Sabbatical Leave Taken
Spring 2016

Understanding the Inexplicable-Spooky Nineteenth Century News:
(Also Applying Storytelling Skills to Twenty-First Century Media)

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Dr. Paulette D. Kilmer’s Winter 2016

Sabbatical Research Accomplishments

The rest of this report concerns the research goals that I accomplished in my semester away from the classroom. Finishing the book that I have been working on for eight years consumed most of my time; however, I also performed some professional writing tasks that had to be done to complete contracts or avoid missing opportunities.

* Finishing the book I began eight years ago: I completed additional research to document my claims and then completed three chapters, plus, this summer, the epilogue.

* Researching at Beinecke Library: I spent the month of April in New Haven, Connecticut, conducting research in the Beinecke Library reading room, temporarily housed in Sterling Memorial Library until construction is complete in the Beinecke. I alternated doing research and writing. I had a marvelous time reading letters in Charles Dickens’ own hand and reading documents hard if not impossible to acquire online in readable condition. (It’s a nerd thing.)

* Organizing to contact publishers quickly and effectively: I contacted four publishers, found a hundred more potential partners in Writer’s Market, and prepared documents that can be easily rewritten to appeal to additional publishing houses. I concentrated first on finishing the book because the chapters that remained required long stretches of uninterrupted time to do some more research, write, and then revise and edit.

* Revising work in the pipeline: I completed some editing tasks on works already en route to publication.

* Doing minor editing tasks for my textbook chapter. I selected four images to exclude from the chapter I edit in the most widely used textbook in the country.

* Paving the way for future publications: I accepted an invitation to present on a panel at the Symposium on the Nineteenth Century Press, Civil War, and Freedom of Expression in November.

Dr. Paulette D. Kilmer’s Spring 2016

Sabbatical Research Accomplishments in Detail

I am very grateful to the University of Toledo for allowing me to take a sabbatical to improve my teaching and complete a research project that is the culmination of eight years of researching in old newspapers and archives.

Finishing the Book I Began Eight Years Ago:

I devoted the most time to finishing the book, which involved making sure all chapters fit the concept for the finished manuscript. I also wrote the three most difficult chapters and the epilogue as well as edited the introduction to fit the completed text. I decided eight years ago to research the presence of ghost narratives in nineteenth century newspapers and since then have focused different
groups of tales on specific aspects of nineteenth century culture and history. The last three chapters required days of uninterrupted time for me to write so that I could immerse myself into the complex ideas that I wanted to convey as simply as possible to increase readability. Here is the chapter outline with those written during the sabbatical appearing in orange:

_Yesterday's Haunted News, Today's Chosen Stories:_

_The Repulsive Charm of Ghosts_

With the exception of the Introduction (Chapter I), the chapters in this book contain many ghost narratives found in newspapers published between 1850 and 1900. My goal is to write a spritely cultural history that general readers as well as academics will enjoy. I focus on the role of these stories as a venue for expressing cultural realities and reinforcing national as well as community standards. Most books set out to prove or debunk ghosts. I leave that question up to the reader. A world with ghosts, Big Foot, the Loch Ness Monster, and flying saucers is far more interesting than one devoid of these mysteries.

Chapter 1: Ghosts in My Life

I introduce the book with my own memories of ghosts from childhood without confirming or denying the existence of these spooks and then briefly introduce each chapter in the book.


I present news stories from _The New York Times_ that feature ghosts because even the newspaper of public record and American history emphasized rattling good stories in the nineteenth century.

Chapter 3: Sorry, Nosey, and Sad Ghosts: Buried Meanings and Skeletal Plots

I examine ghosts as archetypes of redemption and curiosity, focusing on their reasons for materializing to relate these narratives to timeless themes of folklore and myth.

Chapter 4: Which is Scarier—Women in White Ghosts or “Mad” Men?

In this chapter, I examine how ghost stories relate to the reality of the modern woman. I compare a crime story the _London Times_ published twenty years after Wilkie Collins’ _Woman in White_ appeared to the novel to examine the way social conventions turn living women into phantoms and encourage men to convert anger into crazy revenge against their helpless spouses.

Chapter 5: Superstition and the Sea: Marking The Parameters of Reality

The ghost stories about sailors, ships, and the ocean provide a stage for acting out the social pecking order of the time, the consequences of unjust behavior, and the potential of strangers to rescue or inflict harm. The ghost narratives provide a rich palette for understanding the way folklore reinforces cultural mores and helps us sort the goats from the sheep but also remind us to be careful not hide behind the label of superstition to avoid discussing unsettling or even terrifying possibilities. The line between healthy imagination and cruel obsession often blurs.

