join the conversation. I'm intrigued by your sense that public journalism is flowering outside the United States. I know there is considerable interest in Europe, Asia, Africa and Australia/New Zealand -- and projects and experiments. I'd love to know more about the state of these projects and experiments from you or others involved in them.

**Paco Seoane - May 23, 2003 4:57 am (#5 Total: 13)**

Public Journalism and Developmental Journalism

Well, I have to recognize that my sense that PJ was blooming outside the United States is more based on personal impressions rather than on statistical facts. I mean: I've heard about PJ experiments in Colombia, but I haven't heard about PJ coverages in France, for example. And that's what intrigues me most!

To my knowledge, there are few academic works that study PJ in an international perspective. I've found one, written by John Pauly, that might be interesting for us all. Here's the bibliographic reference:

PAULY, John (1999): "Public Journalism in International Perspective", in Communication Research Trends, Volume 19, Number 4. Centre for the Study of Communication and Culture. Saint Louis (MO), Saint Louis University. Available on-line at

[http://cscs.scu.edu/trends/v19/v19\\_4.pdf](http://cscs.scu.edu/trends/v19/v19_4.pdf)

Pauly establishes a relationship between PJ and developmental journalism. Both kinds of journalism have in common their desire of building a sense of community.

**Cole C. Campbell - May 23, 2003 7:32 am (#6 Total: 13)**

That's a great lead

Thanks, Paco. I'll look it up. Another resource is the International Media and Democracy Project at Central State University in Ohio. I think the Web site is [www.imdp.org](http://www.imdp.org). This is intended as a clearinghouse for people interested in public journalism across the globe.

**john pauly - May 23, 2003 8:17 pm (#7 Total: 13)**

International PJ

I'm happy to hear that Paco Seoane was able to find my piece in Communication Research Trends. The journal's circulation is a bit narrow in the U.S., though surprisingly wide internationally. Folks might also be interested in the latest issue of the journal, by Rob Anderson, Ken Cissna, and Meghan Clune, on dialogue studies in international perspective. Meghan wrote a short section on public journalism for that issue, and the general discussion of dialogue is very valuable.

In a way my piece was probing the question of whether we should think of public journalism as a distinctively American movement, or whether it bore a family resemblance to similar changes in politics elsewhere in the world. As Paco points out, development journalism is one point of comparison (as Gunaratne first noted). The debate over civil society has been another. I think every democracy is now struggling with these same issues of representation and participation.

What I'm curious about is whether journalists and scholars elsewhere in the world are taking up public journalism explicitly, as a model for experiments of their own. Or are they simply sympathetic to PJ's purposes, tone or approach? Or do they think that this is just another American enthusiasm?

Another thought. PJ in the U.S. has talked about itself in terms of community. Has that strategy inadvertently sold the movement short, by glorifying the local at the very moment when global-local relation are being remade? In other words, should an interest in the global be a more important part of public journalism's philosophy than it has been so far.

I'll be at ICA the next couple days, but will be happy to respond and participate whenever I can over the next week or two.

**Stanford Mukasa - May 25, 2003 8:23 am (#8 Total: 13)**

Public Journalism and developmental Journalism

Both theories represent grassroots or populist ideals about the role of the mass media in society. None grew from the other.

Public journalism historically grew from the excesses of the mass media in America in the early 1900s. [Remember how the mass media were preoccupied with the so-called Roaring 20s, glamorizing criminal syndicates, etc. In the meantime the US economy was faced with very serious challenges that led to the collapse of the stock market and the

start of the Depression - all of these factors were never given their proper analytical coverage in the media!]

Developmental journalism grew as part of the process of decolonization in the Third World.

Ironically, during the acrimonious debates in 1960s and 1970s on the proposals for the New World Information and Communication Order, some western industrialized countries opposed the basic notions of NWICO, namely journalism that took into account people's cultures and experiences. There were some merits in the arguments from the West, namely, that some Third World governments were seeking international approval to control the mass media in their own countries. But in opposing this the West threw out the baby with the bath water! Many of the ideas in the NWICO are very similar to the ideas of Public Journalism.

Rather than one concept learning from the other public journalism and developmental journalism could learn a lot from each other. This type of symbiosis places both concepts on equal footing on a level playing field. It is definitely not a question of one adopting the other's model, but engaging both models in a dialogue so each can learn from the other.  
Stan MUKasa

**Cole C. Campbell - May 27, 2003 3:49 pm (#9 Total: 13)**

Remind us of the upcoming conference

Stan -- Isn't there a major conference this fall that addresses some of the ideas involved in the New World Information and Communication Order? You mentioned it in an earlier forum. It probably bears repeating in case anyone in this forum is interested.

Thanks!

**Paco Seoane - May 28, 2003 5:33 am (#10 Total: 13)**

"Proactive Journalism" in Spain

Let's take an example... ¿What is the status of Public Journalism in Spain?

Public Journalism was introduced in Spain by the University of Navarra's Faculty of Communication, a center that has been always influenced by American trends.

In 1993, a local paper, Diario de Burgos, asked University of Navarra for academic help to improve its coverage of the General Elections. Navarra's scholars, taking as an example the experiments by the Charlotte Observer in 1992, put in practice what has been the first Public Journalism election coverage in Spain.

Since that date I haven't found any other experiment under the label of Public Journalism.

The movement awakes interest in the Academia, but when I talk about the issue with colleges from the profession, I get the sense that they don't find the need of a change in their work. They are comfortable with their routines. Just on the contrary, when I talk to neighborhood associations about the need of a more deliberative press, they become very enthusiastic.

