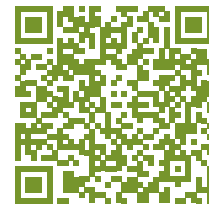




**RJI'S STUDIO** served as the hub for Friends of the Facts, a week-long virtual conference held June 27-30 which aimed at promoting informed consumption of digital media amid the rise of “fake news,” deepfakes, and misinformation.

Pictured in the RJI studio are, on the right, Kathy Kiely, the Lee Hills Chair in Free-Press Studies at the Missouri School of Journalism and host of the conference, as she speaks with her panelists on June 27, 2022, during her virtual Friends of the Facts seminar. With her in the RJI studio are, left to right, Jason Artman, an Illinois high school teacher; Shawn Healy, Illinois iCivics; and Rep. Jim Murphy, a member of the Missouri House of Representatives. The panel: Should we require schools to teach digital literacy? Photo by Nate Brown

**VIEW RECORDINGS OF THE  
CONFERENCE SESSIONS**





SUMMER 2022 | VOLUME 1 NUMBER 1

# YOUR BEST ADVOCATE

IS YOU



**2021-22 RJI Fellows focus on collaboration, innovation**

**Finding a new revenue stream by stating the obvious**

**Newsrooms come together to tackle digital preservation**



# Letter from the Editor

**Randy Picht**

RJI Executive Director



## WELCOME TO THE INAUGURAL EDITION OF RJI INSIGHT.

Inside, you'll find highlights – just the tip of the iceberg – on programs and projects that make the Reynolds Journalism Institute the go-to place for new ideas and insights. Collaboration is the key. We partner with news organizations and innovators across the country and around the world to create solutions of practical use for journalism. That means whether we're talking about guides, strategies, technologies, or any number of other advances, our work is designed to be put to use on the ground in the newsrooms that need it.

In addition to collaboration, our guiding principle in this work is the pursuit of innovation. Perhaps more than ever, it takes ingenuity to create a successful news product, and you don't need me to explain that every aspect of the industry is evolving at an incredible pace — but to keep up with all the changes, we need more than ideas. We need action, answers that newsrooms can benefit from directly.

As an institute housed in the Missouri School Journalism at the University of Missouri, we get those answers by sharing the school's emphasis on stepping outside the classroom and "learning by doing." Here at RJI, we step outside the think tank into communities, into newsrooms, into the projects that move the industry forward. Just a few such projects covered in this issue include our partnership with the Multicultural Media & Correspondents Association (pp. 16–17), the work of our RJI Fellows (pp. 8–15), and the opening stages of a digital news preservation initiative (pp. 22–23).

Take a look, and if you have questions or would like to join the effort, reach out! As is demonstrated time and time again in the pages that follow, collaborative innovation is how we move forward. Let's start something new together.

Send us an email at



[rji@rjionline.org](mailto:rji@rjionline.org)

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## ON THE COVER

Marissa J. Lang of The Washington Post presents at this year's Women in Journalism conference. The conference was held in April and featured a diverse lineup of talented speakers from the Washington Post, BBC Mundo, Reuters and the Institute for Nonprofit News, among many others.



**SUMMER 2022  
VOLUME 1 NUMBER 1**

### RJI Executive Director

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### Editor

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### Designer

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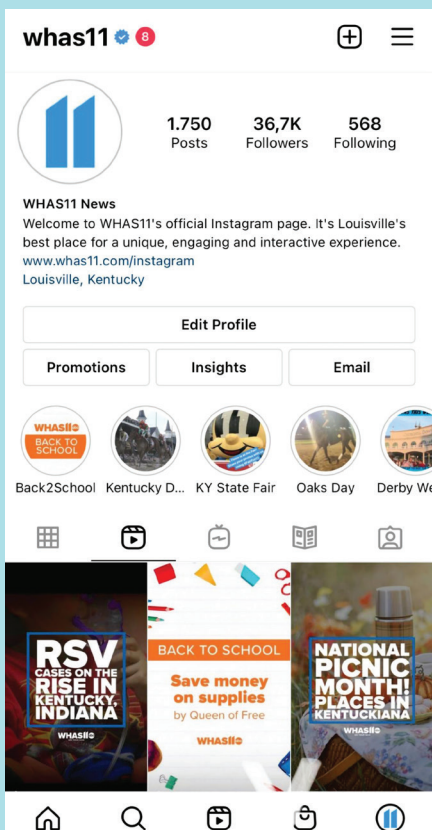


# Innovation in Focus Spotlight

## How to optimize your videos on Instagram Reels

**INSTAGRAM REELS** is one of the most prominent features on Instagram. This category even has its own space and tab — the center at the downbar menu in the app’s interface in both Android and Apple devices — plus exposure on the Feed, Explore and Profile. If your newsroom wants to grow on this platform, give Reels a try.

Reels uses short-form and multi-clipped videos that can have sound, effects, and music added to them. It has distinctive characteristics:



### 1. Length

Reels can be up to 1 minute long. Take this into account if you want to recreate or reshare content from a TikTok account, in which videos are up to 3 minutes in length.

### 2. Content penalized in terms of reach

On Aug. 4, @creators by Instagram published a guide sharing which content should be avoided.

- Low-resolution or water-marked reels: For this reason, you should avoid resharing content from TikTok when possible.
- Reels that focus on political issues: You should focus more on Reels that include trending music, educational content or a behind-the-scenes (#bts), for example.

### 3. Music or sounds

If there is a sound in a reel that you would like to use for future content, go to the down left corner and tap on the sound. Tap on “Use this sound”



or “Save” if you want to use it later. Whenever you want to access the saved audio, just go to your profile, tap the three-line menu icon at the right upper corner and go to “Saved.”

