Mobile Communication Interest Group
Business meeting minutes

Holmhead
Hilton, Washington DC
May 27, 2019, 17:00-18:15

Chair: Colin Agur
Vice Chair: Rich Ling
Secretary: Mariek Vanden Abeele

30 persons members attended

Agenda

1. Chair’s report (Colin Agur)
2. Roadmap to division status (Matt Carlson)
3. Pre-conference (Rich Ling)
4. Doctoral consortium (Veronika Karnowski)
5. Mobile Media & Communication (Veronika Karnowski)
6. ICA 2020: Gold Coast (ICA President-Elect Claes de Vreese)
7. Awards (Jason Martin)
8. Bylaw update (Colin Agur)
9. Fall elections (Lynne Kelly)
10. Discussion item: session types (Colin Agur)
11. New officers (Rich Ling & Keri Stephens)

1. Chair’s report (Colin Agur, Chair)

Our chair, Colin Agur presents some numbers on the state of our interest group:

- In terms of membership, we grew from 210 to 250 members.
- The number of submissions grew from 102 to 120.
- Our finances are strong: We have a structural surplus.

These numbers are very positive. They make for a healthy interest group. In addition to them, our interest group has a number of additional strengths that we can be very proud of:

- We are among the most global sections at ICA
- We have a healthy mix of senior and emerging scholars
- We offer multiple presentation formats (including a doctoral consortium and preconference)
- We continue to be an open and accessible scholarly community

As our chair, Colin represented the interest group in various board activities. There are some notes that he wishes to pass on from the board.

- The board took notice of all the issues related to the new information system. While there were some problems, overall the operations of our interest group seem to have gone smoothly.
The organization has taken some actions to achieve greater inclusion, such as including preferred pronouns on nametags, offering a quiet space, and organizing child care. These initiatives have been well received and ICA commits to continuing them.

There is a new ICA Interest Group: the Human Machine Communication IG. This is the 33rd division/interest group.

In October, a regional ICA conference will be held in Bali. ICA invites everyone to join.

The International Journal of Communication has been donated to ICA.

The journals associated with ICA are moving towards Open Access. Brett Oppegaard asks if there will be fees associated with open access publishing. There is no clarity on this issue at the moment. Veronika mentions that fees for Open Access publishing may make it more difficult for scholars from tiers B and C to submit their work.

There was a large turnout for the main conference this year: there were 3861 online registrations from 67 countries.

Finally, there are some editor positions available next year in the journals Human Communication Research, Communication Culture & Critique, and Annals of ICA. If interested, email Robin Nabi (nabi@ucsb.edu)

2. Roadmap to division status (Matt Carlson, Chair of ICA committee on Division and Interest Group Mentoring and Coordinating)

Matt Carlson, the chair of the ICA committee on Division and Interest Group Mentoring and Coordinating (DIG), takes the floor to give some more information regarding the transition from interest group to division.

Some background: The Mobile Communication Interest Group was founded in 2015 (Puerto Rico, US). It became an interest group together with several other interest groups, which raised concerns over a possible proliferation of interest groups and divisions. Given that membership to ICA is growing, the executive board decided to change the criteria for becoming a division: Rather than requiring a fixed number of members, interest groups (IGs) now need to have at least 5% of the total ICA member population as members, and this for two years in a row.

The membership number is counted on the basis of the membership that is registered in August (right before membership renewals begin). When the 5% is reached, a formal review process takes place. This is done by the DIG. They prepare a report that demonstrates the actual structure and activities of the division, mostly by showing that the IG is real on the basis of the group’s bylaws, meetings, awards, etcera. This report goes to the executive board. In May the board (executive committee + division chairs) convenes. If there is a 2/3 majority, the IG can acquire division status. Mostly the events at the executive board are consensus-driven. The Mobile Communication IG became interest group together with the Computational Methods IG. This latter IG will be the first to go through the review process.

For the Mobile Communication IG, the most important things we can do to promote from interest group to division is continuing to bring in members, and continuing to establish and build on the group’s infrastructure.

In response to Matt’s statement that the executive board usually reaches consensus, James Katz comments that a weakness of consensus-driven decision making processes is that individual voices and sentiments can sometimes have a strong influence. As there were initially concerns about the Mobile Communication IG being duplicative to other sections, he asks if the consensus-driven process may form a risk. Matt states that this risk is low: the DIG report is an
informational report that serves as the basis for independent decision making, and given the strong and demonstrable infrastructure of the Mobile Communication IG, the issue of duplicability is not really a solid argument. Veronika Karnowski, our former chair, confirms this, and states that we have moved beyond this concern.

