



VOLATILITY



UNCERTAINTY



COMPLEXITY



AMBIGUITY



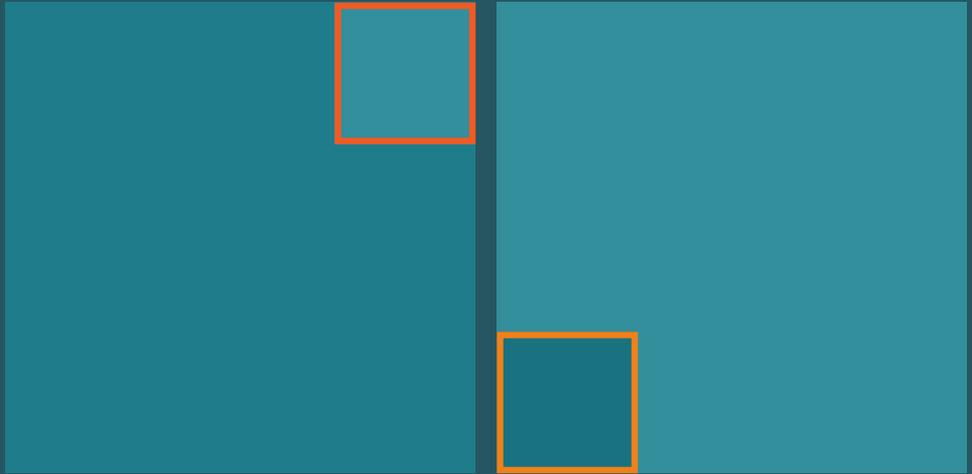
TOROA



# Accelerator 02

2nd TOROA Conference  
19-20 November 2020

TOROA Communication Research  
School of Communication Studies  
AUT City Campus, WG707-708



# COMMUNICATING IN A VUCA WORLD



TOROA



VISION



UNDERSTANDING



CLARITY



AGILITY

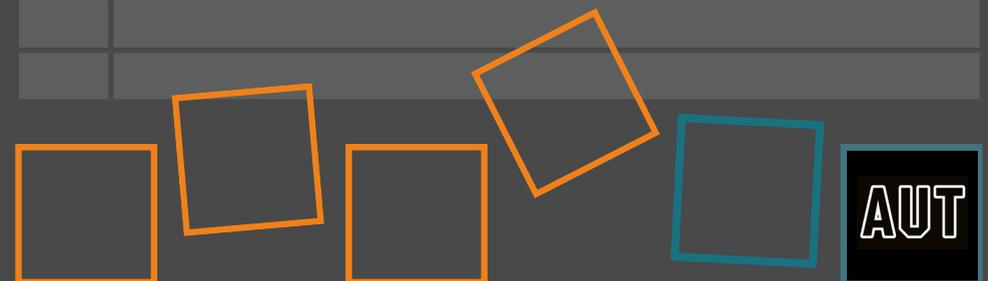
## Thursday, 19 November

8:00	VENUE OPENS   8:30 REGISTRATION	
9:00	Gudrun Frommherz	KEYNOTE: VUCA—what's communication gotta do with it?
	Theme Cluster: VOLATILE MEDIASCAPES	
10:00	Rachel Daniels	Mapping the digital disruption of Internet-distributed television
10:30	Matthew Guinibert	Defining digital media through New Zealand job advertisements
11:00	MORNING TEA	
11:30	Dan Fastnedge	Advertising in a changing world
12:00	Danni Mulrennan	Locked down but not out: How television news responded during COVID-19
12:30	Matt Halliday	Kiwis, COVID, and Cartoons: How an unlikely collaboration helped NZ squash the curve
virtual	Cindy Wang	VUCA communication strategies on WeChat: WeChat engagement during COVID-19
1:00	LUNCH	
	Theme Cluster: BOUNDARY BREACHES	
2:00	Helen Sissons & Philippa Smith	Technologies R Us: Adapt or die. The challenges facing the digital journalist
2:30	Stefanie Martens	Is the PESO model a fraud? An analysis of the changing use of media in NZ's PR practice
virtual	Stephanie Sageo-Tapungu	The effects of Social Media on journalism in Papua New Guinea
3:00	Daljit Singh Bedi & Averill Gordon	Potential of Twitter in mediating relationships between health care PRPs and journalists
3:30	AFTERNOON TEA	
4:00	Feedback, summary remarks, mix & mingle	
4:30	CLOSE OF DAY	