The criticism about media in Spain is focused on the dangers to pluralism derived from the concentration of media companies and on the Government's control over public radio and television. But I have to point out the role of civil society in democracy has become a great issue because of the protests against war on Iraq.

Although I dare to say that Public or Civic Journalism is unknown by the great majority of journalists in Spain, in my region (Galicia) I have found journalistic practices that could be related with the principles of the Public Journalism philosophy. La Voz de Galicia, region's main paper, with more than 500.000 readers, has put in practice some initiatives that the paper itself considers as typical of a "proactive journalism". I will point out two of that works, that can be browsed on-line (they are written in Spanish, so I will introduce them in English):

1) "Galicia and the Irish Miracle". A decade ago, the region of Galicia (note 1, see below) and Ireland had many things in common: an economy in which agriculture had an important weight, a culture of emigration, the consideration of being part of what has been called the 'Celtic regions' of Europe... Nowadays, Ireland exports more software than the US, has made his culture a product that can be sold in the markets (the Celtic-rooted music has achieved a considerable success in Europe) and, far from releasing emigrants, Ireland has an increasing immigrant population. Nowadays, the region of Galicia, although it has experimented an important modernization, it's not one of the richest regions in Europe. What happened? A series of reportages by La Voz de Galicia try to analyze the Irish model of development and wonder if it can be adopted by Galicia. (Note 2)

[http://www.lavozdegalicia.es/especiales/milagro\\_irlandes/index.jsp](http://www.lavozdegalicia.es/especiales/milagro_irlandes/index.jsp)

2) "One hundred ideas to place Galicia in the new millennium". The newspaper invited readers to send their purpose for the future of the region in the 21st Century. Some ideas seem more like a dream, but others are being put in practice by the Administration. To browse these series, you have to visit La Voz de Galicia's main page

<http://www.lavozdegalicia.es/inicio/index.htm>

and then scroll down watching the left vertical bar, until you find the title "100 ideas", which is placed in the section "Informes".

¿Don't you find these projects very similar to those under the label of PJ in the US?

Note 1: Spain has a federal-like structure. Regions have their own competences in Education, Health, Economic Development... Galicia and Ireland have received European Union funds to boost their economies.

Note 2: Remember that Davis Merrit (1995) has written that PJ not only has to worry about what goes “wrong”, but also imagine how things would be if they went “right”.

**Ana María Miralles - May 29, 2003 2:58 pm (#11 Total: 13)**

Public Journalism in Latin America

Hi Lenn, Cole, Stanford, Paco etc.

I am not so good to work with this technologies, so In this precisely moment I don't know if I am in the Global Coffee (is does not smell...) or in the discussion. Anyway, for those of you that did not know about me I am Ana María Miralles, professor of Public Opinion at Universidad Pontificia Bolivariana in Medellín, Colombia.

I started working on Public Journalism IN PRACTICE in 1998 with a project created by me VOCES CIUDADANAS. Between 1998 and 2003 I can tell you about the exponential growing of public journalism not only in Colombia but in some countries of Latin America like Peru, Bolivia, Mexico, Venezuela and Ecuador. Is amazing!! In Colombia we have the pioner experience and from here we can see how the interest in Central and South America is increasing.

I think that journalists in this part of the world share the idea because this reasons (sorry I have not a very good english at all):

1. They have a very strong need of changes in the professional routines.
2. They understand the responsibility of journalism as a central point for education, control over the power and the creation of a vigorous political culture.
3. In this side of the world initiatives as Public Journalism is a way to change the perspective in front of the role of the State that has dominated (and elites of course) the media landscape. For example, here in Medellin there is a clear sense of the proximity to the citizens in the journalism stories, so what they need is a more methodological system to do that.
4. They see public journalism as new and serious way to understand the role of journalism in building democracy specially because we still have authoritarian governments. The people in the power can be civilians but authoritarianism is a way of mind... So we need to try with a journalism more closely related to civil society. And In doing this in group (several media) is a guarantee of self protection in front of suspicions that could create this new model in front of interests of advertisers and governments.

Well I hope we can talk a little bit more about it, this is just to begin a conversation.

Best wishes, hasta pronto

Ana Ma

**Cole C. Campbell - May 29, 2003 6:50 pm (#12 Total: 13)**

Welcome, Ana Maria

Good to have you join us. You contributed so much of value in the earlier online discussion and at the Public Journalism Network summit in January!

**Leonard Witt - May 30, 2003 8:15 am (#13 Total: 13)**

Planting Global Roots

Hi Ana Maria:

My question is, if public journalism is needed in places like South America, what can be done to provide the support and to ensure that public journalism has global roots?

### **The PJNet Web Forum Global Web Forum Archive**

#### **2. Public Journalism around the world**

Use this topic to discuss the political and cultural factors that impact public journalism in the countries where we live and work... or formerly lived and worked.

What does democracy look like there?

What role do citizens -- ordinary people -- play in your community's public life? What role do news organizations play in supporting their participation?

Where do people talk about politics, shared problems, common opportunities? Does your news organization cover these conversations? Feed into them?

Are there journalism organizations in your country that the Public Journalism Network should link up with -- to get the word out, to strengthen journalistic practice or for any other reason?

-- Cole Campbell

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**Leonard Witt - May 20, 2003 7:59 pm (#1 Total: 22)**

Organizational links

Are there journalism organizations in your country that the Public Journalism Network should link up with -- to get the word out, to strengthen journalistic practice or for any other reason?

Cole, what a great question. Here in the states we have civic and professional organizations for just about everything. What about in other countries?

How strong are the journalism societies or organizations in your country? And asking Cole's question again: Are there links the PJNET should know about?

