

## Passing the Conductor's Baton: The Score Remains the Same

### *Editorial*

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When Larry Gross asked me if I was interested in becoming editor of the *International Journal of Communication* (IJOC), I responded affirmatively without hesitation. After editing the *Journal of Communication* and the *International Journal of Press/Politics*, I had not contemplated doing another editorial stint, although I tremendously enjoyed both experiences. Editing is immensely rewarding and stimulating. It is a wonderful opportunity to foster and support research and debates, spotlight important work, and collaborate with authors, reviewers, and editorial board members.

I accepted Larry's invitation because I strongly believe in the mission of IJOC and its unique contribution to communication studies. It is an outstanding example of "thinking outside the box" in academic publishing. An open-access journal that brings together a diversity of epistemologies and research themes, it is committed to global inclusion and cutting-edge scholarship on key historical and contemporary issues. Also, IJOC has featured forums, special sections, book reviews, and commentaries. It recognizes that not every important idea or productive debate always fits the contours of the standard research article. Different formats are needed for different forms of written scholarship. IJOC continues the important scholarly tradition of publishing book reviews as opportunities for criticism and public debate.

My personal vision aligns with IJOC's goals and accomplishments. A change in conductor, so to speak, will not bring alterations to the musical score or the distinctive sound of the journal.

As specialized journals continue to proliferate, IJOC occupies a particular place as a generalist journal. It sits at the intersection of multiple pathways in communication studies. This unique position is worth preserving and nurturing. It is a pillar of IJOC's distinctive identity. I hope that the journal will continue to be seen as a meeting point for scholars coming from different research traditions and with diverse analytical interests. In my mind, this is what makes IJOC a common asset for our vibrant and ever-growing (post)discipline.

IJOC is the kind of journal that fits the current moment in communication studies. I would characterize the situation as follows: the perennial malleability of communication as an intellectual concept and normative lodestar; the thematic expansion and branching out of communication studies; renewed transnational cooperation and comparative studies; the globalization of academe amid significant

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structural disparities in terms of accumulated resources, language skills, and professional capital; shapeshifting forms of digital communication driven by political, economic, social, cultural, and technological changes; rapid digitally based transformations in sociability, work, entertainment, organizations, business, health, religion, government, and citizenship; and the epochal transformation of the communication commons worldwide.

These conditions should nudge us to test, revisit, and refine theories, concepts, and arguments; to understand ways that communication and social transformations spawn novel developments and uses; and to develop nuanced explanations about unique and similar phenomena across societies.

IJOC will continue to highlight the intersection between communication and defining issues of our tumultuous times. Of particular interest are the multiple ways communication is connected to overlapping crises, such as ecological catastrophe, global migration, war and conflict, the fraying of social ties, social exclusion, interpersonal and collective violence, social hate, and disinformation and surveillance. It is equally important to foreground communication processes about responses to multiple crises through hope, empathy, tolerance, reaffirmation, understanding, solidarity, and peace building.

I particularly welcome contributions that explore central questions within each of the many specific areas of specialization or that intend to bring together streams of niche scholarship around common questions. What big questions and ideas attract (or should bring) attention? What are relevant cross-cutting themes? What understudied topics deserve close examination? How do theoretical, conceptual, analytical, and methodological innovations probe conventional wisdom? What are the unique contributions of communication scholarship to transdisciplinary concerns as well as social and public problems? I encourage scholars to contact me if they have ideas for special topics and forums that would fit these priorities.

IJOC's editorial staff will continue in their positions. I look forward to working with Managing Editor Kady Bell-Garcia, Special Sections Chi Zhang, and our new webmaster, Mark Mangoba-Agustin.

Finally, a few words of appreciation. Thank you to Larry for entrusting me with editing IJOC, a journal that is part of his rich legacy in communication studies. I am also grateful to the faculty and staff at the Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism (ASCJ) at the University of Southern California for their support, particularly Dean Willow Bay, Professor Hector Amaya, and Senior Associate Dean Deb Lawler. As a faculty member in the School of Media and Public Affairs at George Washington University, it is an honor to serve as editor of an ASCJ/USC journal. I also want to recognize ASCJ and the Annenberg Foundation for their robust commitment to underwriting IJOC as a valuable, public resource for communication studies.

I look forward to steering IJOC and working with authors and reviewers in the years ahead.