Chapter 6: Ghost Trains: Past Legends and Present Tragedies

The working conditions of the railroad workers generated a climate ripe for believing in ghosts and phantom trains. Ironically, recent fatal accidents resulted from people trying to see phantom trains.
Chapter 7:  “All Argument is Against It, But All Belief Is For It.” Charles Dickens’
‘Hankering for Ghosts’

Charles Dickens published his novels in weekly installments simultaneously in the United States first to build a rapport with readers that no other author ever attained. His public image mattered to him so greatly that he shaped his public views on ghosts to reflect skepticism tempered by an open mind. However, in private, he told spooky stories, practiced mesmerism for a while, and participated enthusiastically in the London Ghost Club’s quest to scientifically investigate supernatural.

Epilogue:  “The Dying Out of the Marvelous”

I end the book reviewing the consequences on faith and hope of demanding factual explanations for ghosts that eliminate imagination or the value of suspending belief either for enjoyment or self-awareness of emotional needs. I will briefly touch on main points in the book and then close with a reprise based on some interviews, tours, and observation of the array of pop culture venues that provide natural homes for ghost stories, phantom hunting, and paranormal activity.

Researching at the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library at Yale University:

I spent the month of April in New Haven, Connecticut, living in an apartment just over a mile from campus. I put my laptop in my backpack and walked to campus every day to research Charles Dickens using John B. Podeschi’s finder guide, Dickens and Dickensiana: A Catalogue of the Richard Gimbel Collection in the Yale University Library. My first goal was to learn about Charles Dickens as a human being, author, editor, and ghost enthusiast. Then, once I collected information about him using the archives and making a bibliography of resources in the archives available online, I was ready to craft the chapter for my book about how his “hankering for ghosts” influenced U.S. readers as well as literary and popular culture circles. He edited to periodicals that circulated widely in both Britain and the United States. I also enjoyed the change of venue as an inspiration to write and completed a chapter while I was in New Haven. I spent four to six hours a day in the archives and the rest of the time writing.

Revising work in the pipeline:


Doing Minor Editing Tasks for My Textbook Chapter:

I selected four images to exclude from “Chapter 11: The Press and Industrial America, 1865-1883,” which I edit in the most widely used communication history textbook in the country, Wm. Sloan’s *The Media in America: A History*. Then, in late June, I submitted a revised bibliography containing recent additions. In October, I will revise the chapter, and in November do the index. Page proofs will arrive around Christmastime.

Paving the Way for Future Publications

I accepted an invitation to present on a panel at the Symposium on the Nineteenth Century Press, Civil War, and Freedom of Expression in November. I did some minimal research to select a fresh angle to pursue so that I could complete a brief description of my contribution. I spent about three hours deciding what to do, and now I must do it!

Publishing the book will require contacting more publishers, which will be easier now than before it was completed. Each publisher requires a different prospectus completed on their form, but since I have done four already, doing more will not be difficult. I plan to do five to seven a week until I get a contract. Publishing is not easy, but if I persevere, I will succeed. I am waiting to hear from Praeger and a small Michigan publisher I met at the storytelling conference, but I will continue to send out appeals because it takes a long time for publishers to make decisions.

My plans for this year are to get the letters sent to publishers, edit the chapters a bit, which is fun at this point, and start a new book in the spring. I need a little time to catch up with everything before I launch a new inquiry. I also plan to send out a few journal articles. I will probably do some conference papers in the future as test balloons for the next book, unless I get a publisher for it while I am working on publishing the ghost book.
Dr. Paulette D. Kilmer’s Winter 2016

Adventures to Improve Her Teaching

This section of the report contains brief descriptions of the things the sabbatical empowered me to do to improve my teaching and to increase my understanding of ways to help students benefit from technology rather than fear it. Here is a bulleted list of experiences that the extended time permitted me to do:

* Confer with educators at The Columbia Missouri School of Journalism.

* Observe Dr. Undrah Baasanjav teach a course in digital design and writing at Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville, Illinois, on the way to Columbia.

* Chat with Reporters at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C., and ask questions about the many artifacts from media history on display.

* Tour The Library of Congress and discuss history with curators.

