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The Pulitzer Prize Board Eases Eligibility for Online-Only Entries

New York, Dec. 2, 2009 – The eligibility rules for the Pulitzer Prizes in journalism have been revised, opening the door wider to entries from text-based online-only newspapers and news sites, the Pulitzer Prize Board announced today.

A year ago, the Board broadened the competition to include many United States news outlets that publish only on the Internet at least weekly, but it required that all entered material—whether online or in print—had to come from entities “primarily dedicated to original news reporting and coverage of ongoing events.”

The Pulitzer Board decided to eliminate that entry requirement at its November meeting at Columbia University.

The requirement sometimes excluded possibly promising entries—notably by online columnists, critics and bloggers—because of the nature of their Web affiliation, according to Sig Gissler, administrator of the Prizes.

“The revised rule will provide more flexibility as we focus on the merit of an entry rather than the mission of the Web site where it appeared,” Gissler said.

Original reporting and coverage of ongoing events will remain central considerations in the prizes for reporting and writing.

Consistent with its historic focus on daily and weekly newspapers, the Board will continue to exclude entries from magazines and broadcast media and their respective Web sites.

The revised eligibility rule now reads:

“Entries for journalism awards must be based on material coming from a text-based United States newspaper or news site that publishes at least weekly during the calendar year and that adheres to the highest journalistic principles. Magazines and broadcast media, and their respective Web sites, are not eligible.”

The Board will continue to monitor developments in digital journalism, Gissler said.

In 1999, the Pulitzer Prizes first allowed online content in its journalism competition, restricting it to online content from newspapers entering in the Public Service category.

In the 2007 competition, online content from newspaper Web sites was permitted in all Pulitzer journalism categories, but online-only news sites were not allowed to submit entries, and entirely-online entries were permitted in only two categories, breaking news coverage and breaking-news photography.

In 2009, online-only sites that publish at least weekly were eligible for the competition, provided they met the original-reporting requirement. The Board also allowed entries made up entirely of online content to be submitted in all 14 Pulitzer journalism categories.

In 2010, the competition will continue to allow a full range of online content, such as video, databases and interactive graphics, in nearly all categories. Two photography categories will continue to restrict entries to still images.

The revised rules, entry forms, and guidelines on the submission of entries can be found on the Pulitzer Prize Web site (www.pulitzer.org). The deadline for entries is Feb. 1, 2010.