

CALL FOR PAPERS

Annual Conference
International Association for Media and Communication Research (IAMCR)
Montreal, Canada
July 12-16, 2015

**The 2015 IAMCR conference will be held under the general theme
“Hegemony or Resistance? The Ambiguous Power of Communication”**

Community Communication Section

The IAMCR Community Communication Section invites submissions of abstracts for papers and panel proposals for the 2015 IAMCR conference to be held 12-16 July 2015 in Montreal.

The deadline for submissions is **February 9, 2015**.

The **Community Communication (ComCom) Section** brings together research on community, alternative and citizens' media, media activism, and other forms of civil society-based communication. It considers a range of non-governmental and non-commercial communication practices such as do-it-yourself media, media for and by communities of locality or interest, social movement communication, social media protests, counter-cultural expressions, and media that form a 'third sector' distinct from public service and commercial media. Such communication practices may use a variety of communication technologies, from print newsletters to mobile phones, from community radio to online social networks.

The section asks questions such as: How do marginalized groups develop, adapt and appropriate communication technologies? What makes citizen media effective and sustainable? What are innovative forms of media activism? What is the social, economic, legal and political environment of community and alternative media? What are appropriate theories and research methods for these media? What forms of journalism do they practice? Do they point us to new forms of networked publics, participatory democracy, and active citizenship (and/or are these concepts problematic)?

The work of the section relates closely to the overall theme of the upcoming conference, “Hegemony or Resistance?” In particular, the notion of ‘media power’, both from the grassroots and from the highest levels of society and politics, is an underlying concern of much of the research in our section. The conference theme will allow us to review how notions of hegemony inform our understanding of media power and the role of community and alternative media. Further, as the conference theme addresses protest movements and their (digital) media use as well as their implications for citizenship and social change, the section similarly investigates issues of social movement media, citizen journalism and new forms of activism. It considers these in their global, social and political context.

Community Communication focus areas, Montreal 2015

The Community Communication Section welcomes contributions from all scholars who research and work in this field and is encouraging submissions particularly on the following themes:

1. Hegemony or Resistance?

Alternative, community and activist media have often been key forces of resistance against authoritarianism and oppression and have played a crucial role in counter-hegemonic movements. Their participatory and interactive character has allowed people (particularly those at the margins) to make their voices heard and contribute to social debate and political change. However, as interaction and contestation have become regular features of mainstream online communication, we need to ask: Are citizen, social and community media resisting hegemony, or are they part of hegemony? Can historical contributions to the theory of hegemony help us understand these dynamics?

2. New Forms of Media Activism

Recent protests and social movements, from the Arab Spring to Occupy Wall Street, and from the Indignados to Quebec's student strike, have led to the emergence of innovative and experimental media practices – from DIY live streaming to social media uses to hacktivism. What can we learn from these experiences about the challenges and opportunities of radical media? What do they tell us about the future prospects of media activism?

3. Community and Alternative Infrastructure

Communities in Canada and elsewhere have successfully developed community-owned and self-managed telecommunications services and media infrastructures. Indigenous and other communities have created internet and phone networks, community WiFi and grassroots tech projects have grown, and academic work on 'community informatics' has flourished. How can researchers and policy-makers support such initiatives? What are the barriers? What can we learn from these experiences?

4. Community and Alternative Journalism: Contexts and Characteristics

What structures and cultures exist within alternative media organisations to facilitate a unique brand of journalism, both in its process and content? What are the connections (and differences) between 'alternative', 'regional', 'community' and 'hyper-local' journalism? How does Gramsci's notion of cultural hegemony relate to contemporary forms of alternative and community journalism? What is the role of these media in the changing news ecology and the emerging 'networked 4th estate'? What new forms of grassroots media (and collaborations) are emerging in the wake of Wikileaks?

5. Challenges and Opportunities for Free Expression and Communication Rights

The policy environment for community, alternative and citizen media offers a diverse picture. On the one hand, community media are increasingly being legalized; on the other hand, media freedoms are threatened by the 'war on terror', mass surveillance and content restrictions (such as internet blocking/filtering). What are the predominant trends? What implications do Snowden's revelations about online surveillance have for citizen media? As we approach the 10th anniversary of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), how has the legal and regulatory situation of community, citizen and alternative media changed?

6. Theorizing Alternative, Community and Citizen Media

The Community Communication Section is interested in investigating, continuing and challenging the theoretical directions laid out by leading thinkers in the field, and developing understandings of relevant emerging concepts. How do we update critical concepts in light of technological and social change? How does research on classic community communication bring new contributions related to social media, and how do digital cultures impact upon collective communicative action? How do we explore connects and disconnects between this field and related academic fields?