* Participate in the conference, “Sharing the Fire—Storytelling in a Changing World,” in Amherst, Massachusetts, from April 1 to 3.

* Do the paperwork to be accepted to learn about new technology, racial profiling, reporting via phones or tablets, and tips to help students visualize news content.

Because students come first always, I also supervised an independent study for Samantha Rhodes, our department scholar, and now the associate editor at Country Living Magazine, a large Ohio rural electric company publication. She needed help in setting up freelance records, splitting one idea into six or seven that then can be pitched to different editors, and applying for jobs in magazine editing. She also completed a rigorous course offered online through the Poynter Institute on copyediting, which certified her in that essential skill. We did much of the work via email and over breakfast. I enjoyed every minute I spent helping her to succeed in her goal of becoming a magazine editor. I would not do any teaching tasks that jeopardized my sabbatical, but I had worked with Samantha from her freshman year, and she had performed excellently in my feature writing class and at The Independent Collegian, and so I knew I could help her as well as finish my book and teaching ventures.

I only supervise independent studies if students convince me they cannot learn the same things in an existing class or they will not graduate on time without the hours. For example, today I asked our student advisor to sign a biology student into media ethics. He cannot graduate without a WAC course in ethics. The class was full, but he needs to finish in time. Besides, his major in science may inspire him to offer valuable insights during our discussions.
Adventures to Improve Her Teaching in Detail
Visiting The Columbia Missouri School of Journalism

The University of Missouri made history in 1839 as the first higher education institution in lands acquired from the Louisiana Purchase. The Columbia Missouri School of Journalism opened on September 14, 1908, the first journalism school in the world. Today, seven buildings house the school of journalism that has expanded to include the Donald W. Reynolds Journalism Institute to train reporters in new technologies. The school also runs its Washington, D.C., program in an office at the National Press Club building there.

Mizzou gives students hands-on experience in real, commercial or nonprofit news agencies and outlets:

* The Columbia Missourian has grown over the decades to encompass print and digital editions, ebooks, an array of digital apps, and a Web page.

* Students run KBIA, the local NPR affiliate.

* KOMU-TV is “the first and only commercial television station for training students” http://missouri.edu/about/history/journalism.php

* AdZou, a strategic communication agency, serves national, regional, and local clients.

* Global Journalist tracks threats to press freedom globally and covers international news.

* Missouri Digital News is statehouse reporting on government and political issues from the statehouse in Jefferson City.

* Mojo Ad clients maintain brands aimed at individuals from 18 to 24 years old.

* VOX magazine offers a weekly iPad edition as well as VoxTalk, a blog about culture and entertainment every day.

I arrived Monday, February 21, 2016, after observing Dr. Undrah Baasanjav teach a course in digital design and writing at Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville. I realized from watching her explain the steps in creating an index and working with fonts that my course cannot embrace both writing in-depth and technical training. She pointed out to her students that they must embrace change and be flexible because the specifics will change. The process of creating a Web page will probably contain certain hallmark elements, but nobody should expect software to remain in vogue. She also showed me the sequence of assignments she developed to show her students how to make Web pages.

My colleague, Dr. Earnest Perry, whose research examines African-Americans in media history and transcultural issues, arranged the following schedule for me:
Chat with Mr. Ryan Famuliner:

Mr. Ryan Famuliner won the Edward R. Murrow Award in both TV and radio. His work in videography, TV, reporting, and public radio prepared him for his duties at Mizzou. He created the course in mobile media and often teaches it. He pointed out that knowing all the apps in the world do not make anyone a good writer. His students produce stories frequently four minutes long for radio and then rewrite them, using AP standards, for the Web. Unless the story is basic and lasts 45 seconds of less, then he expects students to do two versions, and each needs to be developed a bit differently.

His comments about differences between listeners and Web browsers gave me vocabulary to use in explaining to students why they should not transcribe stories they shoot for TV news. Mr. Famuliner refers to this practice as “webbifying.” He said that news directors from across the country denounced this habit that might save time but cannot effectively serve Web browsers. He estimated that only 17 percent of NPR browsers go off line to listen to the radio and only 7 percent of NPR listeners visit the Web page. Each group looks for different format and style in the stories.

