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(BW)(NY-ONA) Online News Association Names Finberg, Stone to Direct Online Journalism Study; ONA Project to Examine Key Issues of Journalistic Standards for Online News Organizations

Business Editors

NEW YORK--(BUSINESS WIRE)--Feb. 5, 2001--The Online News Association (www.journalists.org) announced that it has retained Howard Finberg, president of Digital Futurist Consultancy, and Martha Stone, president of Whole Media Consulting, to direct a study on the credibility of and values for online journalism.

ONA's Web Credibility Study, for which it was awarded \$225,000 from the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation (www.knightfoundation.org), is studying the impact of technology and the Internet on the gathering and dissemination of news. The Knight Foundation makes national grants in journalism, education and arts and culture.

"As digital media become a common news resource, it is important that the ONA address the issues that pertain to online journalists," said Martha Stone, co-director, Online News Association Web Credibility Study. "Howard and I look forward to discussing these issues with our peers in an effort to define appropriate guidelines for online news."

The study will work to develop and promote principles and guidelines for online journalism focusing on proper relationships between editorial content, advertising and e-commerce; the development of ethical standards and avoidance of conflicts of interest; and appropriate use of hyperlinking in a journalistic environment.

Stone and Finberg will direct the yearlong project to study how news organizations are balancing the needs of advertisers -- to harness the Internet's ability to link information -- with the need for journalistic credibility. The research includes interviews with journalists, academics, lawyers, marketers, and technologists discussing setting guidelines for online journalism. This feedback will be compiled into a report with recommendations for enforcement of principles and guidelines to set a standard for online news integrity.

"The results generated from ONA panel discussions and research will provide a foundation for the ongoing discussions regarding credibility in this very new medium. It is a chance to help shape solid journalistic practices early," said Howard Finberg, co-director, Online News Association Standards Project. "Martha and I are honored that we were chosen to manage this crucial project."

"We're lucky to have, in Howard and Martha, two such outstanding thinkers and doers in the field of online journalism," said Rich Jaroslovsky, president of ONA and managing editor of The Wall Street Journal Online. "We feel that they - and ONA - can make a major contribution toward seeing online news develop in a way that is consistent with the highest principles of journalism."

ABOUT THE ONLINE NEWS ASSOCIATION

The Online News Association is an association composed largely of professional online journalists. Though not yet two years old, the Association has more than 450 professional members, that is, members whose principal livelihood involves gathering or producing news for online presentation. The membership includes news writers, producers, designers, editors, photographers and others who produce news for the Internet or other digital delivery systems, as well as academic members and others interested in the development of online journalism. ONA also, in partnership with Columbia University,

administers the prestigious Online Journalism Awards.

ABOUT THE JOHN S. AND JAMES L. KNIGHT FOUNDATION

Established in 1950, the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation makes national grants in journalism, education and arts and culture. Its fourth program, community initiatives, is concentrated in 26 communities where the Knight brothers published newspapers, but the Foundation is wholly separate from and independent of those newspapers.

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