**Tom Warhover - May 21, 2003 10:02 am (#2 Total: 22)**

elections and democracy

At the risk of sounding like a lawyer, let me answer a question with a few questions of my own.

While not necessarily the most important, free elections are the most visible demonstration of democracy around the globe.

I am preparing to run a workshop next week on elections in Jordan prior to its June 17 parliamentary elections. The organizers first question was:

What are the international standards for free elections?

Which, in my mind, raises these questions:

Just how would you define "free election?"

How does a democratic election, or one with the aspirations for democracy, differ from a decidedly undemocratic one?

What values would be espoused in any international standard or standards?

As I told Cole Campbell and Len Witt, I obviously have a jealous interest in these answers, as I'll be discussing these questions with a roomful of Jordanian journalists.

thanks,

Tom Warhover

**Cole C. Campbell - May 21, 2003 10:19 am (#3 Total: 22)**

Interesting questions

Tom -- What's worse than answering a question with a question? How about answering with a non-answer? OK, maybe this is more a partial answer.

I bet there are interesting ideas about what constitutes free elections on the Carter Presidential Library Web site. I'll try to poke around later this afternoon and see if there's anything worth posting here.

Your Jordan assignment sounds fascinating. Good luck!

**Cole C. Campbell - May 21, 2003 3:45 pm (#4 Total: 22)**

A first stab at defining "free elections"

Tom, Here's how the Carter Center web site <http://www.cartercenter.org> implicitly defines free elections by setting out what it looks for when it monitors elections (this is taken from the Democracy Program page under Peace Programs):

#### Observing Elections Around the World

Effective election monitoring begins long before voters cast their ballots. The Carter Center requires an invitation from the country's electoral authorities and a welcome from the major political parties to ensure the Center can play a meaningful nonpartisan role. Observers analyze election laws, assess voter registration processes, voter education efforts, and the openness of campaigns, focusing on competitiveness, unhindered participation in the election process, and access to the media. These assessments begin months in advance. The presence of impartial observers reassures voters they can safely and secretly cast their ballots and that vote tabulation will be conducted without tampering. Thus, election monitoring deters interference or fraud in the voting process. The Carter Center has observed more than 40 elections in 21 countries on four continents.

**Leonard Witt - May 22, 2003 10:45 pm (#5 Total: 22)**

Access to the media

Cole, Tom:

Cole, I was intrigued by this statement in your previous post from the Carter Center's specifications for a free election:

Observers analyze election laws, assess voter registration processes, voter education efforts, and the openness of campaigns, focusing on competitiveness, unhindered participation in the election process, and access to the media.

I wonder what US politicians, especially those outside the two major parties, would think about the statement "and access to the media." I wonder how their answers would compare with those of journalists.

The criticism is that access is so limited that only those with lots of money can buy their way into the consciousness of everyday people.

Anyone else have any thoughts: Do we provide enough access? If not, what do we do about it?

**Cole C. Campbell - May 23, 2003 7:37 am (#6 Total: 22)**

Some anger at the media springs from this

Len,

Research commissioned by the Kettering Foundation, where I work, supports the point you raise in your question. When citizens came together in a number of forums to discuss campaign finance issues, they frequently moved the conversation toward talking about

the news media's failure to compensate for wealthy campaigns because we do not pay attention to all candidates, but settle on front-runners, and we do not fully let other candidates fully rebut claims made in campaign advertisements. Truth-in-advertising stories are a step in the right direction, but they don't tip the scales enough to satisfy citizens who see us as being too passive.

**Buzz Merritt - May 27, 2003 10:49 pm (#7 Total: 22)**

jordan

Tom, I was in Jordan a couple of years ago--actually pre 9/11--and there's a whole lot of stuff you need to know--too much to deal with here. Can we talk?--Buzz Merritt (bmerritt@southwind.net or 316-686-1916.)

**Hideya Terashima - May 31, 2003 12:02 am (#8 Total: 22)**

From Japan

Dear my friends of PJN,

Congraturation for your launching PJNET. It's really great!  
Now I appreciate you much again for your kindness to have included me as a member in Kennesaw Summit. I could return home safely just few days before Iraq War, though friends and relatives were concerned about my trip by flight. I got some promotion as a columnist (Member of Editorial Board) for The Kahoku shimpo, a regional newspaper in Sendai city, nothern Japan.

My another work here has also started, which is to introduce Public Journalism. I got the first chance to make a speech about my research in US for my newspaper last month (see a photo added), and good feedback came soon. I and several colleagues who could be sympathised with it are now organizing study group, which would suggest ideas of reform for my spaper based on experience and experiment of Public Journalism.

Another feedback came from Japan Newspapers'Editors and Publishers'Association, in which every newspaper in Japan joins.  
I have just written and sent a report on Public Journalism and from what we Japanese regional newspapers should learn. I'm looking forward to getting another wider feedback.

About activity program on our study group to be set up soon, an idea is discussed to creat a chances to exchange journalists with PJN. Could we suggest you if it got concrete and if you were interested in it?

Please let me keep in touch to report another development.

Hideya

**Leonard Witt - Jun 2, 2003 12:35 pm (#9 Total: 22)**

## Planting Seeds in Japan and Spain

Hideya, of course, we at the PJNET would love to form exchanges with your study group. If this small discussion we are having here spawns just one or two exchanges, it would be a success. We have already heard a new voice from Spain from Paco Seoane a doctoral candidate, and from Johnny Edwards here in the US. The more seeds that are spread the better the chance of positive reform taking place. The work you are doing Hideya is very important. Thank you for doing it.

