



AUSTIN FORUM

on Journalism in the Americas 2003

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Knight Center for Journalism

in the Americas

University Of Texas At Austin

Introduction

The Austin Forum on Journalism in the Americas is an annual gathering organized by the Knight Center for Journalism in the Americas at the University of Texas at Austin. The forum provides an opportunity for Latin American journalism organizations to exchange ideas and experiences, and to develop collaborative strategies for improving the quality of journalism in the Americas.

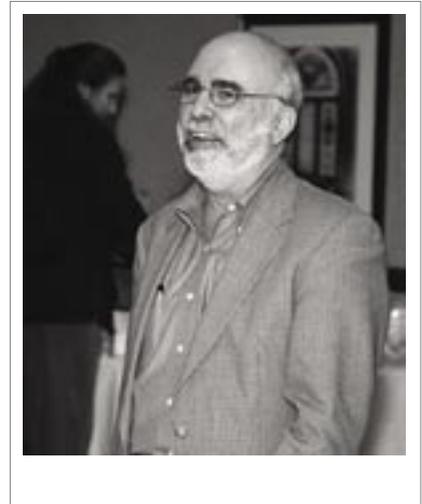
During the 2003 Austin Forum, journalists and professionals from eight countries and 20 organizations discussed the importance of ongoing journalism training programs, and the role of self-sustaining independent journalism organizations as catalysts for the improvement of journalism in the Americas. A number of partnerships and collaborations have resulted from the Forum.

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A Message from the Knight Center's Director, Rosental Calmon Alves

When the idea of the Knight Center for Journalism in the Americas came to my mind, its rationale was based on the fact that journalists in this hemisphere need help to improve their professional skills and the standards of journalism, especially in those newly democratized countries. As a Latin American journalist myself, I grew up under a military dictatorship, suffered the effects of censorship during the formative years of my career, saw news companies and journalists being harassed, attacked and put out of business for political reasons, and many other problems that affected my profession. But I have also seen how much journalists sacrifice themselves to improve their skills, overcome censorship of different origins, and make journalism occupy its place as a foundation of a democratic society. Later in my career, I became a foreign correspondent and saw a similar picture in many other countries in the region, especially during the 1980s, when winds of democracy blew all over the hemisphere.



Since I came to the University of Texas at Austin, in 1996, I identified even more strongly with the reality of journalism in the Americas, since Latin American studies are a core focus of our campus. Out of the forest, I could see it even better than when I was among the trees. So, when I knocked on the door of the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation with the idea of creating a center dedicated to help Latin American and Caribbean journalists with training programs, I was convinced that by doing this we would put our grain of salt in the ongoing efforts of those journalists who see a better journalism – one that is essential to the construction of better and more democratic societies. In fact, we would add to the long tradition of cooperation offered by U.S. publishers, editors and journalists to their counterparts in other parts of this hemisphere. Since the historical Pan American Congress of Journalists, held in Washington, D.C., in 1926, a lot has been done to fulfill the dreams of the 130 journalists from the Americas who called for more cooperation and contact among all journalists in the Western Hemisphere. That Washington conference, 78 years ago, was, for example, the origin of the Inter American Press Association, officially created in another Pan American gathering, in Mexico City, in 1942.

The proposal to create the Knight Center for Journalism in the Americas took into consideration that long tradition, but it also tried to add a new approach. Besides organizing and financing training programs in the region, it included an emphasis on helping journalists of the Americas to build their own organizations or strengthen those they had already formed. Instead of just giving them the opportunity to attend seminars and workshops to improve whatever professional skills they thought they needed, we would also help them to establish or re-energize their own programs. Permanent and self-sustainable journalists organizations will be able to conduct better-focused and more effective programs to improve the standards of journalism in the region. The Knight Center's first year and a half of activities demonstrate that this approach could be very effective.

The Austin Forum on Journalism in the Americas was conceived in our original plan as an important piece of this new approach. It offers a unique opportunity to the most active organizations dedicated to journalism training in the hemisphere to get together, know each other, share their experiences, learn from each other, and, hopefully, articulate some cooperation or joint projects.

On the eve of the second Austin Forum, scheduled for February 13-14, 2004, we have compiled this booklet that summarizes the presentations of the first forum, held in February 2003. The compilation produced by the Knight Center team, led by project manager Dean Graber, became a snapshot of the multiple efforts for journalism training in the Americas.

With the Austin Forum, our trilingual website at <http://knightcenter.utexas.edu> and our programs with local organizations in many countries, we hope to create an active network interested in contributing to the improvement of journalism in the Americas. And we are very thankful to the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation for its generous financial grant and permanent inspiration; to the University of Texas at Austin for its significant support; and, especially, to all the participants of the Austin Forum and all journalists who give their time and work to build their own organizations in the hope of building a free and independent journalism as a pillar of democracy and a better and more just society.

Jaime Abello

Foundation for a New Iberoamerican Journalism (FNPI)

The Foundation for a New Iberoamerican Journalism, started by Gabriel García Márquez in Colombia in 1994, hopes to inspire all journalists to do their craft well, and to reach a place where they feel the pride of being writers themselves.

The original idea was to hold workshops for young journalists, to help them learn the tools of the trade, improve the quality of journalism, and motivate other journalists. These are working professionals, who attend workshops once or twice a year. We are not an academic or training institution, we're a professional institution.

To address the insufficient journalistic training for professionals, we provide the "New Journalism Workshop." Candidates for this workshop learn about professional ethics, specialized coverage of problems in Latin America, and other techniques to improve the quality of Latin American journalism.

We select full-time or freelance journalists who are actively engaged in this work, such as Alma Guillermoprieto, to be the teachers at these workshops. The teachers come from across the region, as do the students. Each workshop has at least five different countries represented. The Internet has helped with this. About 21,000 journalists are on our mailing list, and many receive the information electronically.



There are a number of topics discussed at these workshops. We've worked with senior journalists and editors as well as photojournalists. We had a workshop in Santiago, Chile, on narrative writing, and a radio workshop in Lima, Peru, taught by journalists from National Public Radio in the United States. We'll also hold a seminar on freedom of expression, professional ethics, and the role of media in democracy in Argentina this summer.

We have projects beyond the workshops as well. We're developing our presence on the Internet by adding to a website that is already a virtual community of journalists, with tips on obtaining documents, scholarships, ethics, and online advice. We help to promote the world of journalists through the New Journalism Award, which a Brazilian journalist recently won for his stories on the Amazon. We're also collaborating with Monterrey Tech of Mexico to create a distance education virtual training program.

Our objectives for the future are numerous. We want to share our knowledge with a broader audience than the 15 journalists in each workshop, perhaps through distance learning and publications. This could emerge through the development of a series of books on journalism in Latin America. We need to conduct some institutional strengthening by creating an endowment and obtaining a new headquarters and new equipment. It would also be useful to measure to what degree we have been able to affect the work of the journalists who have attended our workshops.

To accomplish these goals, we plan to continue to build on the international partnerships we've created since 1994. We believe in the value of bringing people together through alliances and partnering. Working in Latin America brings this benefit, for there is no other continent in the world where so many of the countries share the same problems, and where they can also come together to solve them, thanks to the Iberian languages we also share.

Jaime Abello is director of the Fundación para un Nuevo Periodismo Iberoamericano (FNPI) in Cartagena, Colombia. He has held this position since 1995. Previously, he served as an assistant to the Colombian government in reforming legislation concerning television, telecommunications, and the film industry. He is a board member of several organizations dedicated to the film industry and freedom of expression.

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Cecilia Alvear

National Association of Hispanic Journalists (NAHJ)

In the beginning, there was apartheid. Yes, there was apartheid in the newsrooms of the “Land of the brave and the home of the free.” If you could travel in time and go back to the 1960s, into the newsrooms of The New York Times and the L.A. Times, or the networks and their affiliate stations, you would find only white guys called Tom, Dick, or Harry. No Latinos, no Asians, and no African-Americans.

In 1968, when Washington exploded after the assassination of Martin Luther King, the Washington Post had no black reporters. They deputized a messenger who worked in the newsroom to go out into the inner city and find out what was going on. In 1969 the FCC issued an equal employment opportunity regulation, which stations had to abide by. It basically said they had to have women, and they had to have people of color. Their licenses were on the line if they didn't comply.

