



23 May 2020

Dear ICA 70th Annual Conference attendees,

We are now mid-way through the 2020 conference, and we would like to take a moment to **thank you all for being part of ICA history**. While this isn't a perfect experience, we hope that it has been better for each of you than having no conference at all! We have been so heartened by the camaraderie we have seen on social media: old friends checking in and having viewing parties, people trying out VR hangouts for the first time, and funny hashtags that have arisen organically such as #petsofICA (a brutal showdown between cats and dogs), and #pretendlivetweetingICA where you can hear all the usual complaints from not having anywhere to charge your laptop to not being able to find a certain ballroom. There are even whole social media conversations around the inner lives of the avatars congregated in the lobby, and everyone hanging out at the #ica20opening reception, with badge ribbons made of Post-It notes, was fun as well. **ICA attendees are making us laugh every day, even in the middle of stressful times.**

Speaking of stress, we do know there still are glitches in video placements, and ICA and vFairs staff are working together nonstop to get these resolved. Staff are not responding immediately to every email because their priority is to fix everything (rather than talk about it). You will hear from them when they have an answer for you. If you contacted conference@icaheadq.org and we find that your video isn't on the platform at all, we will contact you to have you send it to staff so they can upload it for you and get it placed. If it's simply in the wrong place, we'll move it and let you know it's fixed. All is not lost! In light of these difficulties especially, **we really appreciate all the support for ICA staff and the conference that we have seen online.**

To compensate somewhat for the delayed videos and respond to pleas for more time to peruse the richness and depth of content #ica20 provides (not having to choose between concurrent sessions has led to another new hashtag, #bingelICA), we have decided to **extend your access to the content by one day to 27 May 2020**. The conference as a social event will still end—and the closing toast will happen, and awards will be announced—on 26 May, but there will be one extra day at the end for watching videos you haven't yet gotten to.

When the conference is over, please look for and complete the **post-conference evaluation survey** we will be sending to reap insights from your experience, so please take notes about the good and the bad and be ready to share. We are already developing many ideas about what we will take from this moving forward (such as optimizing the chat function to allow tags), and we will collect them and process as we think ahead. ICA will almost certainly have some form of virtual option moving forward, so the point here is to keep what works and improve what doesn't.

In this second half of the conference, we would encourage those who have time and energy to offer the opportunity for (junior) scholars to reach out and ask questions, have a zoom conversation, and schedule feedback. **Just as in a “real life” conference, such interactions are crucial**, so please feel encouraged to offer this, either through social media channels and/or via the conference platform. We hope this message will lower the barrier for offering, as well as asking for, the possibility of help. We suggest **using the hashtag #ICAmentors** to ask for or offer help. We also understand that this might not be possible in all



cases – some of you are at maximum capacity for what you can handle, and that is ok, too. We will meet you where you are.

A few highlights to which we'd like to call your attention:

- If you haven't yet, take a couple of minutes to watch this [fun #ica20 promo video](#) we made for the conference featuring ICA members from all over the globe. You'll be glad you did!
- The **PDF "print" program** can be viewed [here](#) or you can use the **searchable itinerary planner in ScholarOne** (click "continue as guest" at bottom if you don't want to log in).
- In keeping with our "Open Communication" theme, some of the sessions are **ungated** and available on our [ICA YouTube channel](#) for public viewing, including the [special COVID-19 panel](#). More will be added soon, particularly related to the theme.
- Still other additional videos are available outside the platform but only for ICA members, behind the member log-in, [here](#).
- Make sure to watch the [OPENING PLENARY](#) on **Open Communication**.
- As well, check out the **advised viewing order** for [the theme sessions](#) from Eike Rinke, 2020 theme chair. And, watch the [Theme Roundtable on Open Communication: How Communication Scholarship Could, and Should, Change in the New Decade](#) also uploaded to our YouTube channel.
- The **2020 Presidential Address** from Terry Flew is available today (on Saturday, just like it would be in real life!) both on the conference platform and [on YouTube](#).
- **The gavel-passing** from Terry Flew to Claes deVreese will happen later today on social media (find it only AFTER the presidential address for an extra dose of verisimilitude).
- Find the special panel **First Nations Communication: Challenging Open Communication**, available under Sponsored Sessions on the conference platform.
- **ICA-wide Awards, 2020 ICA-Wide Election Candidates, and the 2020 Class of ICA Fellows** will be announced on 26 May via social media and an email to ICA members and attendees.
- Check out the annual **Steve Jones Internet Lecture: Bronwyn Carlson on Digital Indigenous Identities**, available only on the conference platform.
- The **Meet the Editors session**: some editors weren't available for a full panel but there's some great content there on how to get published in an ICA journal. Find it under Sponsored Sessions in the platform.
- Before the end of the conference, watch the **Closing Plenary on A.I. and Communication** (available now on the platform)
- As a final farewell, look for the (not yet posted) "closing toast" from Claes on 26 May
- **The Hardship Fund application** will be available soon (once conference is over), make sure you have receipts from those non-refundable flights if you want to apply. More info to come on social media and via email.
- Again, the conference itself closes on 26 May but we will keep the videos up until the 27th so you have more time to binge-watch!

ICA20 has been, and continues to be, a learning experience for all of us! We are all new to this virtual world, and we all came here somewhat unwillingly. **But there is a palpable sense that this has brought the ICA community together more than an in-person conference does, in a way. They say that**



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absence makes the heart grow fonder, and we can see already that not seeing everyone in person this year has made us all realize how much we care about and rely on our colleagues around the world, how interconnected we all are, not just through our research but in our shared humanity.

Be safe, be well, and enjoy the second half of the conference!

**Laura Sawyer, ICA Executive Director
Claes deVreese, President-Elect & 2020 Planner**