

GWJEP Staff Interview: **Kimiko Christensen Hammari**

E-Publishing Committee Lead



Biography

Kimiko Christensen Hammari is in her last semester of GWU's MPS in Publishing program and serves as the E-publishing Committee Lead for the GW Journal of Ethics in Publishing. She is a published author and works as a freelance trade book editor. After many years in the industry, she became an adjunct editing professor at Brigham Young University, where she has taught for two years. She is passionate about helping authors

bring their ideas to life and seeing her students grow into accomplished editors.

Can you describe your role as E-Publishing committee lead, and what it means to you/what drew you to this committee?

As the E-Publishing Committee lead, I work with my team to upload, format, and publish the journal articles. This year we are working on enhancing the reading experience with a more sophisticated design and accessibility features. Although still a work in progress, the journal will soon be available as PDF

downloads in addition to the online format. We are also working to implement accessibility features taught in the Accessibility in Digital Publishing class.

To be honest, I joined this committee because the editorial committee was full. But I'm grateful for how things worked out. I love being on the production end of a publication. My design experience up to this point was mostly in print, so I've had my fair share of challenges in this new role. But it has also been very rewarding. I've learned a lot, and I have an incredibly supportive team.

What decisions drive the cover design of an ethical journal from issue to issue?

When we select a cover image, we look for a photograph that embodies Washington DC and the virtues upon which our nation and university were founded. It's nice when the photograph aligns with the season—such as cherry blossoms for our spring issue—but our primary goal is to find an image that captures the strength, integrity, and leadership exemplified by George Washington and other great leaders.

With technologies changing so quickly, what do you think are the most important ethical issues for electronic publishing moving into the future?

Although we need to address accessibility, data privacy, and copyright infringement, I think people are most concerned about AI. We don't always know if an article was written by a human or a bot, and as publishers, we have a moral obligation to produce legitimate, factual work. Most of us agree that AI can be a useful tool, but publishers need to ensure that AI doesn't change the author's voice, present false information, violate copyright laws, or compromise the author's or publisher's integrity.

What innovations in e-publishing excite you, and how would you like to implement them in the journal?

One of my top priorities is making the journal more accessible. Unfortunately, I knew little about accessible documents and websites before starting this program. I don't think most people without a disability even think about things like alt text and color contrast. Last fall, I shattered my ankle and had emergency surgery. While I was getting around on a knee scooter for the next six weeks, my eyes were opened to accessibility issues in the physical world—

handicap parking spots, elevators, ramps, etc. I was lucky that my situation was temporary, but I really started to think about how most people don't recognize certain needs. And because I eat, sleep, and breathe publishing, I began to wonder how I might be discriminating against people in the publications I work on. I knew I had to use my position on *GWJEP* to become an advocate for an accessible publication. Although accessible websites and PDFs are not new, they are new for our journal, and I'm excited to be part of these changes.

What are the main ethical concerns when it comes to digital publishing and open access?

We need to remember that digital and open access content is free to read, not free to distribute, reproduce, revise, or plagiarize. Many authors and designers are not being paid for their works that can be reproduced and shared with a single click.

Additionally, free content is not free to produce. The rise of predatory publishing is a huge concern. Authors should not have to pay exorbitant fees to get published. Nor should publishers rely on AI to produce content to save money.

I'm grateful that *GWJEP* is following the lead of so many publishers in providing open access content. Obtaining knowledge is a right, not a privilege, and I think as many people as possible should have access to educational materials. I believe the *GWJEP* is doing all it can to promote ethical publishing practices.