In relation to the concerns over IG and division proliferation, Arul Chib asks if interest groups and divisions can retire. Matt states that this is indeed the case. If membership continuously drops below a threshold criterium, a group can move back from division to IG, and can even be dissolved.

Katie Pearce comments that one of the unintended consequences of ICA’s growth is that there has been an explosion of pre- and post-conferences. She indicates that this has caused some problems (for example, groups that do not meet the budget for their respective pre- or post-conference). Matt confirms that ICA has indeed witnessed a significant increase in the number of pre- and post-conferences. In response to some of the issues related to that increase, the executive board has reached a decision to cap the number of pre- and post-conferences to a maximum of 30 per year. The Mobile Communication IG may thus have to compete more strongly with other groups for organizing its pre-conference, although the long tradition that we have can hopefully work in our favor.

Keri Stephens asks to confirm that this will be the first time that our membership meets the 5% threshold. Matt confirms. This means that – after this year – we would need one other year to start the process of becoming a division. The current division fee is only three dollar. So Matt encourages all of us to bring in new members if we want to make this happen.

3. **Pre-conference** *(Vice Chair Rich Ling)*

Rich Ling (current vice chair, incoming chair) reports back from this year’s preconference, for which he had been responsible. This year’s preconference was located in the George Washington University museum and Textile museum. The program consisted of 4 workshops on various topics (see www.icamobile.org for the full program). In addition to these workshops, several members of our IG briefly presented a book that they recently published. Because of a tornado warning, this year’s preconference was very exciting, as we briefly had to evacuate to an underground area in the museum where we continued our activities.

The goal of the preconference remains to bring early career scholars together to play with their ideas. It is an explorative space to play around with ideas. The workshop format has clearly found its space. Also, the preconference has a nice vibe of “bringing the gang back together”, a vibe that is most certainly supported by the conference dinner.

Rich expresses his hope that we will be able to organize another preconference next year in Australia. He also thanks the organization committee, and passes the baton over to Keri Stephens (incoming vice-chair).

4. **Doctoral Consortium** *(Past Chair Veronika Karnowski)*

Veronika Karnowski reports back on the doctoral consortium (DC) that the MCIG organizes together with the Communication and Technology section. The doctoral consortium is held on the day of the opening reception (this year on Friday). Small groups with mentors work together
to review the proposals of students and give them constructive feedback. Veronika appealed for potential mentors to volunteer in an aim to diversify the mentorship. This year, there were 23 submissions. Sixteen students were accepted. There were 12 mentors, of whom several were scholars from the Mobile Communication IG: Katy Pearce, Scott Campbell, Jordan Frith, Sun Sun Lim, and Veronika Karnowski. Based on students’ tweets after the event, they were happy.

Veronika asks to spread the word about the DC to potential student candidates. The acceptance rate is about 50%. The DC gives preference to students who are still in an ideational phase so that the feedback can still have an impact in terms of improving the work before submission.

This year was the 10th university, so there was a celebration in the form of a reception (off-site).

5. **Mobile Media & Communication** *(Veronika Karnowski)*

As editor of the journal *Mobile Media & Communication*, Veronika Karnowski also gives an update about the journal’s status. Although the journal has no formal relation with the IG, it informally grew from it, and several of the members of our group contribute to it, as author and/or as reviewer.

*Mobile Media & Communication* is now SSCI ranked. It received an impact factor of 1.6 and came in with a rank of 32/84 in the ranking of Communication Sciences journals. This entry into the upper half is a really good and promising position for the journal to be in, in this early stage.

Some stats and fun facts:
- There were 138 original submissions in the past year (05/18-04/19)
- The SSCI index has significantly increased the number of submissions. Unfortunately, a consequence of this increase in submissions is that the current acceptance rate is now 11%
- There is an upcoming special issue guest edited by Jordan Frith and Didem Özkul on “Mobile media beyond mobile phones”
- Sage was extremely forthcoming in facilitating a women’s day initiative: every month, an article written by a female scholar has been available Open Access. This is a really nice way to promote female scholarship, which has been much appreciated by the audience.