### 4. Ways to share them

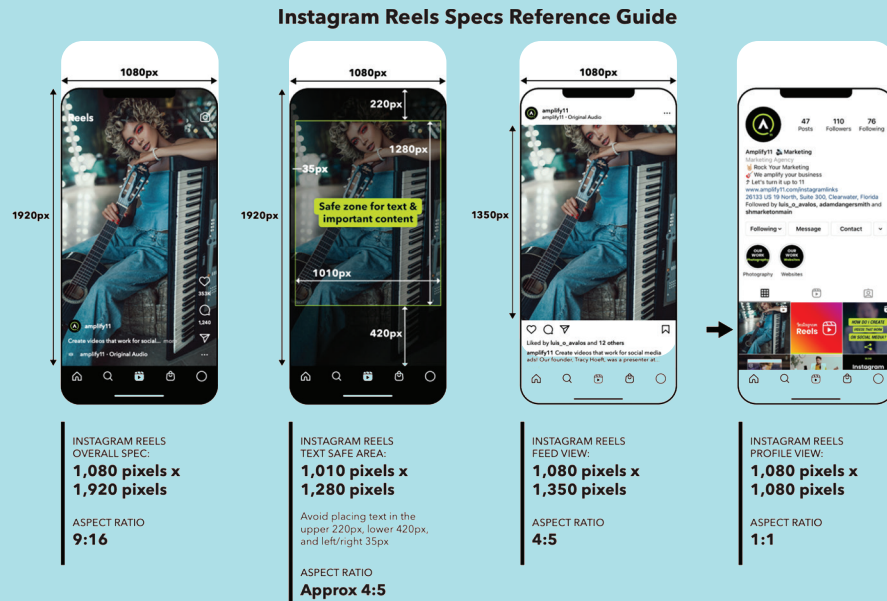
Reels can be shared in a dedicated space in Explore, where it can be discovered by a wider audience. If you want to share it with your followers, you can post it to your Feed. When that option is selected,



it will be shown in your Profile also. When reels contain certain songs, hashtags or effects they can also be featured on dedicated pages to those songs, hashtags or effects.

## 5. Video size and feed view

- Video size: The overall video size is 1080 pixels × 1920 pixels, a 9:16 aspect ratio, but this is not a completely unobstructed view. The upper part is used for the brand “Reels”, and the bottom is overlaid with account information, captions and icons. My suggestion: always work with a Feed view.
- Feed view: As stated before, reels can be shared to your Feed. If you plan to add text, you should consider the “text-safe zone” of 1080 pixels × 1350 pixels, a 4:5 aspect ratio. Amplify11 states that “on some phones, the edges are cut off at about 35 pixels from the right edge and left edge. This includes on the iPhone XS



and several other medium sized phones. You will want to plan your video in all views to allow for this.”

Remember! Reels is a vertical video format, so you will start from there when recording your content. Instagram values this format in order to share it with a wider audience.

## 6. Text or captions: on-screen placement

Adding text to your reels is an important step, as a high percentage of people watch videos without listening to them. Closed captions will also make your content more accessible for people with hearing difficulties.

## 7. Cover and Profile view

Before hitting “Share,” there

is one final step. When you choose to share your reel to your Feed, a “Crop Profile Image” option is displayed below. This is where you can fit the cover to your Profile Grid so it isn’t cropped in the middle of a text. This Profile view is 1080 × 1080, an aspect ratio of 1:1. Take this into consideration when creating your Cover: the aspect ratio should be 9:16 just like the video, but within it, the text or important content that will be shown on your Profile should be 1:1.

## Carolina Vásquez

was a 2021 RJI Student Innovation Fellow. She worked with TEGNA and WHAS-TV in Louisville, Kentucky, on digital centered journalism.





# RJI News in Brief

## A Girl Scout patch: Exploring and building trust in journalism

It seems like a no-brainer: a Girl Scout patch aimed at highlighting women in journalism and demystifying the profession. Sarah Roelke, a 13 year old Girl Scout, has made the patch a reality with her Report It! patch program.

When we heard about Roelke's program, we knew it was perfectly aligned with RJI's mission to increase news literacy and inclusivity. That's why we are excited to share that the Report It! patch program is available now for any girl scout to earn as a patch, and the framework is available on Github.

Trust grows from familiarity, and Roelke's program peels back layers to explain the who, how and why of journalistic practices. She reached out to journalists asking for best practices in investigative reporting and dove into the Girl Scout Archives to find journalists who were Girl Scouts.

"With the help of the Girl Scout Archives, I was able to see a lot of women journalists that have been able to thrive in the world today that I didn't know came from Girl Scouts," Roelke said.

Activities punctuate the program guide to highlight the pitfalls of unreliable information, explore what might have changed if the investigations had not been there and how to be a better-informed consumer of journalism.



## Spotlighting trusted news sites with trust.txt standard



RJI has reached an agreement to collaborate with the nonprofit JournalList Inc. to expand its automated system designed to elevate and monetize trusted news outlets and their official social media feeds.

As part of this new collaboration, the JournalList board and RJI appointed Mark Stencil, of the Duke University Reporters' Lab, to be the project's new executive director. Stencil will work alongside founder Scott Yates

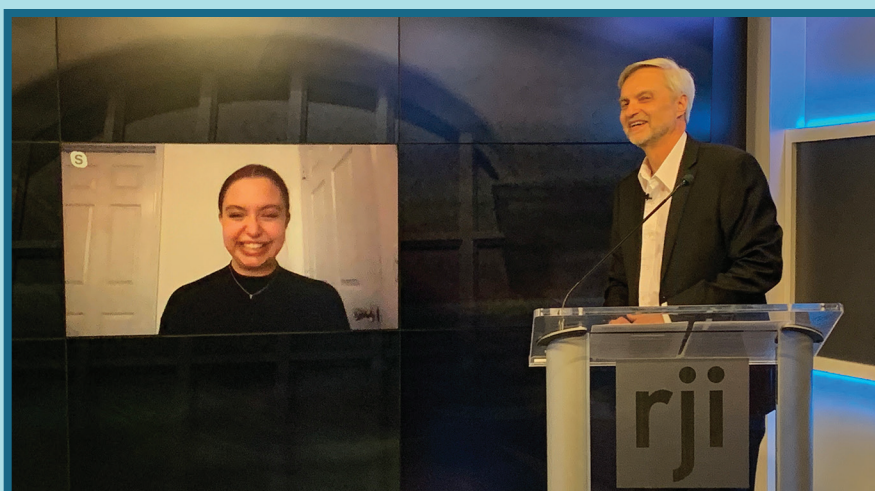


and technology chief Ralph Brown to build momentum for the idea.

Yates, an entrepreneur and former reporter, created JournalList's trust.txt system to help validate news media sites and social media feeds by highlighting their affiliation with other prominent journalism and media organizations — from regional news chains and press associations to national media organizations and trade groups. All of this is done with a text file located on the site — for example: [ap.org/trust.txt](https://ap.org/trust.txt).

As of mid-summer, 2,800 publishers are part of the Trust.txt ecosystem which uses that simple text file to give search engines, social media platforms, app developers and programmatic ad buyers the verification they need to streamline the identification of trusted sources on the Internet. Stencil's role at JournalList will be to increase the adoption of the trust.txt files across the digital media landscape.

