Mobile Communication Interest Group
Business meeting minutes

Virtual Meeting
Programmed: May 27, 2021, 17:00-18:15 (Denver Time)
Pre-recording: April 21, 2021, 4.00 pm CET

Chair: Rich Ling
Vice Chair: Keri Stephens
Secretary: Jakob Ohme

18 persons attended

Agenda

1. Chair’s report Rich Ling
2. Division status Rich Ling and Keri Stephens
3. Pre-conference Mariek Vanden Abeele and Thilo von Pape
4. Doctoral consortium Jordan Frith
5. Mobile Media & Communication Veronika Karnowski
6. Awards Jason Martin
7. Fall elections Lynne Kelly
8. Discussion item: group definition Rich Ling
9. ICA 2022: Paris ICA Executive
10. New officers Keri Stephens and Mariek Vanden Abeele

1. Chair’s report (Rich Ling, Chair)

Our chair, Rich Ling presents some numbers on the state of our interest group:

- In terms of membership, we are at 204 members.
- The number of submissions was 97.
- Finances are strong, plans for a nice reception in Paris 2022.
- The division offers multiple presentation formats, such as the doctoral consortium

Our Chair, Rich hands over to officers to give their report. Our vice chair Keri Stephens starts, emphasizing some important points:

- Due to pandemic, no mobile pre-conference took place in 2020 and 2021
• The interest group needs to work on an membership push to get over the edge to get division status
• Praise of work by Early Career Scholar (ECS) Representative Laura; great work for setting up multiple events for 2021 ICA, together with International Liaison (IL) Hoan, asks group members to support them

Our Secretary, Jakob presents some information on the information channels of the interest group. The group has four main communication channels:

• Email to membership via ICA list (strictly to current members)
• Relaunched ICA Mobile Website (https://www.icamobile.org); the fees for the WIX account are still paid by Colin Agur
• Twitter Profile @ICA_Mobile (315 Follower; over 100 followers increase)
• ICA LINK community ‘Mobile Communication’ (189 Members)

In addition, with the help of Rich and student assistant, the group searched the ICA program for relevant keywords and send a mail merge to broader community based to promote the IG as a space for submissions in upcoming years and find new members.

Next, our International Liaison (IL) Hoan presents work from the past year:

• Main emphasis was to increase the pool of global south members
• Reach out mainly through own personal network
• ICA could not provide list of global south scholars specifically for IG
• Two digital global south scholar session organized for ICA 2021, considering digital time zones

Rich refers to ICA initiative of sending out a survey about inclusion that might provide the requested numbers in the future

Next, our Early Career Scholar (ECS) Representative Laura speaks on the initiatives takes regarding PhD and Early Career Scholars:

• Survey was conducted in January 2021 to tab into needs for networking opportunities among membership → 40 scholars from 13 countries participated
• Team of 12 ECS scholars as well as Keri and Mariek was formed to plan virtual activities for ICA 2021
  o literature hunt
  o synchronous networking sessions

Laura thanks all members from the organizing team.
A second topic that came up in the member survey among ECS and Global South Scholars was English language proficiency. Five of 26 participants said that they already have not submitted a paper to ICA because they thought English was not good enough.
One solution mentioned was a voluntary language check service among members. 38% of survey participants mentioned they would be willing to participate in such a service.
A second potential solution is a networking event for people who feel not fully proficient to write in English.

Jakob mentions that for the submission procedure for the Dissertation award, the committee talked about offering a language check survey for the award submissions to increase diversity.
Jakob suggests a potential two step procedure for general membership: first a workshop that helps a number of members simultaneously, before offering one-on-one help on papers. He mentions that this might be difficult, due to the busy weeks before submission deadline.

Jordan Frith supports the idea of a language workshop, building on positive experience from workshops at university. One-on-one service might to be much work because unclear what levels of proficiency is.

Mariék Vanden Abeele suggest that small suggestions to a workshop could be a starting point to keep amount of work manageable but still help.