6. **ICA 2020** *(Claes de Vreese, president-elect)*

Claes de Vreese, the president-elect, takes some time to talk about next year’s conference. The conference location is in Australia, at the Gold Coast (south of Brisbane). Claes acknowledges that European and American scholars will have quite a distance to travel, but notices that this is an opportunity to celebrate our Asia-Pacific region scholars, who for once will have a much shorter distance to travel.

ICA is currently planning the conference. One thing they will do, is give tips on affordable travel. Among others, multiple hotel options will be provided, ranging from 45 dollars per night in a shared accommodation to 190 per night in the conference hotel. Hopefully this will compensate for the increased flight costs for those who have to travel a long way.
When registering for the conference, there will be an opportunity to give a financial donation to two different goals as a carbon offset.

The conference theme is Open Communication. Claes expresses his hope that this conference theme will be a gateway to an open dialogue on Open Science. This dialogue may include discussions of the open science principals and how we evaluate the implications of those principles for (mobile) communication research. There will be all sorts of activities and opportunities organized related to the conference theme. Eike Mark Rinke is the conference theme chair.

Having lived in the area, our chair Colin Agur expresses his enthusiasm and shares some experiences. He notes that it is easy to fly directly into Brisbane, and that the trip from the Brisbane airport to the conference site should take around 45 minutes by taxi. He considers the area a great place for mobile communication.

Hope we see everyone there!

7. Awards *(Colin Agur, on behalf of Jason Martin, chair of the Mobile Communication Awards Committee)*

On behalf of Jason Martin, who could not make it to Washington, the awards are presented:

- **Top Paper Award**: “WeChat Use by Mainland Chinese Dual Migrants in their Daily Border Crossing” by Bei Ju
- **Best Dissertation Award** (awarded biennially): “Everyday Multiscreening: How the simultaneous usage of multiple screens affects information processing and advertising effectiveness” by Claire M. Segijn
- **Emerging Scholar Research Award** (three awards at $500 each):
  - “Smart Phones and Social Media Fatigue” by Minh Hao Nguyen
  - “Touch Screens, Mobile News Consumption, and Fake News” by Zhixin Giselle Pu
  - “WhatsApp with Politics?! Examining how social networks—within instant messaging apps—affect engagement with political news” by Susan Vermeer

On behalf of the entire Mobile Communication IG: Congratulations!!!

8. Bylaw update *(Colin Agur, chair)*

ICA has decided to change two of the positions from appointed positions to elected positions: the Early Career Representative and the International Liaison. This change requires an update of two articles in our bylaws (see below).

The interest group has unanimously voted in favor in of the proposed changes. The changes to the bylaws are:

- **Early Career Representative** (2 year position, in effect as of the 2020 conference):
  - Current language in Article 4, Section 1:
    The Early Career Representative is appointed in odd numbered years for a term of two years beginning the last day of the ICA Annual Conference.
Proposed language:
The Early Career Representative is elected in odd numbered years as part of the ICA elections, for a term of two years beginning the last day of the ICA Annual Conference.

- International Liaison. (2 year position, in effect as of the 2020 conference):
  - Current language in Article 4, Section 1: The International Liaison shall be appointed in even numbered years for a term of two years beginning the last day of the ICA Annual Conference.
  - Proposed language: The Internationalization Liaison shall be elected in odd numbered years as part of the ICA elections, for a term of two years beginning the last day of the ICA Annual Conference.

For your interest: The current Early Career Representative is Raul Ferrer Conill (Karlstad U) and the International Liaison is Leah Komen (Daystar U).

9. Fall elections (Lynne Kelly)

In the fall, there will be three positions for which we need to elect a new member (all are two-year positions):
- Secretary
- Internationalization Liaison
- Early Career Representative

The interest group has a nomination committee whose role is to:
- Encourage candidates and answer questions
- Review nominations and select finalists

Lynne Kelly, current member of the committee together with Colin Agur and Mariek Vanden Abeele, explains the nomination process. The committee presents a call for the open positions and distributes this call to the members. Individuals can self-nominate or nominate others. A nomination involves submitting some materials, namely a CV and a brief statement of the candidate’s interests and qualifications. Out of the received nominations, the committee members select the two candidates they consider most eligible for the position. The nomination committee has a set of criteria against which it evaluates the candidates’ submissions. These criteria foremost concern the candidates’ qualifications and statements, where the committee evaluates aspects such as academic seniority, outreach and impact, affiliation and commitment to the mobile interest group, organizational experience and expertise and knowledge of and visibility in the wider ICA community. The committee strives for a board that is representative and inclusive for the diverse population of the interest group. Next, the candidate statements are sent out to the members during the election in November.

