

**Application for 2012 Innovations in Teaching Using Technology Grant:
Instructional Technology and Faculty Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning**

Title: Mobile Journalism Project

Courses Involved: News Reporting I, Online Journalism I, and Online Journalism II

Applicants: Mark Berkey-Gerard, Assistant Professor of Journalism, and Dr. Dianne Garyantes, Assistant Professor of Journalism

Objective:

Smartphones and media tablets present significant technical innovations for the news industry. Forty-four percent of adults in the U.S. own a smartphone and 18% use a media tablet, according to a 2012 study by the Pew Research Center. Younger audiences increasingly use mobile devices to get news; two-thirds of media consumers ages 18-34 use mobile media devices to access news at least 5 hours per week, according to another recent study. In addition, mobile devices are powerful reporting tools for capturing high quality photos, audio, video and publishing information online instantaneously.

To reach digital audiences, future journalists must understand how to produce news for a variety of mobile devices. At Rowan University, an increasing number of journalism students own smartphones and tablets, but we have observed that few have integrated the devices into their academic studies, reporting assignments, or news consumption habits. The mobile journalism project is designed to train Rowan University journalism students to use smartphones and tablets to become more sophisticated, versatile and innovative news consumers and producers.

The Mobile Journalism Project has four objectives:

- 1.) Students will study and implement best practices for delivering news for a variety of mobile devices, in particular how to format headlines, text news stories, and multimedia for websites, phones, tablets and apps.
- 2.) Students will use smartphones for a series of multimedia reporting assignments including gathering photographs, audio, video and live blogging/streaming events.
- 3.) Instructors and students will evaluate smartphone hardware and a series of news reporting apps and create a practical “mobile journalism guide” for student reporters.
- 4.) Instructors will develop assignments and tutorials that can be used by other instructors, courses, and departments as well as student-run media at Rowan University. In addition, instructors will hold training sessions for members of student media organizations like *The Whit* and WGLS.

The project will be instituted across three, 300-level journalism courses: News Reporting I, Online Journalism I, and Online Journalism II.

Students and instructors will use their own smartphones and use selected apps as part of their course work. Of course, not all students have smartphones, but informal surveys of our classes found that more than half of the students do own an iPhone or Android phone, a sufficient number to assign group projects.

Funding from the Innovations in Teaching Using Technology Grant will be used to purchase additional tripods, microphone adapters, and software to improve the quality of the photos, audio, and video collected from these devices. This is equipment students are not likely to purchase themselves and is not currently in the department's modest budget, which totals \$8,000 a year. In addition, we are requesting the purchase of an iPad for classroom demonstrations and exercises. All equipment will be housed in the Journalism Department equipment room and available for instructor and student use.

Description of Specific Innovation:

Beginning in the Fall 2012 semester, Professor Berkey-Gerard and Dr. Garyantes will produce a series of assignments that integrate mobile news and reporting into three courses: News Reporting I, Online Journalism I, and Online Journalism II.

In News Reporting I, students practice fundamental reporting and writing skills. They learn Associated Press style and write basic stories that deal with accidents, obituaries, construction, statistics, speeches, interviews and polls. As part of this course, students will study how news stories are formatted in different ways for print, online, and mobile platforms and learn to structure and format news stories for each. In Fall 2012, students will use smartphones to shoot photos and, potentially, videos for news stories related to campus and off-campus events. One assignment will have students using their smartphones to interview and shoot visuals of students commenting on the upcoming presidential election, while another assignment will focus on coverage of the potential merger of Rowan University and the Rutgers University-Camden campus.

In Online Journalism I, students focus on basic multimedia reporting. Students will use smartphones to photograph events, create slide shows, gather and edit audio, and shoot video. In addition, students will use micro reporting and live streaming apps (ie Twitter, CoverItLive, LiveStream) to cover events as they happen. These assignments will be posted online on topical blogs.

In Online Journalism II, students do more advanced multimedia production and produce an online publication called NJSouthbound.com. Students are responsible for every aspect of the website including reporting, production, design and promotion. Students will use smartphones to create content for selected multimedia news pages. In addition, in the past the website has only been formatted for web browsers. Beginning in Fall 2012, the website will be created in a format that adapts to different screen sizes, including iPhones, iPads and other mobile devices.

In all three courses, students will be asked to evaluate smartphone hardware and news reporting apps and create a practical guide for future assignments and students.

