

CALL FOR PAPERS

77th Annual ICA Conference

THEME

Centering the Human: Communication in an Age of Uncertainty

The theme for ICA 2027 invites scholars to reflect on the nature and aims of communication research in a time shaped by the transformative impact of artificial intelligence, and set against the backdrop of intensifying global crises, growing authoritarianism and democratic backsliding, geopolitical instability, and climate emergency.

Artificial intelligence is rapidly reshaping communication processes, societal institutions (including higher education), and research practices across the globe. From algorithmic curation of social media platforms to the use of Large Language Models for communication practices and scholarship, AI is transforming how communication is produced, circulated, researched, and governed.

These developments raise fundamental questions about the place of human agency in communication. They require us to reflect on the aims and preoccupations of communication research, accounting for technological change without losing our inherent focus on how humans communicate, and the role of traditional media organizations and platforms within this process.

Submission deadline

**2nd
November
2026**

SUBMISSION LINK

 www.icahdq.org

IMPORTANT DATES

1 SEPTEMBER 2026

Paper submission
system opens

2 NOVEMBER 2026

Paper submission
deadline

13 JANUARY 2027

Acceptance notices

3-7 JUNE 2027

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Unequal access to AI and disparate impacts of the technology and its infrastructure throughout the world bring a new dimension to ongoing challenges of expanding communication research and growing a more inclusive community of scholars. These questions are both normative and practical, and reverberate across the varied fields and areas of research represented by ICA divisions and interest groups.

At the same time, the uncertainties confronting communication are not reducible to technological change alone. We are living through a period marked by overlapping and compounding forms of uncertainty. These include, but are not limited to, geopolitical conflict on a global scale; environmental crisis and climate precarity; economic instability and widening inequalities; and epistemic uncertainty in the form of misinformation, challenges to academic freedom and scholarly expertise, and declining trust in institutions, including universities and legacy media organizations. These conditions represent challenges for individuals, groups, civic society actors, and media organizations - as well as for communication researchers. The transformations we are witnessing are experienced unevenly across the world. This theme therefore invites broader reflection on the role of communication and communication scholarship, in understanding and addressing the challenges of our time.

To center the human in communication research means foregrounding lived experience and human agency in mediated communication, while coming to terms with the growing power of automated agents within communication processes. It means critically theorizing the impact of these transformations, informed by normative commitments. But it also entails examining how our engagement with ever-changing technologies shapes everyday communicative practices and institutional structures. It ultimately invites reflection on the role of scholars, methods, and epistemologies in shaping knowledge about communication under conditions of uncertainty.

We encourage submissions that examine how communication is evolving in this context, across diverse global settings. Submissions may address, but are not limited to, the following questions:

- What new methodological and theoretical frameworks are needed to study communication in rapidly changing environments?
- How do technological, geopolitical, environmental, or epistemic uncertainties shape communication practices and institutions?
- How is artificial intelligence reconfiguring human agency, creativity, and labor in communication? What are the main challenges and opportunities of these transformations?
- In what ways are communication systems implicated in democratic backsliding, authoritarianism, polarization, and struggles over trust and legitimacy?
- How are conditions of uncertainty unevenly experienced and mediated across different social and global contexts, and what role does communication play in structuring these inequalities?
- What are the implications of global crises (including climate change, conflict and health emergencies) for human communication, broadly understood?
- How do cultural, affective, and embodied dimensions of communication shape experiences of, and responses to, uncertainty?
- What role can communication scholars play in fostering more just, inclusive, and sustainable futures?