In the 1960s, there was a man who broke through named Ruben Salazar, and he became the first Chicano who worked for a major newspaper, who was a foreign correspondent, and who was working in Los Angeles. In 1970 he was covering an anti-war protest, and he was killed after the police shot a tear gas canister that hit him. He's become an icon, a guy who broke through all this racism.



He was an inspiration for these young Latinos who started to work for newspapers and television stations in Los Angeles. They would cover a story, recognize each other, and go out for a drink afterwards. They started to wonder, “Why are there only four of us?” They started an informal organization that would grow and combine with other organizations. Eventually it became the National Association of Hispanic Journalists.

We had our first convention in 1984. There were a lot of growing pains, but here we are, 20 years later. We started having scholarship programs, student projects, and people like Maria Martin teaching in radio journalism. We've given out more than \$500,000 in scholarships to more than 350 students.

For me, one of the highlights of the scholarship banquet is that we have a recipient tell their story. It brings you to tears because they're amazing, and they'll say, “I wouldn't be able to go to college if it wasn't for this money. I wouldn't make it.” It's great.

We're working on a number of new projects. Many of our people work in English, but we have a growing number who work in Spanish. So we made an effort, with workshops and regional conferences, to reach these members. We had a conference in Spanish in Miami, and we're developing a Spanish-language manual. We should try to reach out and embrace our roots in Latin America more, and we want other organizations to help find ways to bring Latin American journalists to our workshops.

These are good quality programs, but it's getting to be difficult to raise money for these projects. It's tough. But we're going to continue. We're not giving up. Working for this group is really a labor of love. It's a lot of work, but the satisfactions are incredibly big.

Cecilia Alvear is a field producer with NBC Network News in Burbank, California. Previously she served as the network's Mexico City bureau chief and the senior producer for Latin America. Long active with the California Chicano News Media Association and with the National Association of Hispanic Journalists, Alvear was elected VP broadcast of NAHJ in 1996 and president in 2000. Born in the Galapagos Islands, Ecuador, Cecilia immigrated to the United States in the 1960s.

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Pedro Enrique Armendares

Investigative Journalists–Mexico

Periodistas de Investigación began in 1996 as a project that came out of IRE. Several members of IRE, both Mexican and American, decided it was a good time to do something similar for Mexico. What they wanted to do was to bring to Mexico, and later Latin America, the same kind of work, training and networking that IRE has been doing in the United States for so many years.

We see ourselves as a network of journalists, students, and professors committed to improving the quality of journalism in Mexico and Latin America. Specifically, what we try to do is acquire and develop investigative skills, and work together to develop transparency and access to information in Latin America.

The timing is particularly good for several reasons. The media have become more independent, and more dependent on readership and public support, and less dependent on government handouts. Civil society is demanding more, not only from their electoral officials, but also from the media.

We organize workshops and courses to promote training in the techniques of investigative journalism. We work with investigative journalists throughout Latin America to help them find information and analyze that information with computer-assisted reporting techniques.

We're also participating with other organizations in efforts to increase and protect rights and access to information and freedom of the press, and also to promote and support the transparency of the democratic process in all countries. I'm very happy that in the last few years several countries, including Mexico, have enacted freedom of information laws. That in a way is very good, but it's also only the beginning of the process. Now we've got to start working with that law, and with the bureaucrats, media owners, and journalists, to try to put it to use.

The major problem today, the mother of all obstacles to reporting in Latin America, is access to information – be it that the law is not in place, or the law is ambiguous, or because it's simply not enforced.

In a way, this new law in Mexico and other countries places a heavy burden of responsibility on journalists. Now we don't have an excuse anymore. We can't say, "They wouldn't give me the information." Now we have an increased responsibility to find that information and to work to be responsible with it.

In the past few years we've confirmed not only that computer-assisted reporting is possible in Latin America, but also that when we use it, it weakens the official monopoly on information. Reporters are finding alternative sources of information, and analyzing it in databases, which they can then compare to the official version. Trends like globalization and economic integration have created wonderful windows of opportunity for this type of reporting.

In the future we hope to concentrate more on Mexico, in terms of workshops, especially outside of Mexico City. There's a strong interest from smaller media, including print and radio stations. We need to find a way to become financially self-sustaining. We need to embarrass Latin American media tycoons into supporting these types of projects. It's especially important today for organizations like ours to find ways not to compete, but to work towards similar goals. We have to find a way to adapt and find a niche to complement each other, to increase our results.

Pedro Enrique Armendares is executive director of Centro de Periodistas de Investigación (IRE–Mexico), an independent organization based in Mexico City that trains, advises, and works with investigative reporters and editors throughout Latin America. Before that he worked for seven years as an investigative reporter for the Mexico City daily La Jornada, and as a professor/researcher at the Centro de Investigación y Docencia Económicas (CIDE), in Mexico City.



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Susan Shattuck Benson

Trust for the Americas/Organization of American States

The Trust for the Americas is a non-profit organization affiliated with the Organization of American States. It was founded in 1997, but its first programs began in 1999. The larger of our two initiatives has to do with new technologies for low-income groups, but I'll focus on what we do that has to do with Transparency and Governance, which, among other activities, trains journalists.



Why did we get into journalism? We looked at development in Latin America, and clearly corruption is probably the major barrier to development. We felt that a strong media and a well-informed population were key elements in combating corruption. So our focus in working with the media has been in coverage of finance, governance, and issues so that citizens understand corruption.

Our goal at Trust for the Americas is not to develop a large staff with many specialties. We see ourselves as a broker and a facilitator. Part of our job is to determine the need, develop the local partners, find who has the expertise and experience, then create the partnerships to implement projects. We don't have journalists on our staff, but we go out and seek journalists and experts from relevant fields to provide the training.

For example, when we started we brought together the World Bank Institute, which had experience in Africa, training journalists to cover corruption. But they hadn't worked in Latin America. We got together Radio Nederland, which had a lot of experience in Latin America, but no experience in coverage of corruption. The Center for International Private Enterprise had a goal to promote financial reporting, so they were brought in. We had businesses provide experts to explain the links between government and business.

The synergies that happen when different institutions bring their specialties together are simply marvelous because all of us benefit from interdisciplinary learning. The Trust also has held anti-corruption summits in Central America and the Andes, with heads of state and experts in anti-corruption measures from press and civil society, to talk about laws and current practices to fight corruption in Central America and the Andean countries. Journalists from radio, press, and television attended the summits, and they listened to the experts discuss the "best practices" and challenges of fighting corruption. This was the background for a five-day intensive training course that followed each summit.

This five-day curriculum includes such subjects as mathematics for journalists, which trains them how to read statistics and analyze financial information. They are walked through the procurement process to understand the relationship between government and business. They learn investigative techniques, ethics, and safety – how to protect your sources and yourself.

What we've learned is that to bring about change, you need to have the local people and institutions intimately involved. As foreigners or outsiders, our role is to make it easier for them to do their work. It is clear that Latin America has all the expertise that it needs. What it needs from the outside is support so that the local people can go ahead and do what they need to do.

Susan Shattuck Benson is the founder of The Trust for the Americas and developed its two basic initiatives: Transparency and Governance, and Information and Communication Technologies for Development. Prior to that she worked throughout Latin America and the Caribbean designing and managing OAS projects to develop information services, micro-enterprise for low-income populations, and publishing and radio for children. She has also worked as a secondary school teacher and librarian.

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Marcelo Beraba

Brazilian Association for Investigative Journalism (Abraji)

It is important to mention first that the Brazilian Association for Investigative Journalism is just beginning. It's an organization that is just being created. The idea has existed for awhile, since journalists in Brazil learned of the IRE in the United States, but journalists were too busy in their day-to-day work to get this off the ground.

But that changed after drug traffickers killed Tim Lopes in June of 2002 while he was covering a story in a gang-controlled section of Rio de Janeiro. This was a case that shocked us greatly, and we felt that there wasn't any understanding or respect for the work that we did in Brazil.

This led to a wider and deeper debate about the role and limits of journalism, and it mobilized a large number of journalists. In December of 2002, during a São Paulo training seminar organized by the Knight Center for Journalism in the Americas, a group of 60 journalists from across Brazil agreed to create ABRAJI.