Keri Stephens proposes to invite professional writing experts to the workshop, based on positive experience from professional writing workshop at her lab.

Veronika Karnowsky says she supports the idea, mentions the danger of double structures, for example with the escalator session.

Rich Ling mentions the ICA inclusion survey that might also address some initiatives around English language submissions.

Rich Ling mentions that the report from the ICA board meeting is not included in this business meeting, as it will only be take place during ICA while the business meeting of the Mobile Communication Interest Group is pre-recorded.

2. Division status (Rich Ling, Keri Stephens)

Rich Ling talks about the status of the interest group towards becoming an ICA division

- The Interest group needs to have membership above 5% of the total ICA membership for 2 years running
- We had that status in 2020 and we are on track for 2021
  - Kudos to Colin
  - We have also sent out a “nudge” to all the papers in ICA that mention mobile communication
- We have been in touch with
  - ICA and
  - Matt Carlson head of the Division/Interest Group Mentoring and Coordinating Committee (DIGMC)
- If we can keep up our membership statistics, we are eligible for division status at the Paris meeting.

Mariék invites everyone watching the pre-recording to attend the virtual conference and engage with the work of mobile communication scholars as this can be helpful to show the benefits of being a member of the mobile communication interest group

3. Pre-Conference (Mariék Vanden Abeele, Thilo von Pape)

Incoming Vice-Chair Mariék Vanden Abeele talks about plans for the planning of the 2022 mobile pre-conference:

- Date & Location: 25 May 2022, Besançon, France
- Local liaison: Thilo von Pape, Université de Franche-Comté
- Tentative theme: Emerging trends and practices across the globe
• Application for pre-conference must be submitted to ICA HQ, once approved, pre-conference planning can start
• Format of one-day workshop including dinner will be continued for 2022 pre-conference
• Thilo von Pape is the local host, as he works in France, at the University of Franche-Comté in Besançon
• Emphasis that it is an additional stretch to have a pre-conference not in Paris but train connections from Paris are very well and plans are to make this a very worthwhile pre-conference for all
• Chances exist to obtain additional funding from the city and the regional offices in that area
• Professor Dr. Christian Licoppe is requested as keynote speaker
• The call for proposals to the preconference will be released in October 2021, Deadline for submissions is early December 2021, Acceptance notifications are planned for January 202; final dates will be communicated once planning is finalized
• Joining the pre-conference planning team is possible, please contact Mariek

Thilo von Pape, Pre-Conference Co-organizer adds information about the city of Besançon, mentioning the great number of mobile communication scholars in Europe but also the vicinity to Africa, where a large mobile communication research community exists.

4. Doctoral consortium (Jordan Frith)

Jordan Frith, Co-Organizer of the Doctoral Consortium (together with the Communication and Technology (CAT) Division of ICA updates the group:

• Doctoral Consortium was cancelled in 2020
• No plans to organize a consortium in 2021 due to different time zones people may have been in
• Planning a doctoral consortium for 2022; need to be coordinated with Mariek to avoid date-overlap between pre-conference and doctoral consortium
• Co-organization with Katy Pearce from CAT

5. Mobile Media & Communication (Veronika Karnowski)

Veronika Karnowski, Editor of Mobile Media & Communication gives an update on the journal:

• The journal is not legally connected to ICA but still very close to the interest group
• 2-year Impact factor (SSCI 2020) 2.545
• Ranking in communication (SSCI 2020, 2-year IF) 18/92
• Original submissions past year (05/20 - 03/21*): 261
• Current acceptance rate (05/20 - 03/21*) 12%
• Upcoming special issue “Digital Wellbeing in an Age of Ubiquitous Connectivity” Guest editors: Mariek Vanden Abeele & Minh Hao Nguyen
• A big thank you to all our reviewers and authors!

