



6/30/99

Promotion & Tenure Committee
William Allen White School of Journalism & Mass Communications
University of Kansas
Lawrence, KS 66045

Esteemed Committee Members

I am writing at the request of Mike Cuenca to explain the import and prestige of the Annual AEJMC Web Design Competition. I am currently the director of the Competition. The Competition is sponsored by the Communication, Technology & Policy and Visual Communication Divisions of AEJMC. Winners of the competition are asked to present their web sites at a research panel presentation during the annual conference. The co-sponsoring divisions want this presentation to carry similar weight and prestige (especially with regard to promotion and tenure) as presenting a more traditional peer-reviewed competitive research paper. The competition is designed to run in a similar manner in that we attempt to maintain the integrity of the peer-review process. This has been modified to some degree to make concessions to the nature of the new technology the Competition showcases. The competition has grown every year since its inception and this year the number of entries nearly tripled and the quality of the entries has risen dramatically as well. We had 83 total entries across four categories. Each of those entries was evaluated by four separate anonymous reviewers. The sites chosen for presentation at the annual conference were selected based on criteria that included appropriateness for the chosen audience(s), design elements including graphic design, use of images, sound as well as text, navigation and information design issues. I am confident that the competition has a review process that is as rigorous and critical as any peer-reviewed paper competition.

I say this in part because I am proud of a rigorous process that I hope I have helped mold but also to explain the import of a "mere" Honorable Mention. Professor Cuenca's submission came literally within a hair's-breadth of winning top honors in the category. This is significant when you realize that



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due to the time constraints imposed by the logistics of the annual conference the six sites the reviewers chose for presentation at the conference would represent a 7% acceptance rate. Given the number of submissions and the quality of many of those submissions, the reviewers felt it necessary, even obligatory to acknowledge in some way several additional sites that were not chosen for presentation. This is why Professor Cuenca's site "only" garnered an Honorable Mention. Even with the "winners" and the Honorable Mentions combined these sites still represent only a 25% acceptance rate - significantly lower than many peer-reviewed paper competitions. I urge you to consider this work and this Honorable Mention as an acknowledgment of a significant contribution to our knowledge of this emerging form of mediated communication.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Mark Giese'.

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