**Exploring Digital Innovations and Bridging Perceptive Divides: A Textual Analysis of HIV Community Photos as Ritual Performance**

In 2007, the Center for Disease Control implemented its CDC 2.0 campaign, utilizing social media as technologically and culturally innovative means to disseminate AIDS/HIV information. One element of the campaign was commemoration of World AIDS Day in December, 2009, whereby HIV community members were invited to upload pictures of themselves onto the online photo-sharing community, Flickr. Each photograph featured one or more people holding hand-written placards verbalizing personal perspectives regarding HIV.  More than eight hundred photographs by 118 photographers were submitted. This study is a textual analysis of both the graphic and verbal dimensions of the photographs as merging forms of discourse within the larger context of the 2.0 campaign. Rather than take a “transmissional” perspective of the photographs as messages sent to a wider audience, Flickr images are examined from the “ritual” perspective argued most notably by anthropologist, Clifford Geertz and cultural studies scholars, James W. Carey and Michelle M. Strano.  The methodology is an adaptation of Katherine Frith’s method of textual analysis through which implicit patterns of communal maintenance – and sometimes, transgression – are revealed, as demonstrated through the performative interplay between visual and verbal messages. From there, those ritual communicative patterns are contrasted with the more overtly transmissional assumptions present in the CDC promotional literature regarding the utility of social media. The study concludes that Flickr photographers and CDC organizers are at times at cross purposes in their assumptions about the preferred forms of performative rituals made possible by social media – CDC’s preferred reading being that of an outward looking sociality performance, whereas the photographers (and their subjects) tend to lean toward an inward, enculturation function of the medium. In short, through visual and verbal analysis, this study focuses on how the Flickr element of the CDC 2.0 campaign symbolically helps reaffirm and reproduce the HIV community experience and make sense of reality within, and sometimes in contrast to, the preferred assumptions of the CDC. Results of this analysis can be useful in development of future health campaigns using social media.