6. Awards (Jason Martin)

Jason Martin, Head of the Awards Committee leads through the awards presentation:

• As the business meeting is pre-recorded, not Emerging Scholar Grant is presented here, as the deadline is April 30
• Encouragement to submit applications for this grant
• Membership will be notified during the conference about the grantees

[Update]: The winners of the Emerging Scholar Grant in 2021 are:

Towards a Spatial Grounding of Mediated and Non-mediated Communication to Capture Hybrid Communication through Chat App
_Deepi Singh Apte, Symbiosis International (deemed) University_

"Digital Boutiques" on WhatsApp and Facebook in Niger: Exploring Their Affordances and Uses Across Gender, Literacy, and Status
_Ibrahim Maïdakouale, Université Bourgogne Franche-Comté_

Jason Martin continues with the presentation of the top paper award:

• Very competitive with great number of high-quality submissions
• Comments from the judges included praise such as “this paper offers a thoughtful and distinct take on disability, inclusion, exclusion and participation of mobile networks.

The winners of the 2022 Top Paper Award are:

_Smartphones as Actors: A New Digital Disability Care Actor-Network in China_
_Zhongxuan Lin, Jinan University_
_Liu Yang, Sun Yat-Sen University_

Jason Martin hands over to Jakob Ohme, Head of the Mobile Communication Dissertation Award:

• Members of the Committee were Lia Uy-Tioco from California State University of San Marcos and Veronika Karnowski from the University of Munich
• High number of submissions with very diverse angles on mobile communication
• All submissions had in common their focus on specific groups in society that were either marginalized or deserved, based on the assessment of the authors, at least a greater visibility and attention in society
• One dissertation eventually stood out and the committee agreed unanimously on the winner
• Comments from the assessments mentioned “This work takes us back to an original understanding of the meaning that mobile communication technology
has for a civilization. It spotlights the role of smartphones and digital inequality research and employs a very insightful methodological approach.

- The winner of the 2021 Top Dissertation Award.

Urban Digital Inequality: Adversity and adaption in the network society
Will Marler, University of Zurich

Jordan Frith mentions that Will Marler’s Dissertation was part of the doctoral consortium in earlier years and emphasises that scholars should go or send their doctoral students to this consortium.

7. Fall elections (Lynne Kelly)

Lynne Kelly, Head of Elections Committee updates the membership on upcoming elections:

- Three positions that we’ll need to seek nominations
- Election takes place right at the beginning of the fall.
- Positions to be elected in Fall 2021
  - Secretary (2-year position)
  - Student/emerging scholar rep (2-year position)
  - International scholar (2-year position)
- The nominating committee
  - Lynne Kelly (chair)
  - Keri Stephens, Jakob Ohme, and Rich Ling
- Role of the Nomination Committee
  - Encourage candidates and answer questions
  - Review nominations and select finalists

- Nomination seeking will be open before the ICA 2021 conference to allow talking to people during the virtual conference and network meetings
- People can self-nominate
- Candidate list needs to be identified in July

Rich Ling underscores that Lynne Kelly does a great job and asks all interested candidates to apply for the opening positions.

Lynne Kelly mentions the group needs at least two candidates per position and that the deadline of submitting the candidate list is fixed.

8. Discussion item: group definition (Rich Ling)

Rich Ling starts the discussion on what the groups definition is. He mentions article two of the Interest Group bylaws that mentions “phenomenon of mobility and communication, the intersection of mobility, technology and culture and human communication. And the common ground of mobile communication is the state of the art theorise on mobile communication is rigorous as well as rigorous methodology.”

Rich Ling mentions that occasionally it is good to just step back a little bit and think about what is the core of mobile communication, what's the boundary? He asks what the difference
is between a paper that is submitted to the mobile communication interest group and a paper that goes to the Communication and Technology Division.

Jordan Frith responds that potentially, boundaries can be defined by core groups of literature that the field uses. Boundaries could not be drawn around topics but potentially around a collective language that the field is speaking.

Rich Ling responds that this comment makes him feel good, because it shows that the field is old enough to have its own literature.