"In real estate, it's location. In news right now, it's trust, trust, trust," said Randy Picht, RJI's executive director. "We're enthusiastic about this collaboration and look forward to working with Mark and everyone at JournalList."



### **Student Innovation Competition awards \$10,000 prize**

Dana Cassidy, who graduated in May from the University of Florida, won first place and \$10,000 in RJI's Student Innovation Competition for her news literacy toolkit project. This year's iteration of the annual competition pitted teams of students from universities around the country against each other to develop solutions for news literacy.

"Dana's project is a real tour de force," said Randy Picht, executive director of RJI. "Her interactive toolkit combines education, technology and reliable news resources to teach young people the value of news, how to navigate the internet and where social media fits in. We're delighted to recognize her hard work with the \$10,000 first prize."

Cassidy's toolkit includes a searchable database of more than 3,000 newspapers across the country, as well as a curriculum of interactive educational activities, reading lists and quizzes. Designed for fifth graders but helpful for people of all ages who want to improve their news literacy, the toolkit is available online ([newsliteracytoolkit.com](https://newsliteracytoolkit.com)) for free public use.

"This project was, for many reasons, such a great experience," said Cassidy, who is now working at the Washington Post as a news engineering intern. "As a journalist, content creator, and technologist, I'm a firm believer that education is the tool to improve news literacy."

Second and third place were also awarded, which came with prizes of \$2,500 and \$1,000, respectively. More information about the winning projects and the other competitors can be found at [rjionline.org/studentinnovationcompetition](https://rjionline.org/studentinnovationcompetition).

## Three disability questions every editor should ask



Newsrooms are slowly seeing the need to make accessibility more than an afterthought, says RJI 2021-22 Fellow Hannah Wise, who spent the past year creating Disability Matters, a toolkit to promote accessibility, accurate coverage and respectful language pertaining to the disability community in the media. Editors are positioned to propel much needed change — even if it takes one story at a time.

Here are three basic questions to ask of every story to make disability visible in news:

### **Where are the disabled voices?**

If you are reading this and have never edited a story with a disabled source, you're failing. When The Washington Post published a lengthy project about unpaid caregivers in America — specifically about women who were married to disabled men — that focused on the perspectives of the caregivers, the response from the disability community was swift.



Critics pointed out that the disabled spouses were rarely quoted in the piece. Reporting focused on choices and losses the women faced in order to care for their disabled partners, which only perpetuated the incorrect stereotype that disabled people are a burden.

Who is quoted matters. Who is photographed matters. The perspective that a story is centered around matters. In journalism, in entertainment, in sports, in business — seeing and hearing from disabled people over and over again is how broader culture is changed.

### **Is ableism hiding in plain sight?**

“Crippling,” “lame,” “crutch,” “handicap,” “lunatic,” “fall on deaf ears,” and “turn a blind eye to,” are just a few examples of common ableist phrases that perniciously litter speech and writing. They obscure true meaning and can add to confusion for readers.



It takes a watchful eye and a creative editor, but there is almost always a more accurate alternative word or phrase.

### **Is this the most accessible format for us to present this story?**

This is possibly the easiest of these three questions, especially if you've already made accessibility part of your newsroom workflow.

Is the alt-text on visuals enhancing the reporting? Have you shared it with the newsroom audience team or journalists who will potentially share this story or its visuals off-platform?

Does a video have closed captioning added? Is a transcript of audio elements provided?

Oftentimes the simplest and most straightforward presentation is also the most accessible for the widest possible audience.

**ACCESS THE DISABILITY  
MATTERS TOOLKIT**





## Student Innovation Fellows support community newsrooms nationwide

Six students at the Missouri School of Journalism are working at local news organizations around the country this summer as part of the School's Donald W. Reynolds Journalism Institute's (RJI) Student Innovation Fellowships program, gaining hands-on experience helping the outlets connect with their audiences.

Students are working on a wide range of projects for the partner newsrooms with a focus on helping the outlets build on or introduce product work, from building newsletters and social media tools to creating various forms of content for television, print, and digital news products.

"I am very excited for these students to get to experiment and innovate in product work," said Kat Duncan, RJI's director of innovation. "From newsletters to cutting edge engagement ideas, these students will get to work with these organizations to expand and build upon their current product work to serve their communities."

The fellows are required to work between 30 to 40 hours per week at their newsroom.

This summer's students and partners are:



**Irina Matchavariani,**

*The Chicago Reporter,  
Latino News Network;*

help build and distribute newsletters, reporting and strengthen writing skills;

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**Julia Wilson,**

*La Voz, Arizona Republic;*

focus on outreach and communication efforts with Spanish speakers in the Phoenix metro area;

---



**Sydney Lewis,**

*The Times-Picayune, The Advocate;*

helping reach audiences by running communications;

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**Lucas Owens,**

*The Atlanta Journal-Constitution;*

work with the product team on newsletters;

---



**Shayleigh Lawson,**

*Center for Public Integrity;*

put material on Instagram, attract and gauge audience attention through social media;



**Samantha Walker,**

*Trusting News;*

develop tools and strategies to help news media earn and retain trust among the general public.

# 2021-22 RJI Fellows focus on collaboration, innovation and new strategies to manage newsrooms

**WITH THE NEW** 2022-2023 cohort of RJI Fellows now beginning their projects at the Reynolds Journalism Institute, the 2021-2022 fellows have ended their terms. From a development tracker toolkit to a guide that helps newsrooms serve the disability community and much more, the group of innovative professionals has emerged from the eight-month fellowship with practical solutions that newsrooms across the country can use to build more diverse newsrooms, engage and collaborate more meaningfully with their communities, and better reach underserved and under-represented populations.

“The fellows had a lot of fresh ideas, but turning those ideas into real, deliverable realities is what really set them apart and demonstrated what these fellowships are all about,” said Randy Picht, executive director of RJI. “These are resources that newsrooms and the public can

benefit from right now to stay nimble and address some of the most impactful issues in the industry.”

In addition to receiving monetary support from RJI for their projects — which each tackled a problem or area of need in local news — fellows were given the option to spend the fellowship period at RJI as a residential fellow or away as a nonresidential or institutional fellow. Their journeys were documented on [rjionline.org](http://rjionline.org) as they progressed from the initial stages to a freshly launched resource available to the public. Learn more about each of the fellows and their projects below.