### **Buzz Merritt - Jun 2, 2003 2:07 pm (#10 Total: 22)**

#### Public journalism abroad

Despite earnest if sometimes misguided efforts, the United States rarely has been successful in establishing American-style democracy in countries in which we have intervened. That history should be cautionary to people who accept invitations to talk about public journalism abroad.

We need to be doing a lot of talking with journalists in other countries, as the appetite to hear our ideas is consistent and widespread, and in the last few years I have been involved in discussions and seminars with professionals in a dozen countries.

Some were more successful than others. In reflecting on my experiences, I've developed a checklist of things to think about in advance of such visits. While many of the points will be obvious to some people, others might not be — and certainly were not to me when I first began developing seminars for foreign journalists.

Language, of course, can be a problem, particularly in Arab and Asian countries. It is impossible to form opinions about newspapers that you cannot read, yet you invariably will be asked what you think of their journalism. I first confess my ignorance of the language, then add that even if I could read their papers, I would not be so arrogant as to judge them, nor would I particularly appreciate some newcomer to my city and country judging my journalism.

But the highest barriers are cultural and historic. It's there that we must begin the study and thinking process well in advance of a trip.

Some considerations:

#### Prevailing Models

The U.S. model of traditional journalism — non-partisan, striving for professional objectivity — is not the prevailing model in much of the world. Partisanship and multiple, fiercely competing newspapers is the more common model, and the partisanship isn't confined to the editorial pages.

In Sweden, for instance, the two primary national papers are owned by political parties, and yet a few years ago, the dominant conservative party financially bailed out the liberal newspaper, which was about to go under, in the interest of maintaining multiple voices.

In Jordan, where newspapers represent multiple splinter political and ethnic groups, the robust competition among them is much more ideological than news- or advertising-driven, and the bitter schism between East Bankers and West Bankers colors every consideration and underlies every conversation. It is not uncommon in Amman for journalists engaged in a seminar to begin haranguing one another over some real or imagined insult. In Colombia and many Latin countries, journalists must be constantly concerned about personal safety and government intervention.

Little things can cause problems. In Amman a few years ago, I conducted three days of seminars for about 25 journalists from all over the spectrum. The room was set up with a square of tables. My interpreter sat to my left, so I naturally turned my head partly that way as she whispered in my ear, trying to keep up with the rapid-fire conversations going on in Arabic. Midway through the second day, a young man who had been heavily engaged in every discussion became agitated. "Why," he asked with obvious anger and frustration, "do you always face that side of the room? (West Bankers were on one side, East Bankers on the other, it turned out.) Though I had deliberately spread the conversation all around the table, he read into my listening posture a slight. I shifted the interpreter to my right side for the balance of the seminar and he calmed down.

In most places, the notions of democracy do not include a requirement for bipartisanship or multipartisanship on the part of journalists. Quite the contrary. In that sense, their vision of how democracy works is probably more realistic than ours.

In contrast to most cities in the United States, most substantial foreign cities have several newspapers and very partisan broadcast outlets, thus multiple voices are assured.

If you have an opportunity to meet with media owners as well as working journalists, you'll understand why the partisanship is so engrained. While some owners, particularly in more advanced democracies, are entrepreneurial, many, perhaps, most, are in it for influence and ideology, not simply as a business proposition.

So the first step for U.S. journalists is to understand as much as possible about the journalistic culture and history unique to each country. The State Department can be helpful, as can academics and U.S. journalists who cover these countries. It's a matter of doing some aggressive reporting and good listening.

#### The Idea of Freedom

U.S. journalists don't worry a lot about going to prison, at least for acts in the line of duty. Journalists in many other countries do, as an almost a daily matter. In Jordan, one of my seminarians was whisked off to prison for publishing the names of members of a political organization that had been banned by the king.

Yet the historic lack of freedom can be very much an advantage for the person leading the seminar. Unlike any living U.S. journalist, the professionals in emerging democracies such as former Soviet Union countries, the Mideast and much of Latin America have been a part of the fight for freedom. They understand, far better and more intimately than many U.S. journalists, the connection between journalism and democracy and appreciate it because they have tried to do their jobs without freedom. However, some of the finer

points of public journalism and the unthreatened way we can apply them are naturally lost on people whose journalistic experience includes constantly looking over their shoulders.

Most of the journalists you will encounter yearn for the freedom that U.S. journalists take for granted. They also are aware, however, that you didn't have to earn it; it was given. Recognizing and appreciating that fact can go a long way toward building rapport with the participants.

#### There To Help, Not Demonstrate or Teach or Critique

Public journalism as we know it can no more be slapped onto foreign models of journalism than democracy itself can be superimposed immediately on a country long accustomed to other forms of government. Both take time to grow, and they must, as has happened in the United States, grow along together, reinforcing each other.

So the public journalist headed abroad needs to think of himself or herself not as a teacher or evaluator or a show-and-teller but as a helper. To do this, one needs to know what problems the foreign journalists want you to help with and how you might help. When the program is a seminar of a couple of dozen and you have planning time, it is helpful to communicate with the participants in advance, asking them to let you know individually what areas they want to discuss. If it's a lecture situation with many more participants, you can get a feel for that from local sources, your hosts and the like.

Many of the assumptions under which public journalism operates — such as First Amendment rights, free elections, open criticism of authority, self-determination by citizens — simply don't apply, so there is no universal template. Each session must be planned around the realities that affect the target audience.

#### U.S. Hegemony

In many countries, particularly in the Mideast and Europe, U.S. hegemony is a constant source of concern and antipathy. Particularly since the fall of the Berlin Wall, our status as the lone superpower and the often-ugly sprawl of U.S. culture across the globe is a source of both resentment and fear. We must not act and sound as if this power makes us right in all things and thus able to concoct remedies on the spot or apply formulas that worked in our context. Rather, our objective should be to plant seeds, giving the participants ways to start thinking differently within their specific circumstances. Only they can apply the principles of public journalism to their situation.