The original group was divided into subgroups that met and discussed key projects for the overall organization. From the original 60, there are now about 200 journalists who want to participate. We want to create scholarships, we need funding for new initiatives, and we need funding for research into the use of computer resources and computer-assisted reporting. We plan to create databanks and other materials for professional training. There's also been pressure from journalists that the organization should also work to protect them.

But all of this is also occurring during a financial crisis that is affecting Brazilian newspapers, magazines, and television. A number of journalists have lost their jobs – many of them with 10, 17, or 20 years of experience – and newspapers are reducing their coverage. It's one of the most significant crises in Brazilian news coverage.

It hasn't stopped our organization from making progress. So far all the work of the organization has been conducted online. This has been very helpful for journalists working alone in some areas, such as newspaper correspondents or newswire correspondents, who often have few opportunities to continue their education. It also helps full-time journalists who have difficulty finding the time to devote to this work.

The workshops and seminars we produced have trained journalists how to cover narco-trafficking and corruption, access to information, computer-assisted reporting, journalist protection, the relationship between the press and the judiciary, and laws concerning freedom of expression.

We now want to bring other organizations into the fold. We're working to improve access to information by promoting a bill on transparency. We're developing partnerships with universities, including the creation of a website that provides training in computer-assisted reporting.

There is a great deal of work to be done. But we at Abraji feel there is no more time to wait. We can't wait for the major media to approve initiatives that we think need to be investigated.

Marcelo Beraba is president of the Brazilian Association for Investigative Journalism (Abraji). He directs the Rio de Janeiro bureau of the Folha de S. Paulo and serves as director of the Freedom of Expression Committee of Brazil's National Newspaper Association. Earlier in his career he served as executive editor of both Jornal do Brasil and TV Globo's Globo News.

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Luis Botello

International Center for Journalists (ICFJ)

For 20 years, the International Center for Journalists has been training working journalists from places as varied as Colombia, Botswana, Azerbaijan, and Cambodia. Our programs have improved the quality of journalism in countries where there was little or no tradition of an independent press. We have taught reporters, managing editors, media executives, and journalism trainers as well. Our programs range from one that brings Latin American health journalists to Washington, D.C., to a program for media managers in Russia, to the Ford environmental fellowships, which send U.S. reporters to conduct training in the field from Ecuador to Ghana to Indonesia.

ICFJ has trained more than 3,000 journalists and worked with more than 30 local organizations in almost every country of Latin America. Our largest program, the Knight International Press Fellowships, sends U.S. journalists abroad for up to nine months, each in a specific country. We've sent trainers to work with community radio in Guatemala, to teach at universities in Argentina and Chile, to teach investigative reporting in Paraguay, and to build a journalists' association in Peru, to name just a few examples.



Our current training programs focus on three vital but often neglected issues – journalism ethics, awareness of press laws and regulations, and investigative reporting. Through four regional Journalism Ethics in the Americas Conferences, we have developed the first Latin American ethics training video and manual, with case studies designed to inspire discussion of sensitive ethics issues. Seventy percent of the participants in those conferences said the program made a significant impact on their work, and we continue to use the video in a variety of other Latin American programs.

Our workshops on Media and Freedom of Expression in the Americas were a three-year initiative to increase awareness and discussion of the issues faced by Latin American journalists. ICFJ conducted 18 conferences in 17 countries in those three years, tailoring each one to the needs of that country. ICFJ educated journalists about international conventions on free-expression rights and resources for bringing about change in Latin America. For many participants, it was the first time they learned about press laws in their own countries. The project that ended last year reached about 400 journalists from 150 different cities in the Americas.

We've also produced a free press video and manual to show these issues in action, including sequences about how insult laws forced Chilean reporter Alejandra Matus into exile after her exposé of the Chilean Supreme Court, and how Horacio Verbitsky successfully challenged Argentina's former president Carlos Menem's lawsuits in international courts.

But despite the extent of our work so far, there are still new areas and journalists to reach. There is a great need for journalism training in the provinces of Latin America. Journalists working in the provinces are the most vulnerable to abuse. The ones we've worked with so far had no idea about their rights before we told them. And that is why we launched last year a second phase of the freedom of expression project. This time we are giving journalists the skills to improve their coverage of free press issues – such as access to information, legal restrictions, and threats and violence against journalists – by introducing new techniques on investigative reporting. Through this project, we are conducting country-by-country workshops that bring together journalists from the provinces and the capitals.

There is also a need for follow-up after the training conferences and workshops end. Without this, it's easy for a participant to return to a newsroom resistant to change and unable to use what he or she learned. Our online initiatives are geared towards maintaining the conversations that start during training sessions. We've created two listservs that already have about 200 Latin American journalists discussing free press issues, and the website *libertad-prensa.org*, which publishes in-depth articles about freedom of expression challenges. The online initiatives are strengthened by our site *ijnet.org*, which provides information on training opportunities as well as training materials, codes of ethics and media laws in Spanish and Portuguese. Through this site, journalists in Latin America are connected with journalists throughout the world who are wrestling with similar issues.

It is this combination of improving the quality of journalism in Latin America and maintaining an international support network that we at ICFJ believe will strengthen media and democracy throughout Latin America and the rest of the world.

Luis Botello is director of Latin American Programs for the International Center for Journalists (ICFJ). He is responsible for the identification, implementation, and development of all ICFJ projects for Latin America and the Caribbean. He conducts a variety of training programs and conferences and was formerly director of ICFJ's web-based service, the International Journalists' Network (IJNet), which tracks media developments around the world. He previously served as morning newscast producer, host, and television reporter for Televisora Nacional in Panama, where he covered assignments in Colombia, the United States, and Europe.

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Joan M. Caivano

Inter-American Dialogue

The Inter-American Dialogue is the leading U.S. center for policy analysis, exchange, and communication on issues in Western Hemisphere affairs. The Dialogue brings together public and private leaders from across the Americas to address key hemispheric problems and opportunities. Dialogue activities are directed to generating new policy ideas and practical proposals for action, and getting these ideas and proposals to government and private decision-makers. The Dialogue also offers diverse Latin American and Caribbean voices access to U.S. policy debates and discussions. Based in Washington, D.C., the Dialogue conducts its work throughout the hemisphere. Its select membership of 100 distinguished citizens from throughout the Americas includes political, business, academic, media, and other non-governmental leaders.



One of the issues on the Dialogue's agenda today is freedom of the press. We began to work on press freedom issues at a time when democratic gains in a number of countries had stalled, and expectations were not being met. There were few opportunities for officials to sit down and discuss press freedom issues with journalists, publishers, academics or other non-governmental leaders. We decided to launch a three-year project that would bring together the different sectors in a series of meetings designed to generate recommendations to help advance press freedom.

The meetings included a wide range of voices. Such discussions usually don't get beyond a group of like-minded journalism professionals, but this was different—government and business leaders also participated. A number of recommendations emerged, but two stand out: increase journalism standards through higher pay and additional education, and promote greater access to public information.

No issue came up more often or with a greater sense of urgency than the need to increase access to information. The reason is simple—if decision-making power is in the hands of the citizens, they will need all the necessary information to engage in informed debate. Even in countries that have passed access laws, there is a lack of clear and organized procedures. Or citizens are not aware that these rights exist. We were convinced that the issue demanded more careful and systematic attention.

Legislators, justices, ombudsmen, and journalism professionals from the United States and Latin America participated in a conference that reviewed existing access legislation. They talked about the challenges for successfully implementing current laws, and agreed on key provisions any law should contain. We have published the results of the meeting, which have been used to help develop hemisphere-wide consensus on a set of principles.

We're also organizing smaller meetings and discussions on the issue. Participants in the Dialogue initiative have urged us to hold meetings in countries where access legislation is pending, to bring more attention and understanding to the issue. The list of countries for such attention is long, and includes Argentina, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Paraguay, and Uruguay. But even this group of countries is ahead of the nations that have experienced no movement at all on access legislation – Brazil, El Salvador, Honduras, and Nicaragua.

A continuing challenge is the search for new funding to support our work on press issues. Our priority in this regard is to work to increase the participation of government officials. We have found there is an interest on their part, but it remains difficult to compete with other demands on their time. But they do attend our meetings, and the contribution of legislators, judges, and ombudsmen enriches the debate. Our convening capacity across the sectors gives the Dialogue a comparative advantage to influence outcomes on this issue. We remain committed to advancing democracy through press freedom in the Americas.