---

## Kate Abbey-Lambertz



Kate Abbey-Lambertz built the Detroit Development Tracker for local news organization Detour Detroit, where she serves as co-founder and editorial

director. The tracker is a news app that tracks construction and development activity in the city using data from journalists and submissions from the public. With the knowledge and experience gained from building the tracker, Lambertz also launched the Local Development Tracker Toolkit, which helps news organizations set up similar apps in their own communities.

“Since the Detroit Development Tracker launched earlier this year, we’ve received more than 100 submissions from users sharing their knowledge about development activity,” Lambertz wrote for [rjionline.org](http://rjionline.org). “Those tips have come from all over the city and included photos, reports of new activity at construction sites and previously unreported projects — an overwhelming indication of our readers’ interest in development and appetite for a more comprehensive, accessible way to find



and collect this information.”

Lambertz’s partnership with RJI won’t end with the fellowship; going forward, she will work with Jimmy McBroom — a data engineer with the City of Detroit — and RJI to build development trackers for three newsrooms across the country.

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## Liz Bloomfield

Liz Bloomfield, executive director of Ripple Effect Images, created the Simply No Words platform, a groundbreaking approach to outreach and public service



using animation. Through the platform, newsrooms can access free or low-cost animations that can be adapted to suit a wide range of audiences, languages, and topics, allowing them to reach across boundaries of language and literacy to communicate important information to their communities.

“Our collaboration with newsrooms across the U.S. over the past 9 months revealed an even wider potential audience than we had originally anticipated,” Bloomfield wrote. “Newsrooms valued the opportunity to better serve younger

audiences who are more drawn to visual content, and to older audiences struggling to access written content.”

Bloomfield is also offering no-cost, high-quality animation to newsrooms that collaborate with Simply No Words to continue to improve the platform through audience testing and cooperative discussions.

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## Emma Carew Grovum

Emma Carew Grovum, founder of Kimbap Media, launched a coaching program to help journalists



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Josh, an incarcerated student at Hampshire County Jail, shares his experiences inside prison with classmates from UMass-Amherst as part of Yukari Kane’s fellowship project. Photo: Brian McDermott



of color in local news develop leadership plans and overcome obstacles in the industry. The program, Upward, trained its first cohort of six journalists over a seven-month period as part of Grovum's fellowship, with participants from six states across the country looking to return to their newsrooms with the tools to create an impact in their organization and in the industry.

"Perhaps more journalists of color would choose to stay with a company if they knew that the company had a clear plan to promote them in a year or two," Grovum wrote. "Perhaps they would be more prepared to take on those expanded roles sooner, if only they had a full toolbox of frameworks and strategies."

In the spirit of the fellowship's emphasis on collaboration, two other fellows in the 2021-2022 RJI Fellows cohort — Sisi Wei and Hannah Wise — served as guest speakers in the program, discussing leadership and management techniques.

---

### **Erin Hooley**

Erin Hooley, staff photographer at the Chicago Tribune, brought journalists and members of



underserved communities together for constructive conversations about news coverage through Covering Your Community. In addition to encouraging participating Chicago journalists to return to their newsrooms with ideas for improving coverage and maintaining relationships with the community, Hooley also built a toolkit designed to help news organizations nationwide replicate these conversations and produce more representative, equitable journalism.

"We want to establish a regular dialogue with people in our communities and learn what is important to those people," Hooley wrote. "We want to forge new relationships and reinforce current ones."

Hooley's toolkit covers everything planners need to hold their own community conversations, from pre-event infrastructure and building a website to promoting the event, as well as incorporating feedback from the conversations into a newsroom.

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### **Yukari Kane**

Yukari Kane, founder and co-executive director of the Prison Journalism Project,



built the Prison Journalism Navigator. The navigator is a compilation of guides and other resources designed to help incarcerated writers and news organizations collaborate on stories that shed light on life behind bars. For instance, 17 incarcerated and formerly incarcerated writers worked together to create a glossary of prison jargon, allowing newsrooms and journalists to work more efficiently and meaningfully with people in prisons. And though the navigator has now launched, it will continue to improve post-fellowship.

"By the end of the year, we plan to add a primer on relevant laws that may impact writers' ability to publish or receive payment for their work; do's and don'ts pertaining to the safety of incarcerated journalists; and training handouts for incarcerated writers with information about libel, their rights as journalists and scenario-based training that could help them prepare for confrontations about stories they might publish," Kane wrote.

One key aspect of the navigator is an emphasis on changing the language around incarceration by encouraging the use of



person-centered language like “incarcerated person” rather than “inmate” or “offender.”

## Sisi Wei

Sisi Wei, co-executive director of programs at OpenNews, created a guide for turning private conversations into public resources. The guide details a process for generating public benefits from off-the-record conversations — one that was forged through Wei’s experience creating two such public resources for the DEI Coalition for Anti-Racist, Equitable, and Just Newsrooms, which she founded with the purpose of bolstering inclusion and anti-racism in the industry.

“I will celebrate the day when journalists feel like they can speak openly and plainly about diversity and equity issues in their newsrooms without fear of repercussion, and without flinching in anticipation of immediate harm,” Wei wrote. “But we aren’t there yet. By making safer spaces (“safer” because while I try very hard, I can never guarantee a space will be completely safe), I’m creating physical and digital places where we can be vulnerable, share what has and hasn’t worked,



Reynolds Journalism Institute fellow Kate Abbey-Lambertz speaks to Columbia Missourian students Friday, Aug 27, 2021, in Columbia, Missouri. Photo: Erin Hooley

and learn from each other more plainly and honestly.”

The DEI Coalition currently has more than 900 members working together to create these and other resources aimed at diversifying newsrooms and building trust between communities and the journalists who cover them.

## Hannah Wise

Hannah Wise, central region audience development editor for McClatchy, formerly at the New York Times, launched the Disability Matters toolkit to promote accessibility, accurate coverage, and respectful language pertaining to the disability community in the media. Wise hopes the toolkit will help make the topic of disability coverage a larger piece of the industry



conversation about inclusion and diversity in news coverage.

“From typography and color choices to video captions and alt-text, to the architecture of websites and news apps, conforming to accessibility standards benefits all readers,” Wise wrote. “News organizations must be better educated to design products and experiences to reach this audience as well.”

Beyond offering tips and tricks for journalists, the toolkit also makes it clear that the issues faced by people with disabilities occur not only in the stories journalists publish, but within newsrooms themselves. Some of Wise’s suggestions for newsroom leadership include streamlining the process of requesting accommodations and fostering a culture of flexibility.