#### The Ultimate Consideration

Finally, the idea that people in other countries want their countries to be like America is a peculiarly American misconception. They want the freedom to determine for themselves what they will be like, and only an effective democracy can provide that. So their interest in public journalism stems not from trying to mimic our experience but from a desire to have a tool to accomplish their goals. To be effective, we must join them in that interest and understand their goals.

**Nikhil Moro - Jun 3, 2003 12:03 pm (#11 Total: 22)**

Let's frame public journalism

I wonder if he meant it this way, but Buzz's discussion of "models" presents a quite fascinating insight into the semantical implications of the notion of journalism. I think our forum should try to conceptualize journalism from a pure, theoretical, perspective that may or may not support popular operationalizations of the term. As a notional value, I think journalism transcends many of the popular cultural meanings we assign to the process of mass-disseminating news, including meanings such as profession, crusade, etc. "Public journalism," as I currently understand it, is a redundancy, in that a non-public journalist is distinguishable as a "pamphleteer" or "artiste."

On the other hand, civic journalism, as defined by the Pew Center or the MPR Civic Journalism Initiative, is an easier term to work with. Most of my humble revelations about the nature of journalism were gained during my career as a reporter/editor in India, a culturally diverse sub-continent where more than 35,000 "small newspapers" constitute a robust, non-partisan, framework of civic reporting that I believe plays a central role in sustaining that country's rather chaotic democracy. As the renowned pluralist-democrat, Robert Dahl, argues, a democracy is difficult to define but must have at least two features: a system allowing citizens to choose leaders and provisions for protection of civil rights and liberties. Dahl contends that freedom of expression is a vital feature of democracy. I think civic journalism, as practiced by the multilingual local press in India, is a tangible agent of this freedom. But "public journalism"? What is that?

**Tom Warhover - Jun 3, 2003 1:00 pm (#12 Total: 22)**

public journalism abroad

Buzz, your list is excellent. It suggests that American journalists should take a page from their own lessons about public journalism -- that we should begin the conversation from where the journalists of other countries are, not from some notion of where we think they ought to be or where we'd like them to be.

I would make an addendum to your first model (the idea that non-partisan, striving for professional objectivity, is NOT the prevailing model worldwide).

The point might extend even to the way journalists talk to each other and to their sources, not just the end product. At the conference in Jordan last week, I was struck how the journalists there gained information through argument more than from dispassionate query. It was like, "I think X, now tell me how that cannot be" than "what do you think about X."

I have no idea whether it was unique to this group, to Jordan, to the Arab world or to the world at large. (And, given my own American proclivities, I make those kinds of disclaimers, eh?) At least with this group, though, the way they think about thinking about these concepts required me to engage in a different way.

Finally: I had no answer for questions about how to promote free expression in places where imprisonment and worse can be the result. It takes real heroes to speak out in an

environment that prohibits free speech.

**Leonard Ray Teel - Jun 3, 2003 1:12 pm (#13 Total: 22)**

Professor and Director, Center for International Media Education, Georgia State University

Responding to Buzz Merritt...All those points are keys to success in the Arab world where my colleagues have been working steadily since 1995. One other important point I could add is that returning frequently, even yearly, to the same countries, the same newspapers and universities, helps build a base of familiarity and trust seldom achieved by one-time workshops. Establishing an international organization, the Arab-U.S. Association for Communication Educators, which meets annually has also helped build bridges for our work in journalism, journalism education and civil society projects. One such media-civil society campaign success this March was the release from prison of a 15-year-old Lebanese girl wrongly convicted of the murder of her newborn child, a story spawned by an NGO-media collaboration spawned in our workshop in Beirut in October 1999.

The fruits of this work in cooperation with U.S. and Arab universities, newspapers and Nongovernmental organizations in the Arab world will be reported at the Civic Journalism Division research session at 11:30 a.m. on Saturday Aug. 2 at the AEJMC convention in Kansas City. Co-author David C. Coulson of the University of Nevada and I will present the paper titled, "A Public Journalism Model for the Middle East and North Africa:

Effectiveness of Media-NGO Relationships in Partial Autocracies" In brief, the Abstract reads: "This study examines how the media and non-governmental organizations might work with each to develop a model of public journalism in partial autocracies in the Middle East and North Africa. We found that a form of public journalism can be practiced in the region. It appears that despite working in partial autocracies where media are generally owned or controlled by government, journalists cooperating with NGOs can represent the needs and concerns of civil society."

We hope to report more such successes, as the the Arab-U.S. Association has just received a sizeable grant, \$500,000, to continue its work with numerous U.S. and Arab companions at Georgia State University in Atlanta, Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond, Northeastern University in Boston, the University of Missouri at Columbia, and Arab universities in Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, Lebanon, the United Arab Emirates, the Palestinian Authority and Iraq.

We will keep you posted.

All the best, and thanks again to Buzz Merritt for those excellent guidelines.

Leonard Ray Teel, Georgia State University

**Cole C. Campbell - Jun 3, 2003 8:09 pm (#14 Total: 22)**

Nikhil Moro,

I enjoyed your observations about the role of the small newspapers in India and the contributions they make to democratic self-rule.

As to the distinction between civic and public journalism, the distinction may be different in different political contexts. In South America, for example, public has such a strong association with government that public journalism connotes governmental journalism and so Latin American journalists prefer civic journalism. Perhaps something is true for India, as well.