Instructors will develop sample assignments and tutorials to share with other instructors, courses and departments as well as student-run media at Rowan University. Instructors will also conduct mobile reporting training sessions for members of student media organizations.

Scalability and Adaptability:

The lessons learned from the Mobile Journalism Project can be adapted to numerous courses in the College of Communication or any course where students use smartphones or media tablets to gather photos, audio, or video or publish information online from a mobile device.

These experiences will also provide practical training and real-life experience for students who, in addition to taking these courses, produce *The Whit* newspaper and website and programming for Rowan Television Network and WGLS.

With start-up funding for the Mobile Journalism Project, the Journalism Department will be able to integrate mobile devices into our curriculum. We expect this to be a long-running initiative that continues to grow and become more useful as more and more students purchase smartphones and media tablets.

Instructional Technology Support:

In developing this proposal and equipment request, we consulted the Mobile Journalism Reporting Tools Guide assembled by the The Reynolds Journalism Institute at the University of Missouri (See <http://www.rjionline.org/news/mobile-journalism-reporting-tools-guide>) We may also seek the expertise of Instructional Technology support to ensure that our purchases are compatible with both iPhone and Android phones and other hardware and software that we currently use in the classroom.

Plans for Evaluating and Sustaining Innovation:

The project will be assessed using several tools during and at the end of the semester:

1. Instructor feedback
2. Student feedback
3. Student evaluation of tools and technology
4. Instructor evaluation of teaching tools and technology

Instructor Feedback – When student assignments are graded, the instructors will provide feedback on the quality of news content created, including writing for specific devices as well as the photographs, audio, and video.

Student Feedback – Throughout the semester, students will have opportunities to discuss the project and equipment in the classroom, e-mails and message boards.

Student evaluation of tools and technology – After completing a reporting assignment or using a new application or hardware, students will be asked to review the equipment or application and

share tips for future use. This will help instructors identify challenges of particular technologies and create tutorials.

Instructor evaluation of teaching tools and technology – Since the project involves two instructors and students in three courses, Professor Berkey-Gerard and Garyantes will do their own assessment of the challenges and success associated with various tools and technology. This information will provide guidance for other instructors, who may do similar projects in the future.

Budget:

The instructors will use funding from the grant to purchase new equipment. This equipment will be housed in the Journalism Department equipment room and available for instructor and student check out. The request totals \$1,476, which does not include taxes or shipping. (See budget on next page.)

We are requesting funding for the following items:

Flexible Tripods - It is difficult to hold a mobile phone steady, especially when shooting video or live streaming an event. The Joby Gorillamobile Flexible Tripod is a gripping tripod that can be attached on almost any surface and works with any mobile device. (See product information at <http://joby.com/gorillamobile/3g/>)

External microphone and headphone adaptors – To improve the sound recording quality of a mobile phone, the Vericorder XLR Adapter Cable connects a professional XLR microphone to the headset jack of the iPhone or smart phone. Provides separate headphone output for monitoring the playback levels of the recording. (See product information at <http://store.zacuto.com/zgrip-iphone-jr..html>)

Optimized WordPress Theme from Graph Paper Press – For the Online Journalism II class project website, we will purchase a theme that adapts to different screen sizes so that the website will work for iPhones, iPads and other mobile devices. Graph Paper Press WordPress Themes are specifically built for multimedia presentation, and the department has great success with them in the past. This subscription provides access to 32 themes that can be used for multiple classes. (See product information at <http://graphpaperpress.com/themes/>)

iPad 4G – For use for classroom demonstrations and exercises using news apps and for the production of Online Journalism II website tablet version, we will purchase an iPad. (See product information at http://store.apple.com/us/browse/home/shop_ipad/family/ipad)

iPad cover – A polyurethane Smart Cover provides added protection for the iPad and a foldable stand for reading, typing, and watching video. (See product information at http://store.apple.com/us/product/IPAD_SMART_CASE_POLY-114501)

iPhone/iPad VGA Adapter – Connects iPad or iPhone 4 to an external projector for video mirroring for class demonstrations. (See product information at

<http://store.apple.com/us/product/MC552ZM/B>)

Grant Application Budget:

Item	Cost	Number	Total Cost
Flexible Tripod	\$30	10	\$300
Vericorder XLR Adapter Cable	\$60	5	\$300
Graph Paper Press Website Theme	\$299	1	\$299
iPad (16GB)	\$499	1	\$499
iPad cover	\$39	1	\$49
iPhone/iPad VGA adapter	\$29	1	\$29
TOTAL			\$1,476