Submissions

Format: All proposals must include:

1. Title, author/coordinator name(s), institutional affiliation(s) and full contact information (mailing address, email address, and telephone number).
2. Topic area (one of the focus topics, see above, or 'other').
3. Type of proposal:

TYPE A:

Individual or co-authored scholarly paper: Applicants must submit a 300-500 word abstract. The abstract should describe:

- the main question or research problem
- its significance
- the theoretical framework
- what is known from existing research
- the research method
- expected outcomes
- relation with the chosen topic area

Submitted abstracts will be evaluated on the basis of their theoretical and/or research contribution, originality and significance, quality of writing, relevance to the work of the section.

NOTE: For project presentations (without a theoretical background) we encourage applicants to choose a format under TYPE C, not TYPE A.

TYPE B:

Panel proposal: The panel coordinator must submit a well-defined statement of purpose (300-500 words) and a complete list of panel participants. For each panelist, a full abstract (as above under Type A) has to be submitted, with a note of the panel title at the top.

TYPE C:

Other session/presentation formats: We encourage proposals for innovative formats such as workshops, video screenings, performances, webcasts or field trips. The coordinator must submit a well-defined 300-500 word statement of purpose and a detailed description of activities, as well as any infrastructure requirements (space, projectors, etc.). We cannot guarantee, at this moment, that all these formats will be feasible in Montreal, but we commit to supporting proponents in making them possible.

Please indicate at the end of your abstract if you would be willing to chair a session.

Procedure:

All proposals must be submitted through the online Open Conference System at <http://iamcr-ocs.org> between 1 December 2014 and 9 February 2015. Early submission is strongly encouraged. Email submission of abstracts is not accepted.

Individuals may submit 1 abstract (paper) per Section or Working Group, and a maximum of 2 abstracts (papers) to the overall conference altogether. Under no circumstances should there be more than 2 abstracts bearing the name of the same applicant either individually or as part of any group of authors. Submitting the same or very similar abstract to more than one section or working group is not allowed. Such submissions will be deemed to be in breach of the conference guidelines and will be automatically rejected by the Open Conference System, by the relevant Head or by the Conference Programme Reviewer. Such applicants risk being removed entirely from the conference programme.

Upon submission of an abstract, you will be asked to confirm that your submission is original and that it has not been previously published in the form presented. You will also be given an opportunity to declare if your submission is currently before another conference for consideration.

Paper Submission:

Presenters are expected to bring fully developed work to the conference. Prior to the conference, it is expected that a completed paper will be submitted to the Section.

Deadline for full papers: **19 June 2015**.

Submitting to the Right Section: If you submit your proposal to the wrong section, it may be rejected. Please consider carefully if the Community Communication Section is most appropriate for your proposal (check the list of sections at <http://iamcr.org/s-wg>). Please contact us well before the deadline if you are unsure.

Languages: IAMCR accepts submissions in its official languages of English, Spanish, and French, though an English translation (even a brief summary) of your abstract will be much appreciated. For conference presentations, we encourage presenters who wish to talk in a language other than English to prepare slides or print-outs in English to facilitate understanding, interaction and debate. The Section endeavours where possible to provide summarized translations of key papers in Spanish and French, although we have no funds to hire translators. To this end, we are looking for volunteer translators/interpreters for abstracts, sessions and papers.

If you can contribute and help translate some papers or key points into Spanish or French, please contact us (see details of Chair and Vice-Chairs below).

Decisions on acceptance of abstracts will be communicated to applicants by **March 23, 2015**.

Information

For information about the conference, go to: <http://congresiamcr.uqam.ca/en.html>

To learn more about the Community Communication section, go to:
ComCom Website: <http://iamcr.org/s-wg/section/community-communication>

To contact your Community Communication Section Heads, or to find out more about ComCom in IAMCR, contact:

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Finally, note the following deadlines and key dates for the 2014 IAMCR Conference:

1 December 2014	Open Computer System (OCS) opens for abstract submission at http://iamcr-ocs.org
9 February 2015	OCS closes – final deadline for abstract submission
23 March 2015	Notification of acceptances of abstracts
14 April 2015	Confirmation of participation from all presenters
6 May 2015	Deadline for early bird registration
19 May 2015	First draft conference program
13 June 2015	Conference programme to be published online
19 June 2015	Deadline for full paper submission
12-16 July 2015	IAMCR Conference, Montreal