In the United States, public has lots of connotations, including governmental or even, perjoratively, a sense of second-rate because it is subsidized, as in public housing. "Public" as used by public journalists refers to journalism that invites citizens into public relationships with each other, into the public sphere, into creating a public. It therefore ties in with a long line of political philosophy and political theory about the public realm.

In the United States, conventional journalism is done in the public interest, but it often does not consider its readers, viewers, listeners or browsers as citizens active in the public domain as much as it considers them political consumers or audience members -- a much more narrowly circumscribed, even at times passive, category. A journalist does not have to be a pamphleteer to ignore citizens as public actors.

So public journalism is journalism that regards and represents citizens as political actors in the public sphere -- and therefore considers citizens partners of journalists in making sense of the world and partners with other political players in shaping it.

**Cole C. Campbell - Jun 4, 2003 10:33 am (#15 Total: 22)**

More on "public"

As you can see, this is one of my favorite topics.

I was reading the web site of the Center for Democracy and Citizenship at the University of Minnesota, which is the domain of Harry Boyte, a great thinker and doer in the realm of democracy and citizenship.

Harry defines public this way:

"The term public means 'a public,' a diverse group of people united around a common goal. It means 'in public,' a space that is open, visible, in which cultures of accountable public behavior can form. And it means some product that is of general use and benefit -- a public thing, a public interest, a form of commonwealth"

He also argues that ordinary people are and ought to be treated as political authorities:

"The notion that ordinary people, not only credentialled academics or intellectuals, help create or are even interested in political ideas goes against the grain of most theorizing. Many philosophers hold that thinking about and creating 'great ideas' is the activity of a class of intellectuals apart from common life. Practice-oriented theorists, in contrast,

stress the political nature of idea-creation. Seeing the creation of public concepts as political action itself opens up new possibilities for democracy."

Unfortunately, this concept of citizen-centered politics -- like citizen-centered journalism -- is eroding:

"American history has been full of ideas of citizen politics and settings in which people gained the skills, habits and associations of a democratic way of life. ... Such experiences of everyday political education and action have declined. Many institutions have become service delivery operations in which experts or professionals deliver the goods to clients or customers. Many forms of citizen politics have been reshaped as large scale mobilizations like the canvass or direct mail solicitations, in which issues are cast in 'good' and 'evil' terms, and solutions are often vastly oversimplified."

Harry's complete essay is available at [http://www.publicwork.org/1\\_2\\_philosophy.html](http://www.publicwork.org/1_2_philosophy.html)

**Griff Wigley - Jun 4, 2003 3:55 pm (#16 Total: 22)**

The rise of the citizen-journalist

Cole Campbell posted this question at the beginning of the forum:

What role do citizens -- ordinary people -- play in your community's public life? What role do news organizations play in supporting their participation?

Something that's not been discussed yet here is the notion of citizens-as-journalists. Microjournalism is another term for it. Also, open source journalism.

It's been kickstarted by the explosion of weblogs and the fact that millions of people -- think citizens, not just consumers -- can easily and inexpensively become publishers on the web.

I've been gathering references and links about this phenomenon and thought it would be helpful to post something about it to the forum.

Dan Gillmor, columnist for the San Jose Mercury News (CA, US) is working on a book titled: Making the News: What Happens to Journalism and Society When Every Reader Can Be a Writer (Editor, Producer, Etc.)

Gillmor wrote a column a couple of weeks ago about an example of this in Seoul. It's titled: A new brand of journalism is taking root in South Korea

SEOUL - Lee Bong-Ryul has a day job as an engineer at a semiconductor company. In his spare time, he's helping to shape tomorrow's journalism. Lee is an active "citizen-reporter" for OhmyNews, an online news service. Only 4 years old, the publication has already shaken up the South Korean journalism and political establishments while attracting an enormous audience. OhmyNews is transforming the 20th century's journalism-as-lecture model, where organizations tell the audience what the news is and

the audience either buys it or doesn't, into something vastly more bottom-up, interactive and democratic.

Jason Lefkowitz wrote an essay for his weblog in March titled Towards Micropolitics, Part I: Microjournalism . In May, he followed it up with: Towards Micropolitics, Part II: Microfinance . In it he cites a recent political crises in Venezuela in which local webbloggers united for Venezuela Liberty Blog Day. His piece includes several other links as examples of microjournalism, as well as to another "thinker", Joichi Ito.

Japanese technologist Joichi Ito and his paper on Emergent Democracy See especially the section on "The Strength of Weak Ties" and how citizen weblogs can have influence. Also:

" Dee Hock, the founder of Visa and a leading thinker in the "chaordics" movement, has sent Joi Ito a thoughtful response to his original paper. "

Sooo it seems worth discussing this phenomenon, since the definition of journalism has traditionally been associated with the institutional media and a small number of well-educated elite. "Public/civic journalism" might just take on a whole new meaning in a few short years.

**Leonard Witt - Jun 6, 2003 2:06 pm (#17 Total: 22)**

Objectivity at a Crossroads?

Media convergence. It happened right here for me. First there was Buzz Merritt's post about making presentations to foreign journalists. He said he in part:

In most places, the notions of democracy do not include a requirement for bipartisanship or multipartisanship on the part of journalists. In contrast to most cities in the United States, most substantial foreign cities have several newspapers and very partisan broadcast outlets, thus multiple voices are assured. In that sense, their vision of how democracy works is probably more realistic than ours.

Then came Chithra KarunaKaran, who might be a citizen-journalist, saying, "In the US, democracy is in decline...the American people are in dire need of a media that is not hellbent on infotainment...." It needs a media "that will inform the American people accurately and consistently."