Joan Caivano is deputy to the president and director of special projects at the Inter-American Dialogue. She directs the Women's Leadership Conference of the Americas (WLCOA) – co-sponsored with the International Center for Research on Women – and coordinates the Dialogue's Sol Linowitz Forum and its projects on press freedom in the Americas and on the media and democracy in Central America. In addition, she manages a range of institutional responsibilities, including membership issues, the Dialogue's publications program, and outreach to the press.

Maribel Cuervo de Paredes

Latin American Center for Journalists (CELAP)

El Centro Latinoamericano de Periodismo started in 1997 with the mission to strengthen a free and responsible press in Latin America through the training of journalists, media owners, and journalism professors.

CELAP has several unique characteristics. Our board of directors is responsible for management and operational control of the affairs of the organization. It includes representatives from the ranks of journalists, ownership, and academics, and meets once a year in Panama to evaluate CELAP's results. Members are elected for terms of two, three, and four years, to give the board a sense of continuity.

Another unique aspect of our organization is the endowment of \$650,000. This money comes from owners of television stations in Panama, newspaper owners in Panama, Puerto Rico, and Costa Rica, Florida International University, and money received through grants, donations, inheritances, and other sources. The interest earned on this endowment is used to cover administrative costs.

Since 1998 we've received \$250,000 in donations from ABITIBI, a company that sells paper to newspapers in Latin America. CELAP has used the money to train journalists through fellowships provided specifically for print journalists. It's important to say that, unfortunately, we can only offer these fellowships to print media. We are not allowed to use this money to give opportunities to journalists in radio or TV. But with this money we have had the opportunity to give scholarships to almost 343 journalists. We've trained about 65 journalists a year since ABITIBI started donating to CELAP.

The structure of our organization has also been an important part of our work. As executive director, I report directly to the board of directors, and we have an accountant and project director as well.

To provide journalism training, we organize and sponsor meetings, seminars, and workshops in several countries in Latin America. This professional training prepares journalists, media owners, and journalism professors to become leaders in the development of democratic institutions in Latin America. We have had 6,170 participants in our seminars and workshops.

At these seminars, we teach investigative journalism, newsroom management, TV news production, and advanced news writing on a one-on-one basis. The journalists come from South and Central America, representing 19 countries and 57 newspapers.

We'd like to expand our fellowship program and to provide similar training to radio, television, and Internet journalists. It's also a necessity to train more journalism professors from public universities, since they're the ones who train our journalists. We have to close the gap between newsrooms and classrooms.

In conclusion, CELAP has had six successful years dedicated to promoting press freedom in Latin America through responsible journalism, in order to strengthen democracy in our countries and to provide quality journalism to Latin America.

Maribel Cuervo de Paredes was designated executive director of the Latin American Center for Journalists (CELAP) in August 2000. In this role, she conducts training activities for journalists, and works to secure funding for the center and to establish an ethics chair for Latin America. She has been a columnist for one of Panama's leading newspapers, El Panamá América, for six years. And for 11 years she has hosted "Entre Nosotros," a weekly radio program about politics and national issues.



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Jim Detjen

Knight Center for Environmental Journalism, Michigan State University

The Knight Center for Environmental Journalism has been training reporters to research and write about environmental issues since 1994. Based at Michigan State University, we are the North American headquarters of the International Federation of Environmental Journalists, and we publish the magazine EJ, which covers topics from ecotourism to golf course pesticides.

Environmental stories are not easy stories to cover, and our center is there to help reporters with this type of work, in the United States and throughout the world. Our training conferences have helped journalists from Russia, Egypt, South Korea, the United Kingdom, and more than 20 other countries. We've even trained Chinese journalists for six months with the help of a Fulbright grant. But one area we have not gotten into has been Latin America. That has been changing.

Our plans for the future involve Latin America to a large degree. In January 2004 in Mexico City, we'll have a conference on environmental journalism that will focus on environmental journalism in Mexico and have journalists from throughout Latin America, depending on the success of our fundraising efforts. Our conference will train reporters in the use of computer-assisted reporting, guide tours to ecologically significant areas, and encourage institution building like the creation of a network or association of environmental journalists in Mexico. We hope to work with other organizations, like the Investigative Journalists association of Mexico and the International Center for Journalists, to look for ways to make this conference a success.



We also have a graduate student with us who was an environmental reporter on Mexican television and is now creating a website in Spanish and English with resources on environmental topics for environmental journalists. We hope to have it completed by the end of this year, and also want to create an online course on environmental journalism. There is a lot of demand around the world for this sort of training. We get a steady stream of people from other countries who show up at our center and hang out for a few weeks, and maybe there's a way to also organize that activity.

Michigan State has a long tradition of partnerships with Latin American countries to help improve the quality of journalism. It dates back to 1972, when Mary Gardner began a 20 year collaboration with El Norte in Monterrey, Mexico to conduct training seminars with their staff during the summer. Thirty years later, the Knight Center for Environmental Journalism is trying to build on that tradition.

Jim Detjen joined the Michigan State University Journalism School faculty in January 1995 as the Knight Chair in Journalism, the nation's only endowed chair in environmental journalism. Previously, he spent 21 years as a professional newspaper reporter and editor. Jim's work has been nominated eight times for a Pulitzer Prize, and three times he has been a finalist, most recently in 1995 for a team project that investigated political corruption in North Philadelphia. He is founding president of the Society of Environmental Journalists and since 1994 has been the president of the International Federation of Environmental Journalists.

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Wyvolyn Gager

Caribbean Media Trainer

Before we discuss journalism in the Caribbean, I want to tell you a bit about the Caribbean. What is this Caribbean that we're talking about?

The Caribbean is the English-speaking, the French-speaking, the Spanish-speaking, and the Dutch-speaking Caribbean. It is a rich tapestry of nations woven together by diverse cultures. But for too long, the Caribbean has been treated as the Cinderella of the Americas. When CNN anchor Leon Harris came to Jamaica a few years ago to speak to our press association he said, "I didn't know about you. Where have you been?"

Well in Jamaica, we have 11 radio stations, two commercial television stations, three daily newspapers, and one weekly newspaper. Of these, the Jamaica Gleaner daily newspaper, where I worked since 1975 and served as editor in chief from 1994 to 2001, dominates the market.

When I stepped in as editor, we asked our readers what they wanted from their newspaper. We had many focus groups, we conducted polls, we had forums, etc. Wherever we went, the clamor was the same. People wanted more investigative stories, they said. More follow-up stories. It became clear to me that our public had become much more demanding. They had become more irreverent. They were more questioning. They were more willing to challenge authority, and we truly had arrived at the gate of accountability.

We had to do something quickly. But the editorial training needed to do this work had not been a front-burner issue in the past. It was not ignored, because we had in-house clinics, but I had to get creative and became well-known in diplomatic circles. We sent journalists to India, the United States, and Japan - wherever there was an opportunity. We had a newsroom exchange with the Orlando Sentinel. We're sending journalists to training centers in the Caribbean, where students can complete a one-year diploma course, and working journalists can take a summer program. When they returned, they had to share their knowledge with the rest of the Gleaner.

This effort has made us very good at the "whats," but bad at examining the "whys," and this is what our public is clamoring for. They want to know the whys behind drug trafficking, gun smuggling, and the spread of HIV-AIDS. We need to get cracking on covering these in a very extensive way, so our public knows we need to tackle these issues. But we do some good work with what we have. Our series on Jamaica's homeless, "The Forgotten Ones," won an award from the International Red Cross for humanitarian coverage.

With Jamaica currently facing an economic crunch, this sort of training does not get the priority it should. Jamaica's journalists, and those of the rest of the Caribbean, are hungry for this training. We need to develop online training to make our dollars go further, and we must collaborate with international organizations to share the little funding that is available.

But before this collaboration can begin, there must be representatives from the Caribbean sitting at the table when the Americas are discussed. Hopefully the seat at the table that we had in Austin will be available again.

