

**To: Michael Haley
Executive Director
International Communication Association**

We, the undersigned, hereby petition the Executive Director of the International Communication Association (ICA) for authorization to form a Journalism Studies Interest Group in accordance to the ICA Bylaws, Article VII.

A large and growing number of scholars recognize and take part in the development of theory and research on journalism. As a result, journalism is becoming an increasingly autonomous field of study. Universities and colleges have responded to this trend with the formation of schools and departments dedicated to journalism. At the same time, the scientific community has created two new international journals in the field--*Journalism* (Sage) and *Journalism Studies* (Routledge)--along with several journals devoted to the inquiry of journalism at the national level.

These changes in professional organization match changes in journalism itself. Journalism has come to rival interpersonal communication as primary source of social co-orientation. In a normative sense, it is regarded as an essential part in the processes of democracy and social change. That journalism has become crucial to such concerns is indicated by our use of concepts such as: *public journalism*, *civic journalism*, *development(al) journalism*, and *peace journalism*.

Journalism, as the term is used here, is not identical with *the media*, which are the carriers of mass communication. Mass communication serves as a *vehicle* for a broad range of content such as journalism, public relations, propaganda, entertainment, or advertising. Journalism generates specific content to be distributed by several channels, including traditional media and interactive media. Journalism operates as a highly autonomous, though not completely independent system. It is, therefore, essential to explore how journalism and the content it generates interacts with other systems in society, including the media.

The purpose of the Interest Group is to promote journalism theory, journalism research, and professional education in journalism as well as to provide a critical perspective on its specific functions, structures, and practice. The Interest Group invites a wide array of theoretical, epistemological and methodological approaches, all of which are united around an interest in journalism and that share the aim of enhancing existing understandings of how journalism works, across temporal and geographic contexts. Central to the mission of the interest group is to explicate what we recognize intuitively but has become increasingly vague within both the academy and the profession: What is news? An Interest Group organized around the concept of journalism itself would be in a better position to address this question than other existing venues within ICA.

The Interest Group is intended to facilitate empirical research and to bring more coherence to research paradigms, and in so doing, to further support the professionalization of journalism studies and journalism education. Furthermore, while journalism is presently studied across the field, often the individuals behind these different research endeavors do not have a place to speak with each other. Creating an interest group with journalism's study as its focus will create a setting in which scholars employing different kinds of academic approaches can engage in dialogue. It would be a clearinghouse of sorts, for the wide range of scholarship on journalism.

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Full name

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Institution

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Signature

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Date