KarunaKaran was saying fix your own problems before going out to help the rest of the world. Recently I was at a gathering of foreign nationals who work for our government in their native countries. Basically they interpret their own press for the American officials. These are, of course, well read people, who because they work for the US government, could not be thought of as radicals. However, they were as critical of the American press as KarunaKaran is. One Pakistani said The Washington Post and New York Times were seen as mouthpieces of the American government. None of the approximately 24 other foreign nationals from as many different countries disagreed with him.

Then came Griff Wigley writing about Micro-journalism or citizen-journalism. As the large media organizations in this country consolidate will there be a backlash, a reaction of many smaller voices, but more partisan voices.

Fox News was a reaction to the Clinton years. The conservatives saw the media as a mouthpiece for the liberals. Now the liberals see the media as an uncritical mouthpiece for the conservatives. Will a liberal equivalent of Fox emerge? Will a partisan, multi-voice media usurp objectivity? Are we at a crossroads where media objectivity is about to be swept from its pedestal here in the US? And if so, what are the consequences? And finally, if we are at a turning point, what role will public journalism scholars and professionals play as change unfolds?

**Cole C. Campbell - Jun 6, 2003 5:57 pm (#18 Total: 22)**

Citizen journalism

Len,

Blogging, which is the source of much early interest in citizen journalism or microjournalism, is certainly marked by partisanship and ideology. But I think we'll see the evolution of a citizen journalism that has a strong ethic of pragmatism -- its criterion of quality will be its ability to help citizens make good choices as citizens. That will require much of what we admire most about mainstream journalism -- solid information and insight, not slanted to a particular viewpoint. But it will expand upon traditional journalism by valuing values as well as information as important elements in reaching public judgment. That's why I think professional journalists and journalism scholars will gain a lot, and offer a lot, in working with citizen journalists -- as opposed to hunkering down in the name of professional prerogatives and ignoring or belittling them.

**Chithra KarunaKaran - Jun 4, 2003 11:42 am (#19 Total: 22)**

US media needs to inform, educate its own people

In the US, democracy is in decline, it has invaded a sovereign state, media ownership is being concentrated by the US govt's own FCC, immigrant rights are being trampled upon, millions of its citizens lack adequate health care, women have virtually no political role, the domestic economy is in deep debt and disarray.

The American people are in dire need of a media that is not hellbent on infotainment, that will circumvent the lies and corporate greed of the Bush White House, that will inform the American people accurately and consistently so that the majority are not misled by their government into thinking Iraq was responsible for 9/11.

The US has plenty of problems of its own and creates problems everywhere it goes. It should quit meddling. It has defeated democracy throughout the Middle East by arming Israel, propping up repressive monarchic regimes to ensue an unending supply of oil to its SUVs, supplied anthrax to Saddam in his war against Iran and the Kurds, paid and trained the Taliban, rejected the Kyoto Protocol -- clearly I could go on!

What price US unilateralism and dominance? Too high, so enough already.

Chithra KarunaKaran  
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**Angela Romano - Jun 9, 2003 2:32 am (#20 Total: 22)**

An Australian Perspective

It's great to see PJNet up and running, and I'm impressed by the contribution of people from so many parts of the world to a dialog on public journalism.

It's interesting to read Buzz's comments about public journalism abroad, because in Australia those who have consciously dabbled with public journalism have tended to follow U.S. examples. This is quite an irony given the fact that journalists in many Asian and other developing countries have supported philosophies similar to public journalism for decades. 'Development journalism' and, more recently, 'peace journalism' show many similarities to public journalism -- both in their philosophies and practices -- although they are generally practiced in far more modest circumstances than the public journalism activities of the U.S.

In some ways, Australia's tendency to draw on U.S. models is ironic, given Australia's geographic proximity to Asia. However, Australians feel far more culturally and politically close to the U.S. than our Asian neighbors. And given the enormous publishing industries in the U.S., most Australian journalists and journalism academics certainly have far more information about the ways and means of US-style public journalism than they have about development or peace journalism.

As a journalism educator and researcher at an Australian university, I have participated in and studied several media projects that have consciously attempted to inculcate public (or civic) journalism philosophies into news rooms. On the one hand these civic journalism projects dedicated large amounts of space to discussion of issues pertinent to community identity and well-being and stimulated healthy public response. On the other hand, there is no clear evidence that these large scale civic-journalism-style activities have been more productive for the media organizations themselves or the communities that they serve than the newspapers' regular journalistic offerings. (If anyone is interested in reading my findings to date, I'm happy to email or post the articles/chapters I've written on these topics.)

Interestingly, some of the best examples of public journalism have not consciously drawn from public journalism models -- they have occurred when editors and their staff have worked on building connections with their audiences and communities. I have talked with some of the editors and reporters whose work I feel embodies the spirit of public journalism, and although some are aware of the debates around civic and public

journalism in the U.S., none claim to be particularly influenced by these debates. One told me that all good journalism is inherently 'public'. This is an interesting way of expressing it, but I guess it shows that for some journalists (unfortunately not the majority) the concepts of community connectedness that have been discussed in the U.S. texts are already ingrained in their modus operandi. For me -- as someone who trains the students who hopefully will form the new generation of journalists -- the challenge is to inculcate this taken-for-grantedness in our journalism students that all good journalism is inherently public.

**Chithra KarunaKaran - Jun 7, 2003 12:21 pm (#21 Total: 22)**

First task of Public J'sm is to Educate its own Citizenry

US Media needs to Inform, Educate its Own People

In the US, democracy is in decline, it has invaded a sovereign state, media ownership is being concentrated by the US govt's own FCC, immigrant rights are being trampled upon, millions of its citizens lack adequate health care, women have virtually no political role, the domestic economy is in deep debt and disarray.