Mr. Famuliner also noted that Mizzou requires both newswriting and multi-media writing, and soon they will expect students to finish the newswriting class before entering the multi-media class. At the moment, both are required, but students do better if they have completed the newswriting course prior to learning how to move stories across platforms. He also said that not every story fits on every platform. Students need to learn to develop ideas into news or features for the best platform and to do develop more than one angle to tell the story to diverse audiences. Journalists must be proficient in many skills, including interviewing and writing.

Students also should learn to take photos and use iPad apps to process their work. Audio alone is not enough for a Web page.

Lunch with Dr. Perry and Dr. Yong Volz

Dr. Yong Volz researches journalism as practice and social institution in both China and the United States as well as transculturally. As a Reynolds Journalism Institute fellow, she recently interviewed forty U.S. women journalists who had persevered in the field for many years. She, Earnest, and I chatted about the challenges of doing research while teaching. Yong also told me some fascinating things about ghosts in Chinese news that related to my book. We discussed ways to incorporate critical thinking into courses. One of the best methods involves using applied questions instead of multiple choice or true and false queries on exams. Course projects involving research can also reinforce problem-solving skills.
JOUR 2150 Multimedia Journalism class

I learned about iPad apps that make photos sharper and allow people to correct photos and improve the images. The class was learning how to make photos line-up with audio. The students had recorded the audio over the weekend. They then learned how to make a slideshow so the images illustrated the sounds. One student showed me her first assignment, collecting five photos of dogs from the shelter. Today she was working on lining up photos with her interview with a woman who works at the shelter and adopted a dog in trouble. She rescued him, and he became her best friend eventually. The story was quite moving. I enjoyed seeing how they use three apps on iPads to create professional looking slideshows to accompany the audiotape. Mr. Famuliner said audio should never stand alone because people think images add credibility to stories.

2-3 p.m., Tour of J-School

On the tour of the Journalism School, we chatted with the judge for the Photograph of the Year contest that draws thousands of contestants from around the globe. The categories include multimedia presentations as well as still pictures. Teams of judges from all over the globe participate in the judging. We looked at some pictures and noticed the composition and artistic elements that transformed them into stories without words.

We visited the library and saw the impact of technology on space as the books are stored in foldaway shelves and students access many resources online. We talked about the impact of budgetary crises on campus libraries.

In the The Columbia Missourian newsroom, we watched students put together stories both writing and applying digital technology. We toured the photo center and an exhibit of common people made immortal by the shutter. We noticed the subtle lighting and the expressions on faces, and the exhibit as well as a chat with one of the instructors reminded me again of the need for visual elements in stories.

I noticed in the labs stations for water bottles to keep all beverages away from the MAC computers.

Introduction to the Murray Documentary Journalism Program with Director Stacey Woelfel

Dr. Woelfel said the program is just beginning and will be limited to 20 undergraduates and four or five graduate students. The undergraduates begin their concentration as juniors and produce a documentary in their senior year. They also complete courses in journalism required of all majors and take electives in film.

The documentary begins with the concept. Once students understand the concept, then they are ready to consider the sequence or storyboard, which shows what the film will cover. They make all kinds of choices in format, style, and how to tell the story, often combining archival material with interviews.

An exercise that works to teach students about storyboards involves asking them to figure out the sequencing of events in a scene of a movie already completed. Then once they create that
storyboard, then they cast their friends in a version of the same storyboard and shoot raw footage. Some students change elements to make the piece creative. Others try to replicate the original. All of them learn the concept of storyboard. It reminded me of the term “beat” in drama, which refers to every action.

I ended my day at Mizzou with supper with a friend and a chat about teaching and learning. I think these kinds of experiences make us better teachers because we can see how others approach the need to teach technology without sacrificing in-depth writing experiences. Curriculum needs to embrace both.

The insights I gained from observing journalism faculty at the University of Missouri in Columbia and also at the University of Southern Illinois at Carbondale to develop a course in Storytelling in Public and Private spaces. I also have left my card and formed connections that I can use as I work on the course later and think of new questions.

Visit The National Press Club in Washington, D.C.

In late March, I traveled to Bethesda, M.D., to spend a few days with my mentor, Professor Maureen Beasley, who took me to the National Press Club, where we learned the history of this prestigious institution and enjoyed looking at the historic photos and front pages of newspapers chronicling important events in U.S. history that line the walls. The club opened in 1908 and continues to provide a professional place for journalists to work. Many keep offices there to stay close to capital hill. Every day, reporters representing all media venues come to the Press Club to hear national and international leaders speak or to work on stories as they dine. I teach media ethics and history, and so I can refer to this experience in my classroom. The preservation of a room where reporters worked to file their stories long before computers existed showed how innovations changed the nature of the work from telegraph, typewriter, to mobile devices. The club has always offered reporters in the nation’s capital a quiet place to work while grabbing a delicious but quick lunch. Leaders from other countries also hold press conferences there because journalists from every news outlet congregate there.

