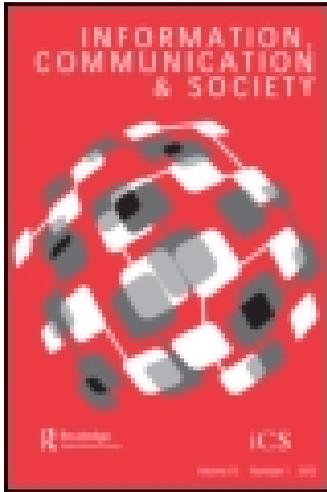


This article was downloaded by: [Apyrl Williams]

On: 06 March 2015, At: 13:26

Publisher: Routledge

Informa Ltd Registered in England and Wales Registered Number: 1072954 Registered office: Mortimer House, 37-41 Mortimer Street, London W1T 3JH, UK



Information, Communication & Society

Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:

<http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/rics20>

Where we've been and where we are going

Laura Robinson^a & Apyrl Williams^b

^a Department of Sociology, Santa Clara University, Santa Clara, CA, USA

^b Department of Sociology, Texas A&M University, College Station, TX, USA

Published online: 03 Mar 2015.



CrossMark

[Click for updates](#)

To cite this article: Laura Robinson & Apyrl Williams (2015): Where we've been and where we are going, Information, Communication & Society, DOI: [10.1080/1369118X.2015.1014205](https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2015.1014205)

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2015.1014205>

PLEASE SCROLL DOWN FOR ARTICLE

Taylor & Francis makes every effort to ensure the accuracy of all the information (the "Content") contained in the publications on our platform. However, Taylor & Francis, our agents, and our licensors make no representations or warranties whatsoever as to the accuracy, completeness, or suitability for any purpose of the Content. Any opinions and views expressed in this publication are the opinions and views of the authors, and are not the views of or endorsed by Taylor & Francis. The accuracy of the Content should not be relied upon and should be independently verified with primary sources of information. Taylor and Francis shall not be liable for any losses, actions, claims, proceedings, demands, costs, expenses, damages, and other liabilities whatsoever or howsoever caused arising directly or indirectly in connection with, in relation to or arising out of the use of the Content.

This article may be used for research, teaching, and private study purposes. Any substantial or systematic reproduction, redistribution, reselling, loan, sub-licensing, systematic supply, or distribution in any form to anyone is expressly forbidden. Terms &

Conditions of access and use can be found at <http://www.tandfonline.com/page/terms-and-conditions>

INTRODUCTION

Where we've been and where we are going

Laura Robinson^{a*} and Apryl Williams^b

^a*Department of Sociology, Santa Clara University, Santa Clara, CA, USA;* ^b*Department of Sociology, Texas A&M University, College Station, TX, USA*

The 2015 CITASA special issue of *Information, Communication & Society* brings together scholarship that invites us to take stock of where we are, the pathways that have led us here, and our journey forward. In this vein, we have selected eight articles that highlight the substantive, methodological, and theoretical innovation central to the Communication Information Technologies section of ASA. Collectively, these articles push the boundaries of our field forward and expand the bounds of our section's intellectual horizons.

Section I: Who are we?

We open the volume with Jennifer Earl's 'CITASA: intellectual past and future'. Earl's piece offers a historical overview of our section's intellectual growth and marks many of the important milestones in our section's developments and self-conceptions. Earl argues that:

CITASA has for both practical and intellectual reasons become the largest point of reconnection between communication and sociology after a period of diaspora ... in addition to being a point of reconnection, our section has re-introduced critical sociological concerns and insights into the study of new media and digital technology ...

Tracing the ever-expanding frontiers of CITASA research, Earl's piece sets the tone for the special issue.

Section II: Who is watching?

In the next section, two articles prompt us to consider how individuals manage their connectivity in two important life realms: romantic partnerships and work. Both pieces of research explore how continuous connectivity affects the psyche in ways both good and bad. Veronika Lukacs and Anabel Quan-Haase investigate the emotional repercussions of digitally mediated breakups in 'Romantic breakups on Facebook: new scales for studying post-breakup behaviors, digital distress, and surveillance'. Developing new scales for measuring 'ex' surveillance, they reveal that young people who engage in higher levels of internet electronic surveillance experience more breakup distress.