The American people are in dire need of a media that is not hellbent on infotainment, that will circumvent the lies and corporate greed of the Bush White House, that will inform the American people accurately and consistently so that the majority are not misled by their government into thinking Iraq was responsible for 9/11. The US press failed to deliver the facts to the American people, it failed to deflect and reveal the US Government propaganda blitz before it invaded Iraq.

The US has plenty of problems of its own and creates problems virtually everywhere it goes. It should quit meddling. It has defeated democracy throughout the Middle East by arming Israel, propping up repressive monarchic and dictatorial regimes to ensure an unending supply of oil to its SUVs, sold anthrax to Saddam in his war against Iran and the Kurds, worked closely with bin Laden, paid and trained the Taliban, rejected the Kyoto Protocol -- clearly I could go on!

What price US unilateralism and US dominance? Too high, so enough already.

The first role of civil society journalism is to inform and educate your own people.

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**Cole C. Campbell - Jun 11, 2003 12:23 pm (#22 Total: 22)**

Wrap-up

Thanks to everyone who participated in -- or dropped it to observe -- the Public Journalism Network's International Web Forum!

Several broad, important themes emerged for me in the forum. Among them:

Journalists have a lot to share with each other across international boundaries. American journalists have much to learn from journalists in other countries, and we can share what we are learning from our own experiments with folks from other countries.

We need to observe an ethic of appreciation for what others bring to the conversation and never presume that our experience, in our country (whichever country that is), is a benchmark or standard for another person's experience in another country.

Journalists and journalism educators from across the globe -- from Japan and Australia and Colombia and Spain and elsewhere -- are committed to strengthening journalism, and public life, and see public journalism as a means of doing both.

There are many emerging forms of journalism or trends in journalism -- microjournalism/citizen journalism, development journalism, peace journalism -- that have lessons for public journalism and that may provide breakthrough ideas to take public journalism to the next level of sophisticated performance.

I'm excited about what future forums -- and other endeavors of the Public Journalism Network -- can produce for the profession and for the public.

Thanks again!

## **The PJNet Web Forum Global Web Forum Archive**

### **3. What the Public Journalism Network can do**

What can an international network of people (PJNet!) interested in public journalism help you with in your work? What can you help an international network of public journalists work on?

Are there particular journalism projects or techniques that you have heard about that you want to learn more about or that you can help others learn more about through the Public Journalism Network?

-- Cole Campbell

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**Leonard Witt - May 20, 2003 7:52 pm (#1 Total: 5)**

Why Public Journalism?

As the President of the Public Journalism Network, one question that intrigues me is: How did you hear about public or civic journalism, and what piques your interest?

**Johnny Edwards - May 23, 2003 2:46 pm (#2 Total: 5)**

Heard your presentation . . .

This is Johnny Edwards. I'm a staff writer on the special projects team at The Augusta Chronicle in Augusta, Ga. Sorry I'm late joining the forum.

I heard about your network at the presentation you gave before the Georgia AP Awards luncheon several weeks ago. I thought you were right on with many of your criticisms of the modern media, and how in many ways it's neglecting its responsibility to democracy. The focus given to candidates with cash in elections, which was discussed in another forum, is a fine example of this.

Now that I'm back from overseas, our team is working on a public journalism project that will attempt to reach into the hearts and minds of our community (I better not be too specific because it's nowhere near complete), and I'm interested in learning more about what the media does wrong in hopes of doing it right. I hope that makes sense.

I'm also looking for other project ideas, other issues that the media tends to ignore. I think we often get in a rut, and make excuses, rather than do the legwork needed to serve our communities like we're supposed to. Don't get me wrong. There are a lot of papers that do public journalism very well. My paper has done some excellent work covering issues in Augusta. But there is always room for improvement.

**Cole C. Campbell - May 24, 2003 7:06 am (#3 Total: 5)**

You're just in time

Welcome to the forum, Johnny.

Sounds like you all are aiming high -- which is great.

Your sibling paper in Savannah also has done some strong work in this area, which I'm sure you know about.

As this conversation gets rolling, you should get plenty of ideas and insights to fuel your work.

**Leonard Witt - May 24, 2003 5:50 pm (#4 Total: 5)**

Regional Centers

Johnny, I have thought a lot about the possibility of regional centers where journalists and scholars could come to exchange ideas and do hands-on work to advance the practice

of journalism.

We already have a good foundation in the Southeast. The Anniston Star is starting a nonprofit institute combined with the University of Alabama. Chris Waddle, who was editor of the paper, will be establishing the institute. He is open to experimentation and furthering the tenets of public journalism.

In Georgia the papers in Columbus and Savannah have done some interesting projects as have the Charlotte, North Carolina and Tampa, Florida papers. The Atlanta Journal Constitution's Mike King is an advocate as is Edward Miller, a newspaper consultant, who now lives in Georgia. So there is a fairly strong foundation. It might just be a matter of solidifying efforts.

There could be regional centers on every continent. Imagine the power they would have.

**Johnny Edwards - May 27, 2003 10:03 am (#5 Total: 5)**

Interested

If something like that gets off the ground, I'd definitely be interested in participating. I assume the regional centers would host forums and conferences. I've been to conferences that were good and bad. The good ones, such as one I attended last year in Savannah hosted by IRE, teach hands-on techniques, ways to get to the heart of a story. The bad ones, which I won't mention here, ramble on about theories and concepts, without ever saying how to put them to practical use. I'm sure there are other reporters out there who have attended many more conferences who might have a different take on them.

Another necessity for this to work would be reasonable registration fees. Many of the smaller papers aren't going to let their reporters participate if the fees are too high, and it's the smaller papers that need training the most.