Wyvolyn Gager began her journalism career as a reporter at the Jamaica Gleaner in 1975. In 1994 she was appointed editor in chief, creating journalism history in Jamaica as the first woman to head that publication in its 160 years. After six years of heeding constant deadlines and overseeing a raft of technology changes in the Gleaner's news operations, Wyvolyn retired in 2001. She is now engaged in media consultancy, which includes conducting training workshops for journalists and NGOs



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Charles H. Green and J. Arthur Heise

Florida International University

Through the International Media Center, which is the research and training arm at the School of Journalism at Florida International University, we essentially pioneered large-scale journalism training in Latin America starting in 1986. Since then, we have trained 7,500 journalists. We reached that number slowly, through small workshops that usually served 15 people per session – from reporters to media owners. We focused on Central America, and we would send trainers into newsrooms there to reach those students who couldn't afford to travel to Miami for a workshop. So we traveled instead, to at least 17 countries.

We've also produced 10 journalism textbooks in Spanish. When we started the project, we learned that there were no good journalism textbooks in Spanish, at all. Most of the textbooks being used were translated from English, and some even included examples of inverted pyramid stories about American football games. When our textbooks are sold, the royalties go to a permanent endowment, and the profit from the sale of the books covers the operating expenses for the Latin American Journalism Center (CELAP) in Panama.



Currently, we're doing an anti-corruption program in Paraguay. We're working with some other NGOs there to at least make a dent in corruption in one of the most corrupt countries in the world. We started by helping the judges and the people in the judicial sector understand the role of the free press, and we're going to work with journalists to help them understand the judicial sector.

We're working with independent journalists in Cuba also. This is a distance learning program of the old tech, by mail, because very few of the independent journalists have access to the Internet. We'll mail them written packets or videotapes, and we've been getting stories from the journalists in return.

But we also hope to exponentially expand the number of journalists who can access FIU's classes, by going online. Through a partnership with Monterrey Tech in Monterrey, Mexico, the "MIT" of Latin America, we plan to offer online courses and are developing an online Masters' degree program. About 50,000 students are in Monterrey Tech's general distance education program, and in the next three to four months we'll have two journalism courses to offer them, with the online degree program potentially available by late 2003 or early 2004.

We want to do this at a cost that will allow many journalists to get a graduate education who cannot do so now because of the costs of traveling to the United States. A big priority, if this is going to be accessible to journalists throughout the area, is scholarship support. The total tuition for this program is \$12,000. That's a big piece of change for journalists, who don't make the type of income to pay that.

These are just a few of the numerous developments in our work training Latin American journalists, but the most fundamental aspect of our training, and all journalism training, remains the same: simply helping journalists understand the role they have to play in a democratic society and the ethical principles they need to perform that role.

Charles H. Green, Ph.D., is director of the International Media Center and a professor of journalism at Florida International University (FIU). Since 1986 he has managed the Latin American training activities of the School of Journalism and Mass Communication. He was co-founder of the Latin American Journalism Center in Panama. Green was a foreign correspondent and news executive with the Associated Press for 24 years. He has written about Latin America since 1966 and heads IMC's efforts to provide training to journalists in that area.

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J. Arthur Heise, Ph.D., is founding dean and professor at Florida International University's School of Journalism and Mass Communication. He is also the founder of the School's Latin American Journalism Program and its Institute for Public Opinion Research and is the author of two books and more than 50 articles and monographs in professional and scholarly publications. He served as a reporter and editor with The Buffalo (N.Y.) News and the Associated Press in Berlin, Germany.

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Marilyn Greene

World Press Freedom Committee

Despite the spread of a free press throughout Latin America, threats to those freedoms remain. They often arise during the deliberations of intergovernmental organizations like the United Nations and UNESCO. The resolutions of such organizations, by equating free speech with the undermining of national security, are sometimes used to restrict the media.

A watchdog is needed to monitor these organizations for such activity, and then alert the public and professionals to the potential a resolution has for harming and impeding free speech. The World Press Freedom Committee tries to serve as this watchdog.

The WPFC grew out of the 1970s-era debate about the New World Information Order, as the Inter American Press Association decided that the discussions unfolding before UNESCO called for a monitoring group. Since then we have expanded to become the coordinating body for nine groups, including the Committee to Protect Journalists and the North American Press Association. When not speaking on behalf of our thousands of members, we arrange training and seminars for journalists throughout the world. We have recently translated our training handbook into Urdu and Kurdish.



Over the years, other organizations have emerged that are willing and able to provide journalism training, leaving the WPFC free to focus its energies. Currently we are concentrating on two overriding issues: the battle against insult laws and the defense of press freedoms on the Internet. The former is considered one of the most dangerous threats to press freedom in Latin America. The region's "desacato laws," which can render even factual depictions of official wrongdoing illegal, often lead to journalistic self-censorship or become sufficient grounds for the arrest and imprisonment of journalists who were simply doing their jobs.

The WPFC fights the desacato laws on two fronts. While we campaign and lobby for legislative action, we also provide legal assistance to the journalists who continue to find themselves sued or imprisoned under the remaining desacato laws. There have been successful efforts to eliminate these laws, notably in Costa Rica, and progress in Chile and Panama. But the chilling effect of these laws is still real. Consider Chile, where despite the existence of a bill that would overturn the country's desacato laws, a court recently sentenced Eduardo Yañez to jail for a desacato violation.

The second and perhaps more universal threat is a government-supported movement to regulate and possibly restrict press freedoms on the Internet. Website blocking, currently synonymous with China and Singapore, could find wider currency at the World Summit on the Information Society in December 2003. Previous declarations at meetings held in Latin America, Africa, and Europe have had a similar thread – the suppression of media and information under the pretext of national security. The WPFC plans to fight this movement before it gains legitimacy at the upcoming U.N. summit.

To deal with this post 9-11 rush to "shut it down if it threatens your government," media organizations will need a spokesperson to represent them at the upcoming intergovernmental meetings that will influence the outcome of this debate. The WPFC could be that representative.

Marilyn Greene was executive director of the World Press Freedom Committee (WPFC), a coordination group of national and international news media organizations. (She left this position Jan. 1, 2004, to pursue a career as an independent media consultant.) WPFC includes as affiliates 44 journalistic organizations on six continents. She was previously an international affairs reporter for USA Today from 1989 to 1996. She reported from more than 30 countries for the special project "JetCapade."

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Linda Hemby

Journalists Against Corruption (PFC)

Periodistas Frente a la Corrupción emerged in August 2000 as a response to Latin America's number one threat to democracy – corruption. It's a regional project dedicated to strengthening and defending Latin America's most promising anti-corruption tool – watchdog journalism. It's administered by the El Salvador-based anti-corruption organization Probidad, and supports journalists as they investigate and expose corruption throughout society.

We have a journalist network and a no-cost investigative assistance project to motivate, upgrade, and facilitate press coverage of corruption and cross-border collaboration. The investigative assistance includes making contacts, doing Internet searches, receiving announcements of corruption and channeling them to journalists. We compose and compare different kinds of investigative resources for journalists who investigate slush funds, campaign financing, etc.

Our second component is our press monitoring and defense, with a focus on journalists and media that investigate corruption. Our third component is our outreach and advising services, including training and other support mechanisms that promote conditions conducive to media continuing in its watchdog role.



These diverse activities have been designed to encourage and support journalists and media that are often discouraged from covering corruption because of difficulties in access to information, lack of investigative reporting skills, numerous potential reprisals, and other complications that undermine both the frequency and quality of most media reports about corruption.

PFC's strategic use of the Internet not only facilitates the numerous activities associated with its three components, but also makes PFC's services, products, and results accessible to Latin American journalists throughout the region. Additionally, PFC uses Internet resources to inform international organizations about corruption, reprisals, legislation, court rulings, and other actions that undermine press freedom in Latin America and to prompt action from those organizations.

While it's difficult to measure how many journalists have benefited from PFC's services, it's an undeniable fact that reports of corruption in Latin American media have consistently and significantly increased since PFC's founding in August 2000. Media reports increasingly reveal relationships between corrupt governments, and between government officials and drug cartels and arms traffickers. These are all topics that were rarely covered before because of a lack of cross-border contacts and networks.

Many journalists also attribute this to a review of PFC's daily clipping service of corruption articles from almost 100 Latin American news sources. This serves as an ongoing training tool, because by being abreast of what their counterparts are covering in other countries, and how they investigate and present their stories, journalists are not only investigating new types of corruption but also learning the skills to do so.

PFC also provides journalists moral support and encouragement and advocates on their behalf, especially against adverse government actions that deny them access to information or threaten them with legal actions.

