

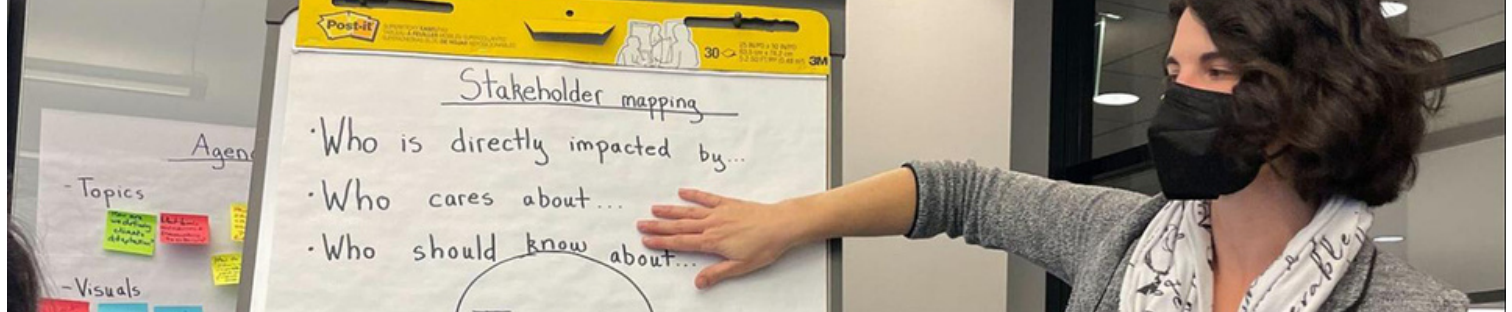
REYNOLDS JOURNALISM INSTITUTE IMPACT REPORT 2023



The Donald W. Reynolds Journalism Institute (RJI) at the Missouri School of Journalism empowers journalists with knowledge, tools and funding to strengthen journalism through practical innovation.

WHO WE ARE

- A leading resource for community journalists and news organizations seeking expertise, proven tools and insights into the **future of journalism**
- A builder of **partnerships & programs** that drive practical innovation and positive change in community news organizations and the journalism industry
- An incubator for new ideas and solutions from **professional and student fellows** and forward-looking **columnists**
- A creator and supporter of models and practices for trusted communication and community engagement that improves civic life



PARTNERSHIP PROJECTS

Collaborating with innovators to build tools, platforms and resources

Source Diversity Tool

This tool, built in partnership with the non-profit news organization Chalkbeat, **is now being utilized in over 100 newsrooms worldwide**. We conduct demos for newsrooms multiple times a week as we onboard newsrooms regularly.

Agenda Watch

Built in collaboration with Big Local News, this free-to-use platform scrapes agendas and meeting minutes from local agencies across the country and sends alerts to newsrooms and journalists when new data is available. This helps journalists find and cover important issues in their communities.

Sustainable Collaboration Toolkit

A partnership project with the Institute of Nonprofit News explored how community-centered newsrooms can build sustainable collaborations. We conducted **in-depth interviews with 48 newsrooms** and surveyed an additional 100+ to inform a toolkit which includes templates, scripts and a database to help newsrooms.

We also built resources this year to encourage better hiring practices and increase civic engagement through partnerships with The Green Line and CISLM. **See more of our practical and innovative resources: bit.ly/innovrji**



**Institute for
Nonprofit News**



FUNDING THE FUTURE OF JOURNALISM

Providing seed money and support for innovative ideas and experiences

Audience growth for black-owned newspapers

This pilot project put local news, information and advertising on digital screens in lobbies, shops and restaurants in St. Louis. Launched in June 2023, the Dynasty Interactive Screen Community expanded to Chicago, Detroit and Atlanta by the end of the year. In St. Louis alone, the network has already **attracted \$60,000 in new advertising revenue.**

New funding for digital transformations in newsrooms

Excellent progress has been made in the effort to encourage banks and financial institutions to recognize newsrooms that serve underrepresented communities as community assets. We aim to help banks provide no- or low-interest loans to help newsrooms expand their audiences. The **first applicant to the program, The Baltimore Times,** is in the works.

Supporting innovative experiences for journalists

RJI presented, spoke and funded experiences at conferences and workshops including: the Association of Alternative Newsmedia, OpenNews SRC CON, Online News Association, Military Veterans in Journalism and the Collaborative Journalism Summit.