Hoan Nyguen asks whether mobile app innovation and entrepreneurship would be part of mobile communication studies.

Rich Ling responds that he would look at if there something about ubiquitous use of communication in the submission. Is it using one of the functionalities of communication or it using something about mobile communication as an integral part of the app? He suggests making a distinction between a user and a developer perspective, as the design part might speak to a different community.

Veronika Karnowski asks whether Rich Ling thinks we need to update the bylaws or if the discussion is more intended of creating a joint sense for the interest group or is this about making clear from outside the mobile communication field to make them clear when to submit to our group or to another group.

Rich Ling responds he does not suggest updating the bylaws but that it is helpful to discuss helping to guide people in their submissions to different areas within ICA.

Jakob Ohme mentions that on the ICA LINK platform, members have also addressed the question that is sometimes difficult to decide for them where to submit.

Keri Stepens adds that other divisions publish a list of keywords assigned to accepted submissions to give the membership a feeling on where to submit their work. With the automatic matching in the ICA submission system, this might be even easier and more meaningful to do now.

Eszter Hargittai responds that a clear understanding on what research to submit to the Mobile Communication Interest Group is not only relevant for potential submitters but also to the pool of reviewers to arrive at a common understanding of what types of research it is that fits the Interest Group best.

Rich Ling responds that the last call to reviewers included some of the dimensions around mobile communication. He agrees with Eszter Hargittai that for potential reviewers, knowing about these dimensions is equally important.

Adriana de Souza e Silva adds that to arrive at the boundaries of the field, it might be helpful to compare the descriptions of the what the Communication and Technology Division and the Mobile Communication Interest Group at ICA require from submitters. From Adriana's point of view, it is not necessary to update the bylaws, but she refers comments on the ICA LINK platform, where members suggested having webinars about specific topics. This could help to create some form of discussion to hear from the group members and to maybe try to define what we understand by mobile communication, how it has developed over the years, because it's not just about the mobile phone itself. She suggests a shared statement that can be send to people submitting their work and reviewing work at the Interest Group.
Jordan Frith adds that some messiness is inherent to the process, especially with the broad nature of the Communication and Technology Division, which taps into a number of fields, such as children's communication, game studies, environmental communication, intercultural communication, etc.

Veronika Karnowski suggests that as a pragmatic solution, a small task force should focus on the text that is part of ICAs annual call for papers. She mentions difficulties about including this into the call for next years (2022) ICA call for papers but suggests hosting this text on the website or spreading it through membership communication channels. She mentions that she is willing to be part of such a task force, in whatever capacity.

9. ICA 2022: Paris (ICA Executive)

Rich Ling mentions that usually, an ICA Executive would join the interest group meeting to talk about upcoming ICA locations and in this year advertise for Paris. He presents a number of different versions of Paris, by using slides with different pictures of Paris.

10. New officers (Keri Stephens and Mariek Vanden Abeele)

Rich Ling introduces the new incoming officers. Keri Stephens is the new Chair of the Interest Group. Keri Stephens has been Vice Chair in the last two years and Rich Ling expresses praise for Keris work and that he feels extremely comfortable to give the interest group into her very capable hands.

And the new vice chair is going to be Mariek Vanden Abeele. Rich Ling says that Mariek Vanden Abeele will be a great Vice Chair and eventually Chair of the interest group.

Mariek Vanden Abeele addresses the membership by saying that she is very honored and happy to have been elected in this position and that it always has been like a warm home to her. She says that she is happy that the mobile communication field at ICA has a strong community and that she wants to create that same home base for new generations of early and young scholars in our community. She looks forward to working on this with Keri.

Keri Stephens says she is really excited to be part of the group and that she felt this group was something she was missing in her career before. She praises Rich Ling for being a fantastic chair who included her in every step of the way. Keri Stephens mentions that she is excited to work closely with Mariek and Jakob and the rest of our group.

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