

DEBBIE PONCHNER

A goal-oriented bilingual award-winning print and digital journalist with over 20 years of experience in newspapers and magazines. Expertise in science writing and editing, translations, and newsroom management. Has a passion for delivering quality journalism to a Spanish or English-speaking audience.

Experience

EDITOR, *KNOWABLE EN ESPAÑOL*

MAY 2022-PRESENT

Spanish language edition of the award-winning *Knowable Magazine*, published by Annual Reviews.

- Runs the Spanish-language edition of *Knowable Magazine* which publishes an average of two in-depth science stories every week, either translations of the content developed by *Knowable Magazine* or original stories written in Spanish by freelance science writers from Latin America.
- Works closely with the editorial team of the magazine to develop, assign, and edit stories.
- Build sthe audience of *Knowable en español* through a social media strategy — that so far has gained 220,000 followers on Facebook and 45,000 on Instagram — a weekly newsletter, and establish republishing partnerships with outlets throughout Latin America, the US, and Spain.

VICE-PROVOST OF COMMUNICATION, ULACIT

COSTA RICA

2020 - 2022

Managed the communication and marketing department of ULACIT, Costa Rica's number one ranked private university, overseeing the work of a team of ten communication professionals (journalists, video producers, and designers). Was in charge of the internal and external communication of the University, all its digital platforms, including website and social media, and its marketing strategy. Worked closely with an external Public Relations Firm and Advertising Agency.

FREELANCER

2017 -PRESENT

Writes, edits, and translate sstories for outlets such as *Scientific American*, *Sapiens*, *The New York Times*, *Nature*, BBC Radio, and *The Open Notebook*.

SPANISH-LANGUAGE EDITOR, *SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN*, NEW YORK

2014 -2017

Ran the website by assigning, editing, writing and translating stories.

- Built the Spanish-language website of *Scientific American*. Responsibilities ranged from working on the architecture of the site to establishing coverage of all scientific disciplines, from biology to physics, setting up content partnerships, and creating a network of over 20 freelancers who provided original world-class science stories, mainly from the Latin American region.
- Worked closely with the editorial team of the magazine — both print and online — to develop, assign, and edit stories as a contributor to weekly editorial meetings.
- Through the management of social media accounts and newsletters, built the website audience. The Facebook account gained over 97,000 followers, and the website would draw more than 100,000 readers a month.

LA NACIÓN, COSTA RICA, THE COUNTRY'S LEADING NEWSPAPER 2000–2014

Costa Rica's leading newspaper with a daily circulation of ~100,000 and a daily readership of ~600,000.

MANAGING EDITOR, 2009-2014

- Oversaw a newsroom of over 150 people, working directly with the 12 section editors of the newspaper. Led the daily editors' meeting, put together the daily story lineup, and directed breaking news coverage, both print and online.
- Headed editorial special projects.
- Organized coverage of special news events, including national elections and the Olympic Games.
- Led the team that worked for six months rebuilding the newspaper's website. Helped resolve the unique challenges of translating print stories for online presentation, and reorganizing the newsroom workflow to be digital first.
- Wrote the weekly column and blog on science developments entitled "Epicentro de la ciencia".

DEPUTY MANAGING EDITOR, 2007-2009

- Oversaw five sections of the newspaper — Science, International, Sports, Arts & Culture, and Fashion & Real Estate news desks —, working closely with the editors in daily coverage and long-term projects.
- Served as editor of a weekly science magazine for children that featured do-it-yourself science experiments.

EDITOR ALDEA GLOBAL (DAILY SCIENCE SECTION), 2005-2010

- After an academic year as a Knight Science Journalism fellow at MIT, returned and proposed the creation of the first daily science section of the newspaper.
- Oversaw and edited the work of four journalists.
- Wrote news and features for the section, including a weekly column.

STAFF JOURNALIST, 2000-2004

- Wrote daily science news and features. Work was recognized with national journalism awards.

Education

Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Massachusetts

Knight Science Journalism Fellow. During the nine-month program took science courses on a wide range of topics. Attended twice-a-week seminars with distinguished researchers.

IDEC, Universitat Pompeu Fabra, Barcelona, Spain

Masters in Science and Medicine Communication.

Universidad de Costa Rica, San José, Costa Rica

Bachelors in Communication, with an emphasis in Journalism. Graduated with honors.

Continuing Education

Columbia University, New York

New World of Journalism in the Digital Age—a five-day program aimed at top-level managers in journalistic institutions, providing perspectives on the latest trends in digital journalism.

INCAE Business School, Costa Rica and Nicaragua

Middle management program, targeted at high-potential professionals who carry out managerial functions. The two-week seminar gave overviews of marketing, accounting, financial analysis, leadership, and other topics.

Poynter Institute, Florida

Essential Skills for New Managers, a seminar aimed to provide the tools to lead a staff of high-performing journalists.

Awards

- Two-time winner of the **National Journalism Prize Jorge Vargas Gené**, given by the Costa Rican College of Journalists, in the science and technology category (2002 and 2005). Honorable mention for this prize (2009).
- Three-time winner of the **National Scientific Journalism Prize**, awarded by the National Council for Science and Technology Research of Costa Rica (CONICIT) (2001, 2002, and 2008). Honorable mention for Aldea Global (2009).
- Winner of the **Alberto Martén Chavarría Prize from** the American-Costa Rican Chamber of Commerce for excellence in journalism and social responsibility (2011).
- Winner of the **World Conference of Science Journalism 2019 Media Competition** (2020).

Affiliations

Board member of the Council for the Advancement of Science Writing (CASW).

Mentor of Punto y Aparte, a Costa Rican program of mentorship for journalism students.

Member of NASW and NAHJ.

Member of the Association of Journalists of Costa Rica (Colper).