## Introducing the 2022-2023 RJI Fellows

### THE REYNOLDS JOURNALISM

Institute (RJI) at the Missouri School of Journalism has announced the 2022-2023 cohort of RJI Fellows, a talented group of professionals creating resources to help newsrooms serve both their communities and their own journalists.

From a toolkit for visual journalists on trauma-informed and identity-informed safety practices to a project aimed at helping radio newsrooms jumpstart youth media programs, this year's fellows are tackling a wide swathe of issues in the industry related

to diversity, technology, youth development, and grassroots engagement.

“These are people on the front lines of innovation in the industry, and we’re excited to see practical solutions for some of the industry’s most challenging issues come to



life over the course of the fellowships,” said Randy Picht, executive director of RJI. “The RJI Fellowship Program has a proven track record of creating real tools that newsrooms can use. I can’t wait to see this year’s fellows build on that success and help move the industry forward.”

Throughout the 8-month fellowships — which allow fellows to collaborate directly with RJI on-site at the University of Missouri or from afar, and come with stipends ranging from \$20,000-\$80,000 — the fellows will post updates to [rjionline.org](http://rjionline.org) tracking their progress, ultimately emerging with a deliverable guide, toolkit, or resource that journalists and newsrooms can put into practice.

### Amy L. Kovac-Ashley



**Amy L. Kovac-Ashley will create a succession planning guide for small, independent local nonprofit and for-profit news organizations to help them grow into mature, thriving businesses that serve their communities and transition gracefully past their founding, startup stage.**

“What happens when a leader who’s been around for a while —

who might even be a founder — leaves? They can leave a pretty huge vacuum, and the organization can experience a lot of turmoil during the transition,” Kovac-Ashley said. “You want the news organizations to survive past these particular individuals and continue serving their communities.”

She emphasized that succession planning is not just about top leaders, but should include people throughout the organization who carry important institutional knowledge.

Kovac-Ashley worked at the American Press Institute for six years, most recently as executive vice president and chief of news transformation, and is now transitioning to a new role as head of national programs at the Lenfest Institute. She has more than two decades of experience in the industry as a working journalist, educator, and executive, and she currently serves as a member of the board of directors for Open Campus, a nonprofit news organization focused on higher education.

### Beth Francesco



**Beth Francesco will build a fundraising toolkit to help local, small news**

**organizations diversify their revenue streams and decrease their reliance on traditional ad sales, designed for those newer to philanthropy.**

“Fundraising is not something that a lot of people are familiar with or comfortable with,” Francesco said. “As we have this need for newsrooms to really look outside of advertising and traditional revenue streams, this toolkit will put turnkey strategies and templates in their hands.”

Francesco is the deputy executive director for the National Press Club Journalism Institute in Washington, D.C., and has deep experience as a working journalist, nonprofit professional, and journalism educator. She published her first book in 2019.

### Mary Heisey and Kelsey Kupferer



**Mary Heisey and Kelsey Kupferer will create a comprehensive guide that supports radio newsrooms in creating or expanding youth media programs to train and invest in the next generation of journalists as well as engage future listeners, leaders, and supporters of radio.**



“Kelsey and I have a combined 15 years of experience in youth media at public radio stations, and during that time we’ve seen and heard so much about the challenges that public media are facing when it comes to diversifying their staff and the stories they tell,” Heisey said. “Challenges like, ‘How do we actually reach all of the public and not just some of the public? We know that youth media is an untapped creative solution to some of those challenges.’”

“We’re creating a website that will be a one-stop shop for radio stations that want to start or expand youth media programming,” Kupferer added. “And while it’s for NPR member stations specifically, any radio station can use it. Whether your station has no money and no time, some money and some time, or a lot of money and a lot of time, we’re saying, ‘here’s what you can do.’”

Kupferer is an alum of the Missouri School of Journalism and worked at KBIA-FM, the School’s NPR member station, while earning her degree. She is currently a producer for Radio-Active Youth Media, the teen journalism program at KUOW Public Radio, an NPR member station in Seattle, Washington.

Heisey works as an audio producer and narrative editor, and previously produced RadioActive Youth Media at KUOW. She currently lives in Charlotte, North Carolina.

## Tasmiha Khan



**Tasmiha Khan will create a toolkit on how to best address Muslims and Islam in the media, including correct terms and templates for journalists who are writing or referring to Muslims in their work.** These templates will also include sample language for Ramadan and Eid, along with other terms and guides.

“I want to change the narrative about Muslims in the media. 9/11 was more than 20 years ago, but it is still part of the public consciousness, and it’s not difficult to pick up a newspaper and find harmful language and stereotypes,” Khan said. “My project is meant to help journalists write more accurately and sensitively about a culture and people they might not know a lot about.”

Khan is an experienced journalist who has been published in the New York Times, the Washington Post, National Geographic, and other

esteemed outlets. She is active in the Muslim community mentoring and coaching young professionals.

## Tara Pixley



**Tara Pixley will create an online toolkit that offers trauma and identity-informed visual journalist safety checklists, tips, gear advice, and other necessary security training elements for all visual journalists, including freelancers and students, with an emphasis on equity and ethics.** It will be a globally accessible resource addressing specific risk management tools, techniques and considerations for journalists with diverse bodies and backgrounds doing visual reporting in a variety of environments.

“The idea is to create a compendium of knowledge and experiences to keep visual journalists safe and connected around the world,” Pixley said. “Most importantly, these will be trauma-informed and identity-informed resources, which means, for example, recognizing that being a Black, queer, femme-presenting person working in visual journalism versus being a white masculine-presenting person



is going to introduce different kinds of experiences and safety considerations.”

Pixley has nearly two decades of experience as a visual journalist, educator, and award-winning writer, and she is currently based in Los Angeles. She describes her work as rethinking “visual representations of gender, race, class, and sexuality in image-making.”

## Nissa Rhee



**Nissa Rhee will create a guide to using grassroots organizing techniques to equip and engage underserved audiences.** This guide will include tips on who to hire, what kind of work field canvassers should do and where, and how to integrate their work into your existing audience growth strategies. It will be available in both English and Spanish.

“At Borderless Magazine, we are using community field canvassers to go out every

weekend to Spanish-speaking communities in Chicago and talk to people who are not being reached by local news outlets,” Rhee said. “It’s about deep listening and thinking of new ways to connect with our Spanish-speaking audience from the ground up. My project will document this approach — what works and what doesn’t — to create a playbook for people who want to try it. We’ve learned so much already.”