The group supports that we continue to organize the process as we have done in the past. Lynne invites persons to self-nominate or think of other persons who may be interested. It is a great way to be even more involved in the IG.
10. **Discussion item: presentation formats in the main conference** *(Colin Agur, Chair)*

Currently we have the following formats to submit work to our interest group:

- Full papers, scheduled in a traditional 4-paper sessions (12min per paper)
- Extended abstracts, scheduled in high-density sessions (7min per paper)
- Thematic panels

Colin asks the members if we should consider other options. Such options could be, for example, roundtables, research accelerators, book presentations, or sessions by partners (e.g. MM&C or the Oxford Mobile Series). Some responses:

- Keri Stephens asks if the high-density sessions are valued. There is agreement that this is a good format to present work.
- Rich Ling argues that the book presentations seemed to present a nice additional feature for the preconference - this seems to be the right place for it. There is agreement on this.
- Keri Stephens explains that several divisions have research escalator sessions where early career scholars or people who are developing research projects can submit work-in-progress, and then have individual mentors that mentor them. This could be a good thing to consider for the future.
- Brett Oppegaard informs that for some scholars the submission/presentation format may matter in terms of institutional funding for travel.

11. **Incoming officers** *(Colin Agur, Vice Chair)*

We have two incoming officers!

The incoming vice-chair is Keri Stephens (U of Texas, keri.stephens@austin.utexas.edu). Colin expresses how happy the group is with Keri taking up office. Moreover, he gives her the first ever Mobile Communication certificate of heroism for her leadership during the tornado evacuation.

As the vice-chair, Keri will be responsible for:

- Developing and circulating a call for papers
- Reviewing proposals
- Creating the program
- Finding a venue
- Managing logistics

A short bio:

Keri is an Associate Professor in Organizational Communication Technology and a Distinguished Teaching Professor in the Moody College of Communication at The University of Texas at Austin. Her research focuses on contexts such as workplaces, health, and disasters, and it explores how communication and mobile communication happen in organizations or interacting with organizing processes. She has authored over 80 articles appearing in top research journals, proceedings, and books, and her two most recent books are *New Media in Times of Crisis* (2019, Routledge), and *Negotiating Control: Organizations and Mobile Communication* (2018, Oxford University Press). She is an Associate Editor with *Management Communication Quarterly*, her Hurricane Harvey and mobile media research was funded by the National Science Foundation.
Keri expresses her enthusiasm for the interest group and already shares some ideas regarding the 2020 preconference (having the conference in Brisbane, perhaps arranging a tour bus for our travel to the Gold Coast). If people have an interested or wish to be involved: Please contact Keri. She is especially looking for people who have local liaisons to find creative locations for the preconference, the dinner, catering.

The incoming chair is Rich Ling (NTU, rili@ntu.edu.sg).

A short bio:
Rich is the Shaw Foundation Professor of Media Technology at Nanyang Technological University, Singapore. He has also lived and worked in Norway at the Gruppen for Ressursstudier and at Telenor’s R&D team. He has studied the social consequences of mobile communication, text messaging, and mobile telephony. He has examined the use of mobile communication for what he calls micro-coordination, used by teens, and use in generational situations, as a form of social cohesion. Most recently he has studied this in the context of large databases and also in developing countries. Among his books are *Taken for Grantedness* (2012, MIT Press), *New Tech, New Ties* (2008, MIT), *The Mobile Connection* (2004, Kauffman)…. and more…. He was named an ICA Fellow in 2016. He is editor of the *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*.

Rich extensively thanks Colin for his service, and compliments him for being so organized and polite. Colin worked very hard for the IG. THANK YOU!

Before focusing on the future, Rich takes a moment to reflect on the IG’s interesting history: The IG was a grassroots initiative, organized in the slipstream of some early activities (edited volumes, non-ICA conferences). It first became associated with the ICA as a preconference. Out of the preconference community a journal was founded. In the meantime the preconference has transitioned to an IG, and in the future may transition into a division. It has been a fascinating journey, in which we have built a community of scholars but also friendships. Rich’s hopes for the future are that the IG remains a place where we can share our work and express our friendly criticisms.

For those members who wish to be more actively involved with the IG, here are some ways to get involved:
- Serve on a Mobile Communication committee
- Encourage & welcome new Interest Group members
- Review conference submissions

Rich thanks everyone for attending and adjourns the meeting. See you all in Australia!