

International Journal of
Strategic Communication



Call for Abstracts & Papers

Special Issue – Volume 19(2)

AI and Strategic Communication: The Impact of Emerging Technologies on the Field

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Deadline for Abstracts: March 31, 2024

Rationale

In 2007, IJSC published a special issue on communication technology. In that first-ever special issue for the journal, studies examined topics such as website use for brand activism and blogs as megaphones for corporate interests. We have come a long way since 2007.

In the 16 years since, communication technology has gone from a growing factor in communication tactics to an all-encompassing force that both defines practice and directs theory. The rise of big data, artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning, including applications that provide automated content production and data analysis and interpretation, has signaled a sea-change in communicator roles. As the tactical tasks of communication are increasingly AI driven and more sophisticated data collection and analysis aids strategic decision-making, questions arise over the future role of the communication professional. . Education has seen a similar shift. Strategic communication programs are moving from a focus on writing and content to data mining, analytics and AI governance, as instructors seek to update course learning to meet the career needs of an already digital native generation.

Collister (2015) stated that “computational processes play a central – and largely invisible – role in the identification, determining, analysis and dissemination of strategic communication” (p. 7). Sundar and Lee (2022) argued for a two-prong approach to understanding AI use: Human AI Interaction (HAI), comprising inputs and outputs in AI use, and AI Mediated Communication (AIMC), encompassing AI’s use in crafting messages and facilitating human-human interaction. Other such as Halff and Gregory (2023) and Buhmann et al. (2020) have identified some of the significant ethical issues with big data

and AI systems. Bourne (2019) warns against communication professionals embracing these new technologies without due consideration of their implications. Looking to the future, Moore and Hübscher (2021) consider a world of AI-enabled intelligent user interfaces and the implications for public relations when total sensory immersion is a reality. All these issues have specific relevance to strategic communication theory and practice. This special issue welcomes a variety of communication contexts, technologies, and fields of knowledge to answer the call to understand the uses and implications of AI, machine learning, and other communication technologies for communicators and scholars. A range of topics may include but is not limited to the following:

- (1) Communication uses and effects of AI and LLM tools
- (2) Effects of AI on strategic communication tasks
- (3) Role of data mining and dashboards in strategic communication
- (4) Ethical implications of AI use
- (5) Issues of algorithmic transparency, explainability and accountability
- (6) Negative aspects of AI including issues of bias, privacy, deep-fakes and lack of redress
- (7) Factors of AI adoption in strategic communication
- (8) Machine learning and algorithms for strategy and strategic decision-making
- (9) Data analytics
- (10) Role of AI in educating today's strategic communicators
- (11) Integration of AI and its effects on functions (i.e. marketing, public relations, and advertising) and communication processes
- (12) Stakeholder reception of AI Mediated Content (AIMC)
- (13) AI and machine learning in crisis planning
- (14) AI and relationships: Chatbots, human-AI interaction (HAI), and other relational effects on organizational relationships
- (15) Strategic imperatives for communicator-computer interaction using AI
- (16) AI and the future of strategic communication
- (17) Reputational implications of AI
- (18) Regulation and legislation of and for AI systems

We encourage a variety of theoretical perspectives and communication contexts for understanding the uses, effects, and effectiveness of AI in strategic communication. Authors should explicitly articulate how their scholarship fits within the broader concept of strategic communication in their submissions.

Contributions to the Special Issue should conceptualize how insights may be utilized to disentangle key issues in the uses of AI in the field of strategic communication, such as trust, ethics, image, identity, reputation, power and influence, and manipulation and deception, among others. Ideally, authors should go beyond exploration, fulfilling the need to develop theory with explanatory power and practical utility.

The selection of papers will reflect the scope of the *International Journal of Strategic Communication*, which aims to build an interdisciplinary body of knowledge in strategic communication, defined as "all communication that is substantial for the survival and sustained success of an entity. Specifically, strategic communication is the purposeful use of communication by an entity to engage in conversations of strategic significance to its goals. Entity includes all kind of organizations (e.g., corporations, governments, or non-profits), as well as social movements and known individuals in the

public sphere. Communication can play a distinctive role for the formulation, revision, presentation, execution, implementation, and operationalization of strategies” (Zerfass et al., 2018, p. 487).