Rhee is a Peabody Award-nominated journalist and the executive director of Borderless Magazine, a nonprofit, immigration-focused newsroom. Based in Chicago, the multilingual magazine works to promote better representation of immigrants and people of color through its coverage.

## Ryan Restivo



**Ryan Restivo will build a practical tool that lowers the barrier to interactively**

**learn best practices for search engine optimization (SEO).** This tool will utilize slash commands in Slack that — once installed — can be used by anyone in a newsroom’s workspace to gather actionable SEO information and insights that they can use for future work.

“How do we lower the barrier to entry for people to get the information they want at the time they need it? We tend to think about that in terms of our audience, our readers, but journalists also have to worry about how they are writing headlines and content and whether that is optimized for a search engine,” Restivo said. “I want to make sure we’re giving our newsrooms as strong a treatment as we give our users.”

Restivo has more than a decade of industry experience and is currently the Director of Product & Emerging Technology at Newsday. Prior to Newsday, Restivo spent six years at MLB Advanced Media.

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# Finding a new revenue stream by stating the obvious: A community newspaper is an economic development asset

## THE MULTICULTURAL MEDIA

& Correspondents Association (MMCA) and RJI are partnering to build the capacity of local news organizations, initially BIPOC media, to report on — and compete in — a more equitable economy through the “Inclusive Media and Economies” project.

Inclusive Media and Economies — conceived in May 2020, founded by RJI, and directed by Linda Miller — started with a simple question: if a robust, free, independent, and diverse press is so critical to the health, economic and civic success of communities, why is investing in local news absent from economic development strategies — and what would it take to change that?

Since then, the project has sparked new thinking and collaborative action aimed at futureproofing community media

amid a public health pandemic, a news ecosystem plagued by underinvestment, and an economic imperative to address systemic racism. By examining harmful media narratives about the economy, amplifying the work of journalists and organizations working to change that, conducting experiments with local newsrooms, and doing outreach to the community and economic development sector, Inclusive Media and Economies has helped launch a much-needed national conversation about funding BIPOC community media as a community development strategy.

“Our expanded partnership with RJI will allow us to scale our efforts and to facilitate greater resource alignment and investments, partnerships and collaboration across the public, private, and nonprofit sectors,” said MMCA Executive Director

David Morgan.

One collaboration saw the Inclusive Media and Economies team work with Dynasty Consulting to help publishers of color initiate plans to tap into community development, revitalization and reinvestment funds, and then use those investments to test new revenue strategies and build more sustainable business models.

The importance of such an effort was underlined in an October 2019 report from The Democracy Fund, “Advancing Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Journalism: What Funders Can Do,” which found that of the \$1.1 billion journalism grants in the United States between 2013 and 2017, only 8.1 percent went to journalism efforts specifically designed to serve populations that included racial and ethnic groups, women and girls, and LGBTQ+ communities.





Tracie Powell, creator of the \$500 million Pivot Fund that invests in BIPOC-led news organizations that serve communities of color, says BIPOC publishers have different needs and require tailored support.

“Where traditional funders and organizations have fallen short is assuming a one-size-fits-all approach. They’ve also been mistaken about the need for digital transformation without first addressing organizational culture for BIPOC news outlets,” Powell said in an interview with Penny Riordan, director of business strategy and partnerships for the Local Media Association. “Changing these mindsets will go a long way in course correction in how we support BIPOC news outlets.”

That’s where Inclusive Media and Economies comes

in with an individualized, community-centered approach to supporting newsrooms, according to Randy Picht, RJI’s executive director.

Elevate Dayton, for example — a community newsroom that amplifies the voices of underrepresented populations — built “Elevate Communities,” a digital town square that highlights the publication’s role as a convenor and connector. It is a hub where Dayton businesses, nonprofits, foundations, community development financiers, local government, and other civic-minded organizations can create profiles, post content, connect with one another, form mutual aid networks and drive their own respective digital narrative and collectively shape the story of their community.

“Inclusive Media and

Economies has made great progress in figuring out how to engage community development stakeholders in conversations around media sustainability,”

Picht said. “MMCA is well-positioned to take the project to the next level, and we’re excited to strengthen our partnership.”

**Next step:** the project team is hard at work formulating comments for the historic reauthorization of the Community Reinvestment Act, which was established in 1977 and hasn’t been updated in decades, to include community media as a qualified funding recipient so banks around the country can meet their community funding requirements by investing in newsrooms. The reauthorization is underway now and should be finalized in October.



# RJI Columnists

Our rotating list of columnists provides regular updates and insights about issues and events

## What “Journalism innovation” is needs to be reconsidered

**GRID NEWS AND** Punchbowl News. Two national newsrooms launched during the pandemic.

Both claim to be different takes on reinventing journalism. But beyond being well resourced, it's not clear how either of these newsrooms will be more innovative than their predecessors (other than attrition).

“We're writing for anyone who wants or needs greater clarity on the most important stories of the day, and we think there are millions of people out there who fit that description,” Mark Bauman, of Grid News, told *The New York Times*.

In a field where well-resourced newsrooms are still dominated by cisgender white men, “journalism innovation” is still too often a euphemism for rebranding or a shallow reflection on reaching “new audiences.” Consider that both Grid News and Punchbowl News were

launched by well-resourced white founders.

Centuries after American journalism first took shape, it remains innovative for mainstream newsrooms to reject segregation in staffing, empower (not just hire) a diverse staff, and provide tangible resources or useful information for non-elite readers. Rather than being common, these ideas remain novel in well-funded major newsrooms. Instead, newsrooms dress up old methods and practices as new, wasting valuable resources that could better serve historically marginalized communities and time.

Newsrooms cannot claim to be doing important work if they are failing to reach substantial portions of Americans with a stake in their journalism or if their staff looks like the newspaper staff from 10, 30, or 50 years ago. Ignoring these larger issues is why “journalism

innovation” remains a buzzword often about small problems in newsrooms that shy away from the larger obvious problems.

Tangibly reaching audiences and maintaining a diverse staff is often overlooked in favor of easier operational changes or rebranding. Some of these practices have and were already implemented by the historic Black press, immigrant-centered newsrooms, and more recently, small (often under-resourced) newsrooms focused on experimentation.

Journalism innovation does not just need to be a change of workflow or CMS. Journalism innovation can be treating your underrepresented employees with dignity, considering what media reparations look like after many outlets harmed Black people and communities in the U.S., or shifting a newsroom's coverage from how something impacts politicians and elites



# In Our Lobby

YOU CAN READ THE LATEST AT  
[RJIONLINE.ORG/CATEGORY/COLUMN](https://rjionline.org/category/column)



to how it impacts the people living in their community.