INNOVATION FELLOWSHIPS

Supporting changemakers in building practical innovative resources and tools

PROFESSIONAL FELLOWS

Our 2022-23 Fellows launched a Slack-based SEO bot, a succession planning toolkit, a youth media program guide, a community canvasser toolkit and other vital resources in March 2023.

Ryan Restivo's YESEO bot is now available in 11 languages and is being utilized by 300+ newsrooms around the world.

Nissa Rhee won the Gather Award in Community-Centered Journalism for her canvasser toolkit.



STUDENT FELLOWS

Our Student Innovation Fellows built vital projects such as a Slackbot that gathered analytic data from multiple platforms for the Texas Tribune, to creating interactive graphics for investigative projects at the Sacramento Bee and building a new organization wide product strategy at the Star Tribune. Students also worked in data, media literacy and audience engagement at the American Press Institute, Lake County News and the Springfield News-Leader.



"Plain and simple, we're a better newsroom now than before they arrived."

- Chase Davis, Managing Editor, Star Tribune

"I loooved your assessment of AI transcription services last week. It was fascinating to see the tests results, side by side. What a fabulous column – and the fact that it's focused on local news? Chef's kiss. Just love it."

- Meg Martin, Editor



INNOVATION IN FOCUS

A monthly series where RJI partners with a newsroom on a collaborative innovative experiment and publishes the results

For Innovation in Focus this year, we partnered with and interviewed 30+ newsrooms – including the Kansas City Beacon, Missouri Independent, the 19th, NPR Planet Money, PBS, Sarasota Herald-Tribune and others - to test innovative and experimental ideas from republication strategies to AI audio editing tools. We also **launched our Innovation in Focus newsletter** which now delivers actionable tips, guidance and innovation ideas to 236 newsrooms each month, and growing!

rji PROGRAMS

Built to serve journalists by providing cutting edge opportunities & vital skills

RJI Community-Centered Symposium

This symposium, supported by RJI and a \$10,000 grant from Democracy Fund, was able to provide a cutting edge and accessible experience for any resource-strapped newsroom or journalist who was accepted. Professionals from around the world spent two days learning from each other and working together. We now have innovative **projects in process in 26 newsrooms** that we will share case studies from in 2024.



Women in Journalism Workshop

The WIJ Workshop, now in its 7th year, continues to bring together journalists from around the world to learn and discuss innovative ideas and skills. The 2023 workshop included hands-on sessions that explored centering consensus and care in the newsroom, HEFAT, product thinking, vertical storytelling, identity-aware reporting practices and digital security.



“Kathleen Duncan’s intentional and profound work of bringing women journalists from all walks of life and at various stages in our careers together to grapple how to take ownership of our safety and ourselves through practical skills and advocacy ensures that the next generation of journalists can continue to participate in this significant part of upholding our democracy.”

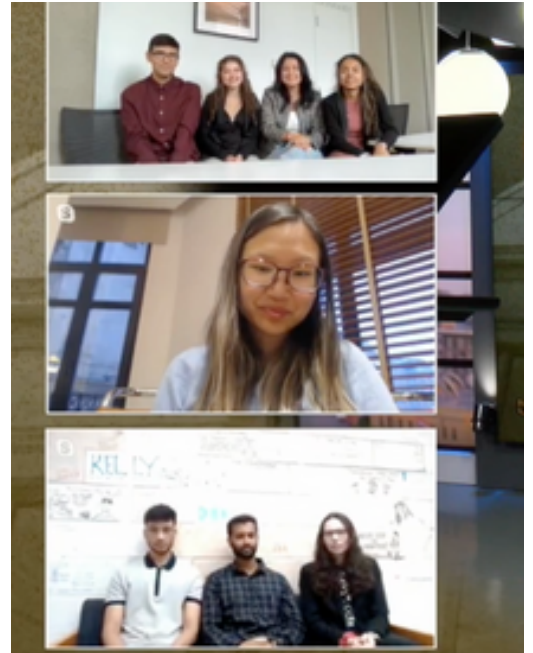
– Vanessa Charlot

rji PROGRAMS

Built to serve journalists by providing cutting edge opportunities & vital skills

Student Innovation Competition

This year's finalists were from Northwestern, Purdue, UC Berkeley, Mizzou, Stanford, NYU and University of Maryland. Each team tackled an original utility journalism idea in its local community; the projects ranged from a wage transparency job app to a news gathering chatbot. The \$10,000 winners were De Veras, a team that **built a Spanish language news source** to deliver original news content and information to underserved communities in Missouri.



