



# Journal of Public Interest Communications

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## Editor's Essay

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Being the editor of the *Journal of Public Interest Communications* is exciting. Not only is it exciting to be an editor at the beginning stages of a journal because there is so much to learn and so many directions in which to be pulled, but also because we are on the edge of better understanding this realm of communications, called public interest communications. This first issue of the second volume is full of diversity—diversity of topics, diversity of methods, diversity of thoughts, and diversity of context. I believe this somewhat disconnected connection is an important step forward as we determine just what public interest communications is.

For a field to grow, there has to be a range of ideas and concepts. Otherwise we are just in an echo chamber talking among ourselves about the same issues and using the same theories. Diversity of thoughts, application, and theory allows the field to grow and mature. It is interesting to see the realms to which public interest communications can be applied. It is interesting to read the words of scholars beyond the United States and to see how they are interpreting public interest communications. It is interesting to see the viewpoints, assumptions, and challenges this new field brings to practitioners and academics alike. And, I believe this issue does all these things and more.

Although an unlikely place to find inspiration, I found the concept of mirrors, windows, and sliding glass doors while reading a Scholastic Book Fair blog. This piece led me to the work of Bishop (1990) and Tschida, Ryan, and Ticknor (2014) in children's literature. These scholars talk about diversity in children's literature in terms of mirrors, windows, and sliding glass doors, and I believe these concepts can be adapted to ruminate upon the status of public interest communications as evidenced by the research published in this issue.

*\* Please send correspondences about this article to Brigitta Brunner, School of Communication & Journalism, E-mail: [brunnbr@auburn.edu](mailto:brunnbr@auburn.edu). Copyright Brunner 2018. This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 3.0 United States License. To view a copy of this license, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/3.0/us/> or send a letter to Creative Commons, PO Box 1866 Mountain View, CA 94042, USA.*

Mirrors reflect back to show us our experiences. I believe these manuscripts reflect back what public interest communications is and help establish the field's identity. If people reading this issue are questioning whether or not their research fits within the definitions of public interest communications, they may see an article addressing a similar topic or question. Having viewed this published piece, readers will see a validation for their research ideas. This validation will then help readers to connect more strongly to the field.

However, we don't want readers to think the topics covered in this, or any, issue of *JPIC* are the only ones relevant to public interest communications. Doing so will eventually lead to exclusion. This situation is when windows become important. Windows allow readers to see beyond their own research. They are able to see the research of others and how these additional topics help build the narrative of what public interest communications is. When readers are looking out their windows rather than introspectively looking into their mirrors, they will see the additional areas to which others are applying principles of public interest communications. Readers may also see ways to expand their own lines of research. Windows, therefore, help us to offer solutions to the unresolved issues in this discipline and to build the field by extension. Such growth will also help us to better understand public interest communications' connection to other areas of and fields within the large umbrella of communications. Finally, sliding glass doors allow readers to imagine how they can open the door and join the conversation. The sliding glass door allows readers to envision how they can add to our knowledge of public interest communications.

I invite you to read the manuscripts in this issue and determine what the mirror is reflecting back, what the window allows you to view, and to find ways that you can open the sliding glass door to imagine how you, too, can be part of creating public interest communications' literature and theory.

## References

- Bishop, R. S. (1990). Mirrors, windows, and sliding glass doors. *Perspectives: Choosing and Using Books for the Classroom*. 6(3), ix-xi.
- Tschida, C. M., Ryan, C. L. & Ticknor, A. S. (2014). Building on windows and mirrors. *Journal of Children's Literature*, 40(1), 28-39.