If American journalism is critical to an inclusive democratic society, then well-funded mainstream American newsroom leaders (at new and legacy publications) can't look to a new website, a new brand, or a new product as the sole driver of what innovation means. They must instead acknowledge and learn from the work that's already been done by newsrooms often run by people that look nothing like them, give them credit for those changes, and connect them to tangible resources.

**Gabe Schneider** is a co-founder and editor of *The Objective*, a nonprofit newsroom holding journalism accountable for past and current systemic biases in reporting and newsroom practices.



## Using local photographers in international media to document pivotal events

**IRYNKA HROMOTSKA (KOHUT)**, a Fulbright graduate student at the School of Journalism, spearheaded the creation of a photo exhibit displayed at RJI in the spring. The exhibit, which featured 17 images from Ukrainian photographers documenting the Russian invasion and its consequences, grew out of Hromotska's desire to not only offer a window into the realities of the war and daily life amidst the invasion, but to showcase the work of Ukrainian photojournalists and advocate for the use of local photographers in international media to document pivotal events in the country.

"I wanted to include Ukrainian voices because I see that in international media, editors are sending photojournalists who are basically just parachuted into Ukraine and don't always know the history and context of what they are documenting," Hromotska said. "A much better way is to hire Ukrainian professionals who have been doing this for years. This is something we need to talk about."

The images ranged from chaotic depictions of war to quieter scenes of daily life, all under the umbrella of the exhibit's title: *Fighting for Dignity*.

"It's not just servicemen fighting on the front lines, but also grannies preparing food and teenagers helping create camouflage nets. It's about people trying to live their lives while also being of service."





# POY 79

PICTURES OF THE YEAR

**JUDGES REVIEWED** more than 30,000 images submitted by photojournalists working in more than 100 countries during the 79th Pictures of the Year International competition, which took place at RJI Feb. 9–28. Winners were announced in 34 categories, including international, local, and sports photographers of the year, as well as single news images and in-depth picture stories. 2021’s biggest news stories, from COVID-19 to the Jan. 6 attack on the U.S. Capitol Building and much more, were represented throughout.

Photographer of the Year for local news coverage went to Gabrielle Lurie of the San Francisco Chronicle, becoming the first photographer since 1971 to win the award two years in a row.

Her portfolio included a series of images ranging from

a family’s struggles in the wake of an eviction to the work of incarcerated firefighters during a devastating series of wildfires in California. Lurie was also awarded the prestigious Community Awareness Award. Independent photographer Lynsey Addario was named Photographer of the Year, International for her evocative images of crises in Brazil, South Sudan, South Africa, Ethiopia, the U.K., and the U.S.

All winners can be found online at [poy.org/79/winners](http://poy.org/79/winners). “We are honored that photojournalists entrust their work with POY,” said Lynden Steele, director of POY and director of photojournalism at Reynolds Journalism Institute. “By discussing and sharing this work, we come together as a profession and learn a great deal from each other.”





**POY79 Photographer of the Year,  
International: Lydney Addario**

Ten-year-old Desnest Gebreabzgi was wounded when she and other children were playing with unexploded ordinance in her village of Denbela, Ethiopia, in May. In Ethiopia's Tigray region, a grave humanitarian crisis is unfolding. As civil war escalates, millions have been displaced, thousands killed and reports of human rights violations and atrocities are rampant.



**POY79 Photographer of the Year,  
Local: Gabrielle Lurie**

"Grandma, look at my house! I'm gonna make it look pretty", Bre-Anna Valenzuela, 10, exclaimed after building a "house" out of U-Haul boxes in front of her grandmother's home days after being evicted on Thursday, April 8, 2021 in Fresno, California, USA. Despite a moratorium on evictions due to the coronavirus many evictions are still occurring throughout the state. The Valenzuela's received eviction notices but not under their name and they say they thought it was a mistake. The owner of the house, Louise Traxler, sold it to a real estate company who plans to flip the house.



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**First Place, Sports Photographer  
of the Year: Dean Mouhtaropoulos**

Alex Gomez Abello of Team Spain shoots and scores a goal over Hassan Kaddah of Team Egypt during the Men's Bronze Medal handball match between Egypt and Spain on day fifteen of the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games at Yoyogi National Stadium on August 07, 2021 in Tokyo, Japan.







## Newsrooms come together to tackle problem of digital news preservation

L-R: Brian Kratzer, director of photography at the Columbia Missourian, Randy Picht, executive director of RJI, Heather Isherwood, editorial director of Vox Magazine, Elizabeth Stephens, executive editor of the Columbia Missourian

**LEADERSHIP FROM EACH** of the Missouri School of Journalism's professional media outlets gathered together in a conference room in late April, no small feat for a group in charge of "feeding the beast" of news media day after day while also juggling teaching responsibilities at the School. The challenge that brought them together? Preservation and accessibility of digital news archives.

Even today, it can be jarring to think of digital media as having preservation issues. Digital media was once the answer to news preservation, a seemingly limitless, instant archive for stories that would otherwise fade and rot on newsprint. But the widely understood realities of larger file sizes, limited server space, and aging hardware infrastructure have collided with

shrinking newsroom budgets and myriad other pressing priorities, largely confining the issue to the back burner despite its worrisome implications for the future.