Unfortunately the number of attacks against Latin American journalists has risen. In Panama, 90 of 200 active journalists have been indicted for defamation related to their coverage of corruption. In 2001, PFC identified 114 journalists who suffered death threats, violence, or other attacks for their part in investigations.

Linda Hemby is regional coordinator of Periodistas Frente a la Corrupción (www.portal-pfc.org) and co-director of its parent organization Probidad (www.probidad.org), a nonprofit organization based in El Salvador, that directs anti-corruption and freedom of expression projects as well as local activities in El Salvador, Panama, and Honduras. She is a speaker, instructor and author of numerous articles about Latin American corruption, the monitor role of communications media, and freedom of expression.

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Brant Houston

Investigative Reporters and Editors, Inc. (IRE)

We're very much a membership organization, a grassroots organization that was started by a lot of reporters and a few editors. We're an independent, non-profit educational institute and professional organization. We began in 1975 and have been based at the University of Missouri's School of Journalism for more than 20 years.

Our profile got very high very quickly because in our first year, investigative reporter Don Bolles was killed in Phoenix with a car bomb. The IRE membership decided to get together and go to Phoenix and finish his work, and to carry on his investigative work into statewide corruption. This resulted in more than 20 stories, known as the Arizona Project, published in papers around the country and winner of an SDX award. A lot of people found out about IRE because of the Arizona Project. As a matter of fact, I found out about IRE that way. I was in Boston, working at the Woburn Daily Times and stringing for the Boston Globe. I said, "I have to join this organization right away." I attended the 1979 IRE annual conference there.



Our membership is at its highest ever. I tell people that during bad times, the IRE thrives because everyone wants to get together and figure out how to continue doing good investigative work. IRE offers 40 or more seminars and conferences a year, with a staff of 12 that's very ambitious in its efforts. But we depend on a lot of our members to volunteer and speak, which they do.

What we're known best for is teaching investigative techniques for every journalist, whether they're reporting on a daily or weekly basis. Internationally, we're also providing more web resources for journalists and journalism organizations. We've done border workshops on the Mexican and Canadian borders. We're talking about doing one in the fall in Mexico. One thing we did two years ago is a Global Conference on Investigative Journalism, where we planned on 150-200 people showing up, and we had more than 300 people from 44 countries.

We host a dozen organizations now on our website, including the Center for Investigative Reporting. We provide services, and they control the content. We don't tell the journalism groups what to do, but we all get together and try to find common ground. We have a resource center with an index of 20,000 investigative stories, and more than 1,000 tip sheets. We also have a data library with more than 40 major databases. They're U.S. databases, but international reporters love to look at some of them, particularly federal contracts – that is, U.S. government contracts that are performed in the United States and dozens of other countries.

We're creating an endowment fund so we can support our core operations. We're increasing international training on site and online, and we're hoping to create an international network of investigative journalists and journalism organizations at our international conference in Copenhagen in May of 2003 (which we did). We're also, through the National Institute of Computer-Assisted Reporting, developing new electronic reporting tools to help reporters do their job faster and make their work more substantial.

We've also started a feature on our website called "Extra, Extra." What we're trying to do is keep really close tabs on all the great investigative reporting being done in the United States and the world. If you simply send an email to extraextra@ire.org, we'll get those stories up on our website.

For organizations like ours, it's absolutely key to be a membership organization. I deal with 5,000 members right now. It's a tougher road – to have members – but I think it's the way to go. It makes the organization vibrant, lively, constantly changing, and relevant. It gives it a heart and soul.

Brant Houston is executive director of Investigative Reporters and Editors, Inc. (IRE), and associate professor at the University of Missouri School of Journalism. He is also author of Computer-Assisted Reporting: A Practical Guide (in its 3rd edition) and co-author of the fourth edition of The Investigative Reporter's Handbook. Before becoming executive director in 1997, he was managing director of The National Institute for Computer-Assisted Reporting (NICAR) and prior to that, a daily journalist for 17 years.

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Amy Johnson and Sherry Rockey

International Women's Media Foundation (IWMF)

The IWMF was founded in 1990, based on the mission of strengthening the role of women in the news media worldwide. It is based on the belief that no press is truly free unless women share an equal voice. We've worked all over the world since 1990 - in Latin America, Asia, Africa, Eastern Europe, and the United States.

Our programs are designed to help women get the experiences, the skills, the opportunities, and the access to resources that they need to compete with their male colleagues in the media. We've done programs in 22 countries, and each year more than 350 women journalists come through our programs.

Our new website, which we launched in September 2002, is a clearinghouse for information on women in the media. Every week we update a section called "In the News," which features the latest happenings about women in the media and articles by women in the media. One of the most exciting parts of our website is our online training center. It's a set of self-directed modules that anyone can access at any time and work through various issues. We're planning on adding modules on reporting on HIV-AIDS and radio reporting. These are all linked to our face-to-face programs that we do around the world. There's also a directory on our website, listing more than 900 journalists from around the world, that's fully searchable.



Our Africa Women's Media Center, which we started in 1997, works throughout Africa with women journalists by providing training, ongoing resources, and networking opportunities. About 900 women have been through our training programs in Africa. The topics have included how to report on development issues, how to cover economics issues, computer-assisted reporting, a leadership development seminar, and AIDS issues in Africa. Our manual on reporting on AIDS has been used not only in Africa but in Haiti and Pakistan. The Gates Foundation - in its first media-directed grant - recently awarded us a grant to help change the way the media covers health issues in Africa.

In the United States, we've been focusing on leadership development. We've been doing a series of seminars for women journalists at mid-level positions, helping them to get the confidence and skills they need to move up. Of the women who have been through our seminars, 44 percent have negotiated for a new assignment, and a quarter of them have negotiated for a promotion. For us it shows that even a small seminar gives women what they need to walk in that editor's door and say, "I need something that I'm just not getting here."

Women in Latin America have been included in our programs from the beginning. But we've never had an ongoing presence there. In 2000 we started a needs assessment in Latin America, through a series of surveys and interviews, to get a sense of what the needs of women were, and what challenges they were facing. In Brazil, and Nicaragua, and Mexico, we really heard the same thing - that women aren't taken seriously when they do get to newsroom management positions, that they have to work doubly hard to be considered to be doing a good job, and that the male dominance in the newsroom really affects women in all the positions they work in. In 2001, we held a series of workshops in the region to find out more specifically how we can support women in the Latin American media. More than 70 women journalists participated. We also provided leadership training as part of these workshops because that was something the women told us in the needs assessment surveys that they wanted.

We would like to work with you to make sure that women are at the table, not only in the newsrooms but in journalism organizations. We're hoping our invitation to this discussion means that there is more receptivity and more openness to having these types of issues discussed in these kinds of dialogues.

Amy Johnson has been director of programs for the International Women's Media Foundation since 1998. She develops, plans and implements the IWMF's training programs to support women journalists around the world and manages content for the IWMF's Online Training Center, offering women journalists access to professional development resources and online training opportunities. Johnson also coordinates the IWMF's annual Courage in Journalism Awards, the only awards program exclusively for international women journalists.

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Sherry Rockey was executive director of the International Women's Media Foundation from September 1994 until August 2003. During her tenure, the IWMF developed into both a network of women journalists from more than 100 countries, and an organization with programs that strengthen the role of women in the media and promote worldwide press freedom. In 1997, she led the IWMF in creating the African Women's Media Center in Dakar, Senegal, the first continent-wide organization dedicated to helping African women journalists advance in their profession.

Peter Laufer and Deborah Mendelsohn

Internews

Because we do have U.S. government funding, which is a very sensitive issue in a lot of places that we work, people may draw certain conclusions about us. For that reason, I want to tell a quick version of our history.

We started in 1982 by people who were passionately involved in the anti-nuclear movement. Some of those people were labor organizers, some were community organizers, and others were media advocates. During the era of Glasnost in Russia, we had a hunch that there was a lot of independent broadcasting going on as the Soviet system was beginning to collapse. We sent a group of people to investigate, and we found about 400 groups doing that by buying VCRs, stealing movies, and showing them with whatever equipment they could get their hands on.

After the fall of the Soviet Union in 1992, emerging democracies from throughout the region had to learn how to create and manage television and radio stations that were entirely different from the once-dominant state-run media. Following the United States' bombing of Afghanistan in the fall of 2001 came attempts to construct an independent media, as did similar efforts in post-Suharto Indonesia.