Subsequently, Julia Ticona continues the analysis of how workers manage connectivity in 'Strategies of control: workers' use of ICTs to shape knowledge and service work'. Counterposing knowledge and service workers, Ticona finds that these two groups of workers differ in the ways that they manage their connectivity. Service workers use ICTs as emotional outlets to

*Corresponding author. Email: laura@laurarobinson.org

counter the undesirable aspects of work. By contrast, knowledge workers seek to limit their connectivity to shield their personal lives from greedy jobs. Both articles shed new light on the emotional repercussions of connectivity.

Section III: Who is engaging?

In the third section, three articles suggest that the transformative effects of digital media are more subtle than previously thought. Each of the three pieces reaches conclusions indicating the complicated nature of the relationship between the digital public sphere and digital media. Shelley Boulianne explores these relationships in ‘Social media use and participation: a meta-analysis of current research’. In her analysis of meta-data, she finds a positive relationship between social media use and participation. At the same time, Boulianne cautions that questions remain about the degree to which the association is causal and transformative vis-à-vis participation in election campaigns.

A second article also contributes to our understanding of sustained engagement in the digital public sphere: ‘Connecting people to politics over time? ICT and retention in MoveOn.org and the Florida Tea Party Movement’ by Deana Rohlinger and Leslie Bunnage. Studying two very different kinds of political groups, Rohlinger and Bunnage link individuals’ decisions to stay involved to the ways ICTs are used to structure participation. Their analysis establishes that reasons for continued involvement are more complex than previous research demonstrates.

The section closes with a third article, ‘Professional journalists in “Citizen” journalism’ by Andrew M. Lindner, Emma Connell, and Erin Meyer. The authors challenge popular accounts of citizen journalism as far removed from mainstream media. Rather, they conclude that a large number of citizen journalism sites include current or former professional journalists as contributors. Their article sheds light on the persistent professionalization within citizen journalism and the continued dominance of elite actors within the public sphere.

Section IV: Who is in? Who is out? Whose data?

In the fourth and final section, the 2015 CITASA special issue closes with two articles that ask us to consider implicit assumptions about universal connectedness and what it means for future scholarly agendas. The article ‘Digital inequalities and why they matter’ assembles the voices of many CITASA scholars of digital inequalities: Laura Robinson, Shelia Cotten, Hiroshi Ono, Anabel Quan-Haase, Gustavo Mesch, Wenhong Chen, Jeremy Schulz, Timothy M. Hale and Mike Stern. They argue that digital inequality should make its way into the work of social scientists concerned with a broad range of outcomes connected to life chances and life trajectories, placing it alongside more traditional forms of inequality in the twenty-first century pantheon of inequalities.

Finally, we close this issue of iCS with Alexander Halavais’ ‘Bigger sociological imaginations: framing big social data theory and methods’. Halavais challenges us to ground our use of big data in well-developed and time-honored social research methods and theories. He makes the case that key questions about big social data are core sociological questions. Therefore, to answer these questions, ‘We need to develop a new, bigger sociological imagination that allows us to incorporate big social data rather than reinventing the wheel’.

In closing, the 2015 CITASA special issue of *Information, Communication & Society* is the fruit of many labors. We thank the authors who contributed their work, the iCS editors Brian Loader and Sarah Shrive-Morrison whose efforts have been tireless, the reviewers who provided invaluable insights, and our section leadership and membership, both of which continue to invigorate our field of inquiry.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

Notes on contributors

Laura Robinson is Assistant Professor in the Department of Sociology at Santa Clara University. She earned her Ph.D. from UCLA where she held a Mellon Fellowship in Latin American Studies and received a Bourse d'Accueil at the École Normale Supérieure. In addition to holding a postdoctoral fellowship on a John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation funded project at the USC Annenberg Center, Robinson has served as Visiting Assistant Professor at Cornell University and Visiting Scholar at Trinity College Dublin. Her research has earned awards from CITASA, AOIR, and NCA IICD. Robinson's current multiyear study examines digital and informational inequalities. Her other publications explore interaction and identity work, as well as new media in Brazil, France, and the United States. Her website is www.laurarobinson.org. [email: laura@laurarobinson.org]

Apryl Williams is a doctoral student and Diversity Fellow in the Department of Sociology at Texas A&M University. Her research investigates race-based patterns in social media use among American millennials. Williams' other research interests include postmodernism, identity, presumption, fat studies, and social theory. Her work is currently being published in the *International Journal of Communication*. Among her many service activities, she serves as the communications coordinator and web administrator for CITASA. She also serves on the 2015 editorial team for *Emerald Studies in Media and Communication*. [email: Apryl17w@tamu.edu]