Visit The Library of Congress

We also visited the Library of Congress, which was helpful since I use its resources in my communication history class. The exhibit on Bob Hope showed me different ways to view the entertainer and his role in American popular culture. I could do some similar things with famous journalists or media innovators. The displays receive digital treatment rather rapidly, which increases their availability to teachers at all levels.

Participate in, “Sharing the Fire—Storytelling in a Changing World”

The conference theme of storytelling in a changing world provided a focus on using storytelling skills in ways that journalists could adopt, too. I think a refresher in basic storytelling will benefit me enormously, and the workshops center on the art in social justice, gender, technological, and environmental issues, which can easily be adapted to teaching journalists. One afternoon workshop, four hours long, focused on digital storytelling.
My time in Amherst, Massachusetts, from April 1 to 3, allowed me to see how professional storytellers teach others how to express themselves. I plan to teach students to use these techniques as part of their journalism skills to empower sources to tell personal stories about their public and (when appropriate) private experiences. I attended these sessions:

(Friday): 1-5 p.m. "Sensing Personal Stories: Discover Those Hidden Gems!" with Meg Gilman

7 p.m. Opening Gathering [Music, drumming, dancing, and stories]

7:30 p.m. "Changing Skins: Tales about Gender, Identity, and Humanity—A Performance" [Milbre Burch]

9:15 p.m. "Story Swaps" [We chose a group according to topics to tell a story. I went to the “dark at night” group and had fun.]


10:30 a.m. "Folktales, Fairytales, and Social Justice" [Sheila Arnold]

1:30 p.m. "Digital Storytelling and the Story Circle" [Yvonne Mendez]

3:30 p.m. "The Values of the Future through Storytelling" [Doug Lipman]

5:30-6:45 p.m. “Storyteller Banquet”

7:15-9:00 p.m. “Storytelling Olio Concert”


11 a.m. – 12:15 p.m. "How to Be a Good MC" [Tony Toledo]

12:30 - 1 p.m. Conference Closing Gathering

1:30 – 2:45 p.m. “Falling for Emily Dickinson” [Performance, Jay O’Callahan]

I brought home handouts, some books, and a lot of ideas to apply to my classes. I think creativity begins with using the imagination to learn things for oneself. Storytelling taps the memories and experiences we all carry with us everywhere. Journalists benefit from learning to listen and to encourage those they interview to recall anecdotes. People relate to narratives that remind them of their own history, heritage, or discoveries. As technology expands our ability to illustrate stories, journalists will need
to understand the core of that art and then apply skills without sacrificing accuracy or lapsing into fiction. The sabbatical gave me the window of time to devote my entire attention to the convention and participate fully without any teaching duties or deadlines to worry about. I also met many fascinating people.

I plan to create new course that blends storytelling techniques with traditional feature writing skills to prepare students for jobs in blogging, specializing in creative nonfiction, and empowering sources to tell their stories. Of course, the students will be invited to experiment with using emerging platforms to tell stories, to create interest in long pieces, and generate conversations with as well as among readers.

The Poynter Institute Teachapalooza VI: Renew, Refresh, Energize Your Teaching

I spent about four hours preparing my appeal to be accepted for the three-day seminar in St. Petersburg, Florida. I was invited, and I learned many helpful tips for teaching students about using technology as journalists as well as some things about covering race. I participated in the seminar in June and took notes for each session I attended. Al Tompkins, the Poynter leader and teacher of broadcasting and online journalism, ended the Palooza with a Ted Talk from Rita Peterson about the power of self-esteem and positive reinforcement. “Teaching and learning should bring joy. Every child deserves a champion who never gives up on him or her and sees that he or she reaches his or her potential,” Pederson noted. Al Tompkins said that core skills help students figure out what news means and what to do next and tech skills are part of the job. “A large part of the job is not just skills, but that you believe that they are important, you believe in them, and they can do it,” Tompkins pointed out. We spent most of the sessions learning how to use different kinds of technology and on Sunday heard how the 3-D devices will totally change how we do everything. I would like to go back. It was a wonderful time, and I brought home lots of notes, Web addresses, free online resources, and ideas.