On the scene amid the rubble and confusion during these times, within these and other countries, was Internews, a nonprofit organization formed in 1982 by labor and media activists in the middle of the anti-nuclear movement. Our mission, to encourage the spread of a free and independent press, has led to the training of more than 22,000 journalists and collaboration with independent television and radio stations – from the Middle East to the Balkans.

The frequent lack of rules under the typical conditions found in countries and regions recovering from conflict has often called for media development that differs from the norm. One striking example was our broadcast of the Rwanda tribunals to Rwandans by showing videos displayed on a portable television carried around the country in a van. We then recorded viewers' reactions to show to court officials interested in the public reaction to their work.

We have offices now in 25 countries, but missing from the list is a presence in Latin America. That is changing, with the help of Peter Laufer, the new Latin America director for Internews. We're currently looking for areas where the possibility exists for independent media, and we have seen it most profoundly in Mexico.

As in other countries we've worked in, we work with all forms of media but specialize in radio. We realized that because of the oral tradition in Mexico, audio is something to be exploited. There are three areas of work we want to start in Mexico: in Juárez, where the murder of women continues, we see an opportunity for alternative media to keep the public informed of this situation – possibly through the development of a cell phone network; and in Chiapas, where we hope to provide both training and legal support to grassroots radio stations.

We could talk endlessly about what it is we look forward to doing in Latin America, and we'd be pleased to see if there are ways we can work together with the rest of you.

Peter Laufer is the Latin America director for Internews, an organization dedicated to helping Third Sector groups publicize their causes and to promoting international freedom of the press. He is an award-winning U.S. journalist and the author of several books as well as a veteran correspondent who has covered civil wars, drug trafficking and natural disasters around the world.

Deborah Mendelsohn, a former television producer, is director of program development for Internews. She has overseen its special elections-related training programs in Russia and Ukraine and directed its four-year Media Development Program in Russia, a comprehensive media-sector development effort. Since 1999 she has managed new program development for Internews.

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María Martin

LATINO USA/GraciasVida Productions and Central American Training Project

I love this concept of Journalism in the Americas, and I'd like to connect that to my work at LATINO USA. With the trajectory that Latino public radio and community radio have undergone in this country, I see a great connection with what's going on with the opening of the media – especially the grassroots media – in Latin America.

This concept of Journalism in the Americas recognizes that there are few borders, and that good journalism in English, Spanish, Portuguese, and the indigenous languages of the Americas means creating the bridges that help all of us in the Americas.

My drop in the bucket in that process has been LATINO USA, which is a half-hour weekly news magazine in English that airs on 230 stations nationwide. Ten years ago it began at the University of Texas at Austin. It grew out of a number of needs, because the public radio system was not serving Latinos the way it should. Here was something that said to them, in this very influential medium, "Here is something for you."



At the same time it was not just for Latinos, because it was an educational tool for that really influential audience of key decision-makers who listen to public radio, to help them understand this community that, unfortunately, many people were very ignorant about.

It has moved on to the idea of Journalism in the Americas. You cannot talk about Latinos in this country without understanding the reality of the history and culture of all our very diverse countries and the connections between them. We wanted to see not only more coverage of Latin America, but also a different kind of coverage, where it wasn't just reporters from the North going to Latin America, but a south-to-north focus as well. We wanted to hear the voices of Latin Americans – journalists, reporters, people on the street, etc.

This process, making the connections to Latin American journalists, has to be done. Last year, I was able to spend time abroad in Guatemala working with local radio stations. I saw the vibrancy that radio has in all these countries. Radio reaches places that nobody else reaches, first of all, because of the high rate of illiteracy. Second of all, if you live in Guatemala or Bolivia, the newspapers are printed in the capital, and they're printed in Spanish. Radio tells you your story in your language. It is local. It speaks to your needs. You feel a connection to it.

We call LATINO USA a bridge. It tries to bridge different cultures. It provides a bridge between different Latino ethnic groups in this country, and between Latinos and non-Latinos. Latinos in this country are the natural bridge to Latin America. I urge for there to be a recognition of a real opportunity here to put our heads together, because people are doing wonderful things, the need is tremendous, and it's important that we all work together.

María Martin's career spans 25 years in pioneering Latino programming in public radio. She is the founding producer of LATINO USA, NPR's award-winning Radio Journal of News and Culture, based at the University of Texas at Austin. Prior to joining LATINO USA, Martin worked as an editor at National Public Radio's national desk, where she was responsible for assigning and editing reports from staff and freelance reporters for All Things Considered and Morning Edition. She has reported widely from Latin America, and is involved in a number of broadcast journalism training projects in Bolivia, Guatemala, and Uruguay. She is a Fulbright scholar and the recipient of over two dozen awards for her reporting, including the Robert F. Kennedy Memorial Journalism Award for her coverage of torture in Guatemala.

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Maria Mann

IAPA/Knight Foundation Workshops for Advanced Photojournalism

It is the power and the work of photojournalism to explain mankind to mankind. It is the challenge of photojournalists to communicate through images which, when married to words, can educate, inform, and make us feel.

But if photojournalism fails to do that, it engenders indifference. It's always been my mission to use photography to bring about change - whether on a small or grand scale - by making the reader feel something, anything, but indifference. Images should serve as an invitation to the reader, and say, "Look at me. Stay a few seconds. See what it is I'm trying to tell you. Do you want to understand more? Read the words. Do you want to understand more? Go back to the photographs."

For too long, photographs have served as perfunctory hole-fillers in Latin American newspapers. News photography is overlooked in these countries because it is mediocre, and it is mediocre because it is overlooked. The Inter American Press Association, through its Knight Foundation Workshops for Advanced Photojournalism, hopes to break that cycle.

So far, we have had results. The question is: are there talented photographers in Latin America? And the answer is yes. The IAPA, with help from the University of Miami, offered its second photojournalism workshop for a week in July 2002. While there, professional photojournalists from 11 Latin American countries worked with editors from North America and Latin America to hone their skills in an environment far from the typical, overworked newsroom.

For the average newspaper photographer, reality usually consists of five to seven assignments per day, with no time to think about the assignment. At our workshops, photographers have time to think. We teach them how to see and to think. We discuss ethics and work structure, and we discuss solutions to problems. Instructors go through all of the photographers' frames, telling them what they've done well, and where they've failed to communicate and connect.

These are small stories that were self-initiated, by students who had come in cold from outside the area. When married with words that explain what is going on behind the photos, the photos are imminently publishable. The subjects are all over the ballpark. Among the recent highlights were photos of street children in Argentina - opening doors for taxi passengers and holding each other at the end of the day; the daily lives of the residents of an inner-city mission; and the everyday habits of a local drag queen.

I have to tell you that the learning curve was tremendous. The response was overwhelming. The appreciation really cannot be underestimated.

Although several art galleries in Miami are exhibiting some of the final work, and we plan to publish a book of the photos, our goal is to have a commitment from the newspapers that these photographers represent to publish the photos that they produce.

But the educational process that unfolded in Miami shouldn't stop with working journalists. It must also span into the higher ranks of newspapers, by teaching the same appreciation of photography and advanced photojournalistic techniques to photography editors, managing editors, and even further up the chain of command. There's a wall that needs to come down, and we would love to be given that hammer.

Maria Mann is the editorial coordinator for the Inter American Press Association/Knight Foundation photojournalism workshops in Latin America. Until recently, Mann was director of photography for Agence France-Presse for North America, which she joined in 1984. She was instrumental in establishing photojournalism operations throughout North and South America. She also served as international editor in chief in Paris for AFP. Mann began her career at United Press International's world headquarters in 1970. She regularly addresses international symposiums on photojournalism ethics.



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Ricardo Trotti

Inter American Press Association

In 1995, the IAPA decided to initiate work dealing with the punishment of crimes against journalists. We wanted to demonstrate the impunity of those who committed these crimes, as well as the consequences of the self-censorship journalists experienced as a result.

We first studied the leading cases of such violence against journalists, and managed to get the cases brought to the Inter-American Human Rights Commission. We want to bring these cases to the attention of the judiciary, for one of the only ways of dissuading these cases is to have a response.

We've had some success with this effort, and I believe the strength of our group lies in the number and commitment of our membership. This, together with bold objectives and goals, is what makes it possible for all our various missions to be achieved.

