On Wednesday, 21 September 2011, the group held its first “roundtable” event. Led by Samuel Winch, Ph.D. (associate professor of Humanities & Communications at Penn State Harrisburg), the focus of the get-together was to talk about distinguishing news from entertainment. Among the many salient points addressed by the nine professionals in this 90-minute session were these:

- **What is “news”?**
  - defined as important, interesting, or useful
  - no more “mainstream” (e.g., Walter Cronkite)
  - problem of trying to fill a 24-hour news cycle
  - problem of “branding” news stories

- **“tabloid” reporting**
  - gains in popularity (from Saturday Night Live’s weekend report to The Daily Show!)
  - increased skepticism in culture ... problem of information literacy
  - people will believe the one they like ... leads to polarization of positions

- **new means of communication**
  - rise of user-generated content
  - problem of lack of vetting on social media

Several **future topics** for discussion surfaced, among which were:

- “Bashfest” – how we’ve moved from disagreeing with to despising an other’s view
- “American Theocracy” – revisiting how journalists report about the influence of religious beliefs
- “World Communications Day” – discussing the theme for 2012 (to be announced 9/29/11, with the papal message to be published 1/24/12)

Suggested dates for **upcoming roundtable sessions** are:

- Tuesday, January 31 @ 8:00 a.m.
- Tuesday, May 8 @ 8:00 a.m.

Information about the info-ethics group is now available at this **web site**:

http://www.desales.edu/default.aspx?pageid=13939