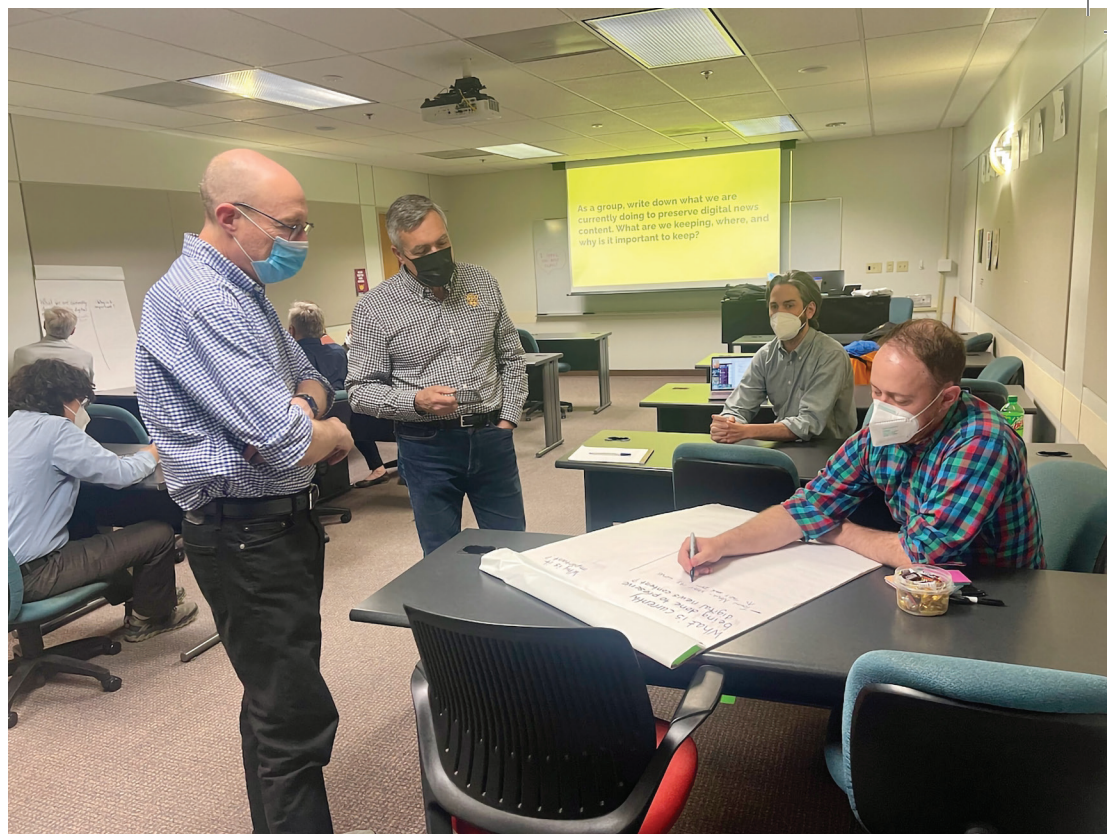
Now, at the School of Journalism's Reynolds Journalism Institute (RJI), a group of news veterans are addressing the problem with a sense of urgency, though the path forward remains murky.



“The technology exists to solve this problem, but unless you’re the New York Times or the Washington Post, you can’t afford it,” said Edward McCain, director of the Journalism Digital News Archive, a digital news access and preservation initiative. “What you can do is come up with a policy that governs how you archive stories and assets under the financial and technical constraints of a modern newsroom.”

In the April gathering, leaders from daily newspaper the Columbia Missourian, NBC TV affiliate KOMU, NPR member station KBIA, Vox Magazine and the digital-only Missouri Business Alert started by working together to understand the individual challenges each newsroom was facing. Some were surprised to learn that back in 2002, the Missourian lost 15 years’ worth of stories and photographs to a server crash. A few years later, the process of migrating to a new content management system resulted not in a total loss, per se, but in the erasure of important metadata that made re-cataloging and re-formatting archived stories a grueling, time-consuming process.

It quickly became apparent to the group that content



L-R: Mark Horvit, director of the Missouri School of Journalism’s state government reporting program, Mike Jenner, faculty chair of the Journalism Professions group, Michael Stacy, managing editor of Missouri Business Alert, Ryan Famuliner, news director of KBIA-FM

management systems (CMS) were the source of many aches and pains surrounding digital content preservation. Though any one system might have a perfectly serviceable approach to content storage, the reality is that news organizations change systems relatively frequently as needs and costs change, and — as the Missourian found out firsthand — there is no guarantee that digital archives will survive the transition.

But CMS issues are only part of the problem. Average file sizes for even the simplest file types are now many magnitudes larger than in 2000, and video files in particular have

ballooned in size as resolution increased and sound quality improved, making complete archiving a near-impossibility for TV stations that must constantly make room for new, high-resolution content.

**READ THE WHOLE STORY AT  
RJIONLINE.ORG**







# Women in Journalism Workshop: By women, for women

## RJI'S WOMEN IN JOURNALISM

Workshop is an annual workshop that focuses on challenges specific to women in the journalism industry today. In order to help build safer, more diverse and innovative newsrooms to serve communities worldwide, the workshop helps both students and professionals learn how to creatively cover stories, manage newsrooms and teams, and train

with emerging skills and tools.

This year's conference was held in April and featured a diverse lineup of talented speakers from the Washington Post, BBC Mundo, Reuters and the Institute for Nonprofit News, among many others. Topics ranged from an exploration of non-traditional roles in journalism to advice on how to negotiate pay, benefits and other circumstances in

the workplace. Other sessions focused on personal security and dealing with covering traumatic events.

Inspired by the experiences of the workshop's founder, Kat Duncan, and those of other women in the industry, the workshop is part of RJI's commitment to serving as a diverse and collaborative space to help move the industry forward.



# Where are they now: Linda Austin

## RJI Fellow teaching journalists one text at a time

**LINDA AUSTIN** speaks about how her 2017-18 Reynolds Journalism Institute (RJI) Fellowship led to her building text-based micro-learning courses for journalists and communities at organizations such as Report for America and the Solutions Journalism Network.



### **Tell us about your RJI Fellowship. What was the project?**

The purpose of my fellowship was to try to figure out whether mobile microlearning could help journalists who don't have the time or money to take training. Even an hour-long webinar can be a massive time commitment for somebody who's struggling to get that five-story-a-week quota met.

We first surveyed journalists to figure out what they needed from training, talked to experts in the field, and conducted a literature-research project with the Information Experience Lab. Based on that, we moved to creating a mobile-micro-learning course called "The 5 C's of Writing News for Mobile Audiences."

Of those who took it, 80% saw their scores increase in a statistically significant way. The course is now available for free globally on the EdApp.

### **How did your project lead to the creation of the new texting courses?**

The basic principles behind mobile microlearning are the same, whether it's app-based or text-message-based. You're trying to break down the components of what you want people to know into very small, bite-sized chunks, helping journalists take advantage of little pockets of time where they could do a five-minute lesson. Maybe they're on the bus going to work, or they're

standing in line at Starbucks. In that time, how can we give them a little tidbit of learning?

### **What is the next step?**

I think that really the sky's the limit. It works well for knowledge retention and behavior change. It would work for a variety of subjects for journalists to learn more about the craft. I just hope that people can open their minds to the possibility that there are new ways to learn. Not everything needs to have a teacher standing in front of class or a teacher getting on Zoom and talking at you.

*This interview has been edited for clarity and length.*