These missions are numerous and diverse. We monitor the status of press freedom in Latin America, through visits to Venezuela, Colombia, the Dominican Republic, and other countries in the region. We've identified other niche activities to independently work on besides our Impunity project, but we also want to collaborate with other organizations on these efforts.

So we've lobbied for additional access to information. And we've assisted groups like the World Press Freedom Committee, which are trying to preserve journalistic freedoms in the information age. We've worked with the Freedom Forum to put the IAPA's library online. This contains information and links to scholarships and grants available for journalists from the United States to study in Latin America, and vice versa. We're involved in the accreditation process for journalism schools in Lima, Santiago, and other Latin American cities. In this last case, we think it's important to make the curriculum reflect more closely what journalists truly experience on the job.

During all of these efforts we've discovered another mission for our organization, and all journalism organizations. Beyond the need to protect journalists, train journalists, and simply do our own work as journalists, journalism organizations have to increase awareness of their work and explain their role in society to the rest of society. Journalists know how to carry out investigative work and how to fight for freedom of the press, but we don't know how to promote ourselves. We don't know how to get our work known, and how to carry out the work of cases that are nearly forgotten.

Ask yourselves this: do ordinary citizens understand the work of journalists and the importance of journalists to democracy? Do they support the work of journalists? We plan a training initiative for this new phase of our efforts, which will reach out to these citizens.

To do this, we are starting a promotional campaign through newspapers about our efforts to end impunity. We will publish online reports on the assassination of journalists, and we'll ask people to participate in campaigns to fight impunity, through letters and Internet campaigns. To gain the understanding and support of citizens, we must continue to investigate and publish, but also promote.

Ricardo Trotti is Coordinator of the Press Freedom Program and director of the Press Institute of the Inter American Press Association, and director of the "Unpunished Crimes against Journalists" project. He was managing editor of El Liberal, Santiago del Estero, Argentina, and author of several publications, among them the book The Painful Freedom of the Press: Searching for the Lost Ethics. He received the 1991 IAPA Grand Prize Award on Freedom of the Press and in three consecutive years he received the national press freedom award ADEPA/Clarín in Argentina. He is an instructor on ethics and press freedom issues.

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Ricardo Uceda

Press and Society Institute (IPYS)

Instituto Prensa y Sociedad evolved in an atypical fashion, after independent journalists started the organization in Peru in 1993 as a way to defend us from Alberto Fujimori and Vladimir Montesinos. We wanted to find a way to promote independent journalism and support those journalists who received little publicity.

Most journalists supported the coup when it occurred in 1992 and didn't support Peru's democratic institutions. From 1993 to 2000, I worked with four assistants and one fundraiser. We decided not to try to compete with journalistic organizations, but to collaborate with any willing and experienced journalists and lawyers interested in helping us.

After the fall of Fujimori and Montesinos in 2000, the obstacles facing journalists changed from attacks on the press to corruption. By 2001 commercial interests had become more powerful than the news, as seen in the lack of attention paid to regional and provincial news.

But most journalists and journalism organizations gave other issues higher priority. Debate was focused on freedom of the press, rather than the role of the press. Advocates emphasized legal issues, insult laws, and access to information while treating self-censorship and conflicts of interest lightly.

In 2001 we redefined the mission of IPYS, and decided to get involved in investigative journalism. There was a lack of study on the impact and practice of investigative journalism in Latin America. Most texts on the subject had an academic focus, rather than case study research on investigative reporters and their stories. Through this specific study we hoped to open up debate on the role of the media.

This project has several elements. We have our own correspondents in seven Latin American countries, including Chile, Argentina, and Venezuela, who write weekly articles for our bulletin. We've launched an annual prize competition, sponsored by Transparency International, that honors the best investigative journalism.

Our main work and idea behind this project is to study how investigations are being done, and what we can learn from them. We want to set up a research database with case studies of investigative journalism. With this we can establish the methods and results of each investigation – sources, techniques, costs, resources available and required, what problem the investigation tried to solve, and what impact the investigation had.

In Peru, we've already studied 10 investigations and come to several conclusions. There is a need for editorial leadership in investigative projects, and for additional training of journalists. Teamwork, field research, document research, and the occasional "Deep Throat" type of source are also important criteria for these investigations.

With this and additional research, we've realized that it's possible to study investigative journalism. Our analysts have found some indicators to study and help understand the methodology of investigative journalism.

We plan to continue this study as a unique contribution to the development of the free press in Latin America. IPYS doesn't want to train journalists. We want to promote issues for debate among Latin America's investigative journalists, on the issues that we find important.

Ricardo Uceda, is director of Instituto Prensa y Sociedad (Press and Society Institute), an association founded by Peruvian journalists to defend journalism, promote press freedom, and strengthen the media's role in the development of democracy in Peru. He is one of Peru's most renowned investigative journalists, and is best known for his reporting on government corruption and the military's abuse of human rights. Under his editorship, the newsweekly Sí implicated military officers in the 1991 massacre of 15 people in the Barrios Altos district of the capital, Lima, and revealed the existence of a clandestine grave containing the bodies of nine college students and their professor who had been abducted by the army. Refusing to reveal his sources, Uceda became the focus of legal actions, physical threats and censorship. In 1994 he left Sí to found the Investigative Unit of El Comercio, Peru's oldest and most prestigious daily.



John Ullmann

World Press Institute

It's a pleasure and an honor to be with so many people who have given up so much time of their life to helping people they don't know – day after day, and week after week, and month after month, and in many cases year after year – for completely altruistic reasons. I know you don't make a dime off of it, and if you do, we have to have another seminar.

The whole idea is that you want to help colleagues function in a democracy, because we're under attack, in the United States, and everywhere else in the world, and we're losing this battle every day, all over the world. It's just an honor to be with you people, who are doing God's work.

WPI is 42 years old, we have 470 alumni in 93 countries. We bring journalists to the United States, not for a couple of weeks in one place, but for four months, and we show them around the country, usually 15 or 16 places. We see our best practices, and we analyze our worst practices. Journalists from the U.S. would kill to get the same kind of access. For example, in Atlanta they spend a day in the penitentiary, four hours with the CDC, four hours with CNN, and they get a briefing from a Georgia Tech professor about the history of the South.



The journalists say it's an epiphany in their lives, both personally and professionally. One of our journalists, from Argentina, went on to win a Pulitzer prize in Miami. We have a journalist in China who was written about by the Wall Street Journal and the Washington Post. She's the editor of a business magazine that's doing real investigative reporting, and the government has allowed them to continue. Most are still in journalism, and they're slugging away everyday.

I agree completely that wherever we go, there's a tremendous thirst for our colleagues to share their information. Nobody comes reluctantly to our table, or to your table. Our work will not be done in our lifetime. We do not overlap to the point where people don't need us when we show up.

We have a network, the WPI network, that has 120 journalists in 50 countries who have agreed to help other reporters looking for sources in their country. In some cases they're available for research, or freelancing, but mostly they've agreed to help journalists from other countries. We want to double that. It's the fundamental premise of IRE-type organizations – journalists helping one another. We're also putting together our first book, with an international directory where journalists can go to get data about their own countries if they can't get the data in their own country.

I wish all of this energy was captured so that publishers could see all the work done to train their people for free! We have to figure out a way to do that. These publishers owe you a great deal, and it's about time they gave back. The reason why they haven't is because they haven't heard from you – the best ambassadors of this, next to their own journalists.

Here's the thing, my final observation. You are never, ever alone. The greatest thing that ever happened in your lives was when you realized you could take advantage of the people around you to help you do your job better. Why shouldn't you learn from Africa? Why shouldn't you learn from Europe? Why shouldn't you learn from Asia? Who's going to educate us, and who's going to broaden our view so we can do it better? These meetings rejuvenate us, they have the potential to make us do our jobs better, and they're the best single thing that's happened in my life since I got into this work.

John Ullmann is executive director of The World Press Institute (WPI), a four-month fellowship program for non-U.S. journalists. He is a former assistant managing editor for projects at the Star Tribune in Minneapolis. Projects he supervised during his six years won more than four dozen awards, including the 1990 Pulitzer Prize for investigative reporting. Previously, he was executive director of Investigative Reporters and Editors (IRE) and started most of its programs, including its journal and electronic library.

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Austin Forum on Journalism in the Americas 2003

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