I attended lots of sessions including these workshops:

* **Race on Campus: How to Report, Write, and Talk about It** examined problems with coverage that evades why things happen and instead fills in stereotypes, allowing people to fall back on excuses. Only deep coverage will show how actions: votes, policies, and differing standards hurt people. Officials claim to care about black people but act in ways that harm them.

* **Rock Star Capstone Project** in which students divide into teams to accomplish a project together that depends on each group to do its part to find an information-driven product or service of an audience whose needs are not being met currently and then design the service to sell to a team of entrepreneurs who.

* **Rules for Using Spreadsheets** provided precise instructions for handling issues that arise while using Google Spreadsheets to organize data for interpretation in computer-assisted reporting.

* **Virtual and Augmented Reality—Is Virtual Reality a Flash in the Pan?** These devices allow people to interact with things rather than merely viewing them. Emotions as well as facts become part of the experience of learning about the world. Why play a game when you can live it?
• **Apps with AI** introduced us to new free tools to use via the phone, tablet, or computer: Thinglink, Vont, Canva, Chartbuilder, Soundcite, Real-Time Face Reenactment, Picflow, Google Translate, Voice Base, and Lemmetweethatforyou. The last one generates fake messages that are considered parody but may pose problems for journalists who do not realize the message is untrue.

• **Tiny Docs** empowers us to boil down information and grab attention to promote a long story in a way that inspires people to read it. This approach focuses on conveying the heart of the story with the tools available; it does not emphasize software. Any tools will do: Premiere, Final Cut, AfterEffects, Soundslides, Keynote of PowerPoint, or Pencil and Paper. Nowthis, AJ+, HuffPost, and Tech Insider create effective tiny docs.

• **From Ferguson to Paris: Telling Stories Around the World** examined the impact of culture and geography on news as well as on what folks considered important. Technology continues to shrink the globe, but certain lessons about human nature remain constant. Tear gas increases defiance from protesters.

• **Visual Information Verification** we learned that technology increases temptation to falsify photos or to recycle them from prior shoots without identifying them properly. Sometimes humorous effects inspire people, like putting an angry shark on a porch in New Jersey. Other times TV reporters or editors add the images because they need visual material but do not have time to generate it.

• **Snapchat** is a mobile messaging system used to convey messages, images, text, drawings, and effects to share with others who are also present. The messages disappear after 24 hours and do not take up messaging space on the phone.

• **JEDI: Journalism and Emerging Digital Innovation** demonstrated how the Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism combines using Al Tompkins’ book, *Write for the Ear, Shoot for the Eye: Aim for the Heart* with using social media to tell stories suited for each platform. The industry needs journalists who are trained in using platforms to tell stories that convey information, not just promote articles, find sources, or interact with audiences. It’s important to put information where the audience is and experiment with emerging platforms.

• **“Data, the internet and #FailureFactories”** demonstrated how the Tampa Bay Times data team finds evidence to reveal shortcomings in public institutions, like mental healthcare facilities and high schools. They used the data to show that things going on in Florida high schools were not normal. Education reporters interviewed students, teachers, parents, and experts.

• **How a Pro is Using Drones and GoPros** showed us ways a reporter enhances coverage with video, but he warned that stories need plot, characters, a point. GoPro won’t replace those things.

• **Banjo** offers this formula: Real-Time Web + Journalism = Real-Time Reporting. The technology acts like a drone, empowering journalists to pick up images and conversations from around the globe in seconds, which is helpful in verifying sources.
* Videolicious from MAC gives students a cheap way to make effective videos just as do newsrooms across the country. The license is free for educators, and the Blue Mikey microphone costs about $80. Journalists can make a video in two minutes. A free version is open to everybody. But it is limited to three images. Enterprise version does not limit and offers more choices and editing options. But the biggest challenge remains how to tell a good story.

* Data and Graphics enable reporters to make comparisons people can understand and also show the arc of the story, when things changed. Graphics should not be reduced to mere decoration but serve as conveyers of the facts.

* “The Raw, Unbridled Excitement of Data” revealed how to make sense of numbers, tame them into spreadsheets, turn conjectures about how fast police officers drive (for example) into statements based on evidence gleaned from official records. These stories rely on anecdotes, often for the lede, but backup the stories with numbers.