Vertical Storytelling Workshop

This year we launched our Vertical Storytelling Workshop, a virtual two-part workshop focused on teaching vertical storytelling skills to journalists to reach the 44% of Americans who primarily access news and information through TikTok, Reels, YouTube Shorts and other vertical spaces. This workshop **sold out every session** with over 200 journalists attending the workshops we offered in 2023, with more planned for 2024.



"Thank you for this opportunity and the access to take a class from an active professional in the field being presented on." "Phenomenal, engaging, well prepared and extremely knowledgable on the topic. The two hours flew by."

- Vertical Workshop Participants

rji COLUMNISTS

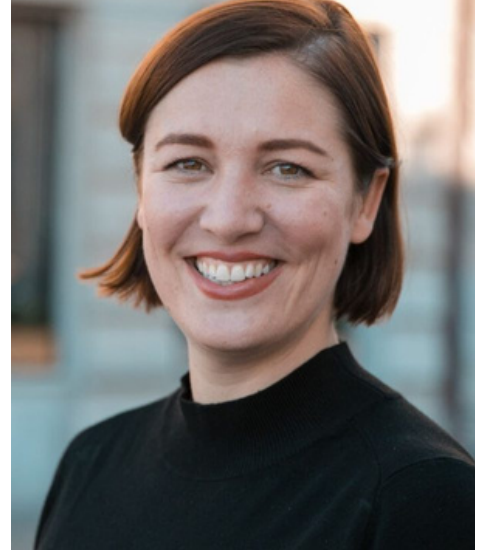
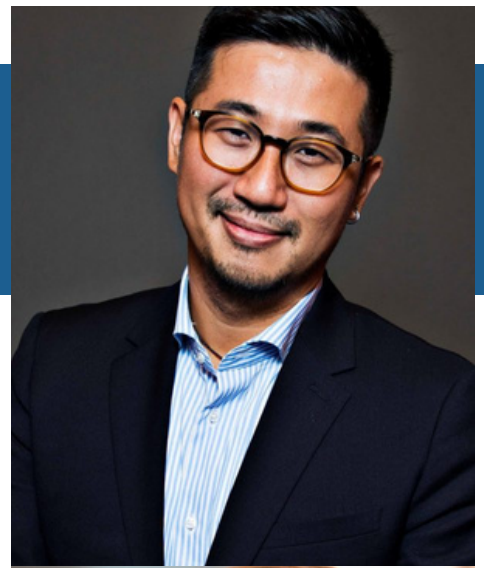
Our columnists are leaders in the journalism industry who tackle issues at the intersection of innovation and journalism. This year they addressed everything from step by step guidance on AI tools to how to diversify revenue generation and building more inclusive spaces in journalism and in our newsrooms.

A few of our 2023 columnists:

Paul Cheung, CEO, Center for Public Integrity
Upasna Guatam, Senior Product Leader, CNN
Anita Zielina, CEO/Founder, Better Leaders Lab
Sarah Alvarez, Founder, Outlier Media

From our columnists:

- [Why a diversified revenue portfolio is the best sustainability insurance for media organizations](#)
- [Four text to video AI tools for social video building](#)
- [The art of salary negotiation](#)
- [A roadmap for a way out of this mess](#)





OUTREACH

Newsletters, social platforms and other outreach



This year we grew our outreach to deliver our innovative and practical resources to more journalists who need them across the country. Our audience on **LinkedIn** grew **+65%** over the previous year.

A few of our most influential articles this year:

- [Why we're combating misinformation that affects Latino communities](#)
- [Changing work culture beyond burnout and bad bosses](#)
- [How to detect disinformation created with AI](#)
- [What do you need in your local news go bag?](#)
- [Five different AI options for transcribing audio](#)
- [Product development is built on a foundation of trust](#)

"I visit rjionline.org every day and refresh it to see what great article you published. I love the useful content you produce."

- ONA Participant



rji YEAR AT A GLANCE

- Worked with over 100 newsrooms around the world on innovative ideas and experiments
- Presented at 10+ conferences to teach and share RJI's projects, programs and opportunities
- Engaged journalism professionals from around the world to teach cutting edge sessions with RJI
- Partnered with organizations and journalists to build vital platforms, tools and resources
- Matched students with community-centered newsrooms to expand and build innovative projects