Pulitzer Board elects Politico co-founder
7 December 2009, By SAMANTHA GROSS, Associated Press Writer

(AP) -- The Pulitzer Prize Board has elected its first member representing a primarily online news organization, keeping in step with the board's recent decision to allow entries from more online sites.

The selection of Jim VandeHei, executive editor and co-founder of the news Web site Politico, "reflects the changing nature of the news media," said Sig Gissler, administrator of the prizes.

"He's a smart, talented journalist who also has this new media experience that will enrich the mix of background and outlooks that the board has," Gissler said.

VandeHei will help decide who receives the prestigious journalism prizes.

The announcement Monday comes days after the board said it had adjusted its rules to allow entries from Web sites that are not "primarily dedicated" to original news reporting. The steps mark the latest changes for the overseers of the venerated prizes, who for years have been coping with a shifting media landscape in which news increasingly is published and read online.

VandeHei's appointment and the board's decision last year to consider entries from news organizations that publish only online "are extremely positive steps in the evolution of journalism," Arianna Huffington said in a statement.

The co-founder and editor-in-chief of news Web site The Huffington Post called the developments "a recognition that what matters is great reporting, not the platform on which the great reporting first appeared."

News and analysis site Slate will likely submit its work for prize consideration now that the rules have changed, said Jacob Weisberg, chairman and editor-in-chief of the Slate Group, which publishes Slate and other Web sites.

"They're recognizing that the kind of journalism that the Pulitzers exist to reward can really come in any format now," Weisberg said Monday. "To tie it to print or the concept of a newspaper is really anachronistic."


Last year, Matt Wuerker of Politico was among three finalists for the Pulitzer editorial cartoon award, although none of 65 online-only entries won any prizes. Since 2006, the board has accepted entries of online content from newspaper Web sites in all journalism categories. It has allowed entries of online content in the Public Service category since 1999.

VandeHei fills one of two vacancies on the board, which includes 17 voting and two nonvoting members. He will serve at least one three-year term, and could be re-elected to serve two more terms.

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