Submitted papers should clearly be linked to existing scholarship in strategic communication and reflect the understanding mentioned above, but can be based on theoretical and methodological approaches from diverse disciplines. Research questions and topics addressed should be valuable for a global readership. While international, comparative, and cross-cultural studies are especially welcome, research with a regional or national focus is suitable if insights or results build understanding of strategic communication in other parts of the world.

Submission and Selection Process

Abstracts with proposals for submissions should be no more than 1.000 words, including references (double-spaced with 1” margins, Times New Roman 12 pt.). Abstracts should outline the paper, providing research questions and/or hypotheses, methods, key messages or results, and contribution to the body of knowledge.

Please also submit a separate title page to list all author names and affiliations, as well as a short bio (2–3 sentences; max. 75 words) of the author(s).

Abstracts and bios should be submitted by March 31, 2023, to guest editors Brian G. Smith (bgsmithphd@gmail.com) and Anne Gregory (A.Gregory@hud.ac.uk).

The authors of the abstracts most suited to the topic of the Special Issue will be asked to submit full papers of not more than 32 pages, including references and tables/figures (maximum 8,000 words), by June 30, 2024. Full paper submissions should follow the Instructions for Authors on the IJSC website. Authors must use APA 7 style for citations, references, tables and figures caption. All identifying information must be deleted before full paper submissions.

Full papers will receive blinded external review, as well as review by the guest editors. The accepted manuscripts will be published online in late 2024 and in print in IJSC, Vol. 19(2).

Depending on the overall breadth and quality of the selected submissions, the articles might also published later on as an edited book by Routledge – this was done with some special issues of this journal before and gained more outreach for all authors.

Timeline

- Deadline for abstract submission: March 31, 2024
- Requests for full papers provided: April 13, 2024
- Deadline for full article submissions: June 30, 2024
- Reviews of full papers provided: August 31, 2024
- Deadline for revised submissions: October 31, 2024
- Additional revisions (if necessary): subsequently
- Final versions due: December 10, 2024
- Papers and editorial transferred to production: December 15, 2024
- Special issue articles published online-first: subsequently
- Special Issue IJSC 19(2) published in print: March 2025

About the guest editors

Dr. Brian G. Smith is an associate professor of public relations in the School of Communications at Brigham Young University, USA.

Dr. Anne Gregory is professor emeritus of corporate communication at the University of Huddersfield, UK.

About the journal

The International Journal of Strategic Communication (IJSC) is one of the top journals published by Routledge (Taylor & Francis) listed since on the Web of Science (Clarivate) since 2023 and a CiteScore (Scopus) of 4.9 (2022). The journal had a record 230,000 downloads of articles in 2022. It has a truly global outreach: almost 3,000 institutions have access through subscriptions to Taylor & Francis Online and more than 1,000 through EBSCO. Its readership is truly international with article downloads spread over Asia (22%), North America (19%), Europe (39%), Africa (10%), and Australasia (8%). The journal is part of a multi-national effort to integrate various communication disciplines into a coherent body of knowledge and facilitate the development of strategic communication as a domain of study. IJSC seeks to define the field of strategic communication, address the application of theory to this emerging field, provide a forum for multidisciplinary approaches and diverse research traditions, and espouse a truly international perspective that gives voice to cross-cultural research and scholars in all regions of the world. To view an online sample, visit www.tandfonline.com/HSTC. The journal is managed by editors Dr. Ansgar Zerfass, Leipzig University, Germany & BI Norwegian Business School, Oslo, Norway; Kelly Page Werder, Ph.D., Zimmerman School of Advertising and Mass Communications, University of South Florida, Tampa, FL, USA, and associate editors Dr. Jens Seiffert-Brockmann, WU – Vienna University of Economics and Business, Vienna, Austria; Brian G. Smith, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, USA.

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