A NEW ERA OF JPIC

KELLY CHERNIN, CODY HAYS, AND JOSEPH RADICE
Editors’ Essay: A New Era of JPIC

Kelly Chernin, Cody Hays, Joseph Radice

Appalachian State University, Marketing Mission, University of Florida

A year has passed, and much like the world we seek to change, the Journal of Public Interest Communications has also evolved. We would first like to introduce you to our new co-editors. Kelly Chernin, Editor of Academic Research, is an Assistant Professor at Appalachian State University’s Department of Communication. Kelly’s primary research focuses are the aftermath of social movements, specifically Hong Kong’s pro-democracy movement, public interest communications, and science communications. Cody Hays, Editor of Practitioner Reports, is the Founder and CEO of Marketing Mission. Cody’s work in nonprofit marketing involves helping busy nonprofit founders, executive directors, and fundraisers maximize their marketing and streamline their time. Joseph Radice, Managing Editor, is a linguist and researches LGBTQ+ identity construction, language use, and the dynamics of social power therein. Together, we look forward to ushering in a new era of JPIC content.

While JPIC may have a new(ish) editorial team,1 we remain committed to the original goal of the journal established by Linda Hon and Brigitta Brunner. In Brigitta’s farewell essay, she thanked many individuals who have helped make our work at the journal possible, including Lauren Griffin and Jasper Fessmann. We are honored to continue the tradition started by our forerunners, making JPIC a space where scholars, activists, and practitioners are able to share their ideas and research.

*Please send correspondence about this article to Kelly Chernin, Department of Communication, Appalachian State University. E-mail: cherninka@appstate.edu.

Copyright 2023 Chernin, Hays, & Radice. This work is published under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial 4.0 (CC BY-NC 4.0) International License.

1 You will likely recognize a few familiar names on the editorial team: Kelly Chernin and Joseph Radice. Kelly served as Managing Editor from 2017-2019 and has since served on the JPIC review board. Joseph Radice has been the Managing Editor since 2019.
When the first issue was published in 2017, the contributors discussed the importance of building the field, conceptual foundations, and the importance of scholarship. They also discussed more nuanced considerations for the field, such as how PIC could promote community engagement and civic professionalism, the role of the public interest in public diplomacy, connections between PIC and social psychology, and how social media could be leveraged to promote climate change initiatives. We have come a long way since 2017, publishing articles about healthcare, racial justice, and corporate social advocacy along the way. We will continue the journal’s mission to expand the empirical and theoretical underpinnings of public interest communications. Now that we have established ourselves as a respectable research-driven journal, thanks to our contributors and the hard work of those listed above, we want to also render this space more inclusive to the communicators, practitioners, and activists our research has long sought to support.

PIC is a growing academic discipline that transcends the institution. Our journal is open-access and interdisciplinary because we believe that everyone should have access to sound research, thought-provoking case studies, and practical campaign strategies to drive sustained social change. Increasingly, there are more spaces where academics can publish for a general audience, but this new iteration of *JPIC* aims to foster collaboration between academics and practitioners to a greater extent. While our publication has always welcomed practitioners to publish with us, our goal for the next phase of the journal is to encourage more practitioner perspectives and activist participation.

As such, this issue showcases the work of practitioners. We brought back the Practitioner Q & A, first introduced in volume 1, issue 2. In this issue, Maria Bryan of Maria Bryan Creative considers how to incorporate trauma-informed strategies into copywriting work. Bryan also discusses other issues related to cross-cultural communications. This issue also includes the first of our peer-reviewed Practitioner Perspectives (a new series of practitioner case studies) written by Carter Dougherty, Communications Director of Americans for Financial Reform. Dougherty details the strategies utilized by various public-interest groups, including his own, to help Dr. Lisa Cook get confirmed to the Federal Reserve Board of Governors—the first Black woman ever to hold this position. Our final piece is a review by Corinne Futch of the book *Prisms of the People: Power & Organizing in Twenty-First-Century America*.

We are also excited to announce that, by July 2023, *JPIC* will be listed in Scopus, Elsevier's abstract and citation database of peer-reviewed literature. Why are we cheering about this? It is big news for the journal because it means that our content will now be more widely available and searchable on a global scale.

As we nurture and grow *JPIC*, we are set to bolster our outreach and community-building efforts significantly. We are particularly excited about an upcoming centerpiece of our efforts—a comprehensive, open-access, user-friendly online database of our articles. This new online database will transform the way our readers interact with our content and help you to quickly find the content that best suits your needs.
For each published article, we will provide succinct summaries and key takeaways, carefully simplified for your convenience to help you to grasp the essence of our research articles. A key feature of our database will be an intuitive categorization system: you will be able to navigate and find the research articles and case studies that are most relevant to your industry with ease. Whether you're seeking information on a specific topic, looking to understand a complex communications framework, or simply exploring out of curiosity, our categorized database will be your go-to resource.

In line with our commitment to facilitating collaboration, we will also spotlight partnerships between researchers and practitioners who focus on similar topics. These collaborations aim to unite the rigor of academic research with the practical experience of those on the ground, creating a rich tapestry of insights that can help drive sustained social change. We believe that this database will be a transformative tool, promoting the exchange of ideas and making our research more accessible than ever. Keep an eye out for its launch—we cannot wait to share it with you.

We look forward to publishing a mix of peer-reviewed academic research and practitioner perspectives moving forward. We hope you enjoy this first issue bridging the gap between practitioners and academics. In the coming issues, we seek to include content that represents the full spectrum of everyone who contributes to growing public interest communications as a field.

Lastly, we would like to dedicate this issue to Rakeem Robinson, an incredible budding PIC scholar who passed away October 25, 2022. Rakeem embodied the ideals of PIC; his research focused on minority narratives surrounding mental health in addition to emphasizing the intersectional strategies of the Black Lives Matter movement. Rakeem will be missed as a member of the PIC community, but he will not be forgotten.
I have hope that I will achieve something more valuable than I can comprehend and that I can help someone else grow.

– Rakeem Robinson
In Memoriam: Rakeem Robinson

It is with profound sadness and a deep sense of loss that we remember and honor Rakeem Robinson, a rising star in the field of PIC who left us all too soon. Rakeem embodied the spirit of PIC. His intellectual curiosity, passion for social justice, and relentless pursuit of truth were evident in every aspect of his work. His research, which focused on minority narratives surrounding mental health and the intersectional strategies of the Black Lives Matter movement, broke new ground and shed light on areas of our field that had previously been underexplored.

Rakeem had an innate ability to connect with people, empathize with their experiences, and weave these narratives into his work. He was not just a scholar; he was a storyteller, using his research to give voice to those who had often been unheard. His work was not just about promoting understanding; it was about promoting empathy, compassion, and change.

His passing leaves an irreplaceable void in our community. However, his influence continues to resonate in the work we do. Rakeem was a beacon of hope and inspiration, a powerful reminder of what we, as public interest communicators, can achieve when we strive to make the world a better place. His legacy will continue to motivate and guide us as we move forward.

Rakeem's loss is deeply felt, but he is far from forgotten. His contributions to the field of PIC will continue to inspire scholars, activists, and practitioners alike. His spirit will live on in the research we conduct, in the conversations we have, and in the change we strive to create.

Rakeem Robinson, we remember you not just as an exceptional scholar, but as a compassionate advocate and a cherished member of our community. Your absence is keenly felt, but your impact is indelible. Rest in peace and know that your work continues to inspire and drive us forward.