## Friday, 20 November

8:00	VENUE OPENS	
	Theme Cluster: SOS EDUCATION	
9:00	Petra Theunissen & Deepti Bhargava	Learning and teaching in a VUCA world: Embracing the 'experiment'
9:30	Khairiah Rahman & Wan N. W. Noordin	Impacts of VUCA on teaching, learning, and institutional reputation
10:00	Zak Waipara	Seachange: Navigating uncertain currents
10:30	Patrick Usmar	Media literacy education for citizenship in a VUCA world
11:00	MORNING TEA	
	Theme Cluster: VUCA CREATIVE & LEADERSHIP	
11:30	AD Narayan	VUCA as design master: What UX designers can learn from perilous HCI interaction
12:00	James Nicholson & Ross Brannigan	A VUCA practice-led approach to making short-form dramatic film
12:30	Justin Matthews	The value of futurecasting for navigating VUCA in a changing world
1:00	LUNCH	
virtual	Adriel Nugraputra & Dorien Kartikawangi	The influence of leaders' image on customer loyalty: Start-ups and Instagram followers
2:00	Karl Udy	Finding an anchor in a VUCA world: What if we were guided by compassion...?
2:30	Rosser Johnson	CLOSING ADDRESS: Leading change
3:00	Feedback and summary remarks; AWARDS	
3:30	CLOSE OF CONFERENCE	



## KEYNOTE

Dr Gudrun Frommherz

Volatile times, complex lives, and uncertain futures—what's communication gotta do with it?

The keynote to the ACCELERATOR 02 conference introduces 'VUCA' as an emerging scholarly interest. The concept was borrowed from strategy planning in a military and later business context. More recently, 'VUCA' has become a buzz phrase in the contemporary discourses of a visibly changing world. Innovation forces, technological acceleration, disrupted industries, shifting job roles, environmental stresses, climate change, and pandemics all contribute to an increasing sense of both opportunity and doom. Although variation and adaptation may be as old as planet Earth, VUCA suggests the intensification of change pressures—changes that occur much faster and more frequent, rupture deeper, and are substantially less predictable.

The experience of economic volatility, mounting technological complexities, old and new social inequalities, political ambiguity, and a sense of profound uncertainty about human future have informed many debates, both in professional practice and in academia. Nevertheless, and regardless the emergence of newer communication disciplines such as Health Communication, Environmental Communication, Science Communication, Crisis Communication, Change Communication, and Welfare Communication, the role of communication—and of Communication Studies as a scholarly discipline—for defining, structuring, positing, and explaining the experience of 'living in a VUCA world' is yet largely overlooked.

TOROA ACCELERATOR 02 is the first academic conference to address VUCA from a communication perspective. Papers at this conference present, explicate and illuminate various VUCA scenarios in the contexts of media, communication production, education, leadership and future-casting. Together, these papers make a profound argument for communication to be recognised as a central concern for addressing and mitigating VUCA impacts on societies and the lifeworld.

## VOLATILE MEDIASCAPES

Rachel Daniels

Mapping the digital disruption of Internet-distributed television as it proliferates across the world

Internet distribution television services born out of America have strategically spread across the globe, disrupting local broadcasting industries. The 'Any Time, Any Where, Any Device, Any Content' feature and the deluge of quality original content have

captivated audiences, fragmenting their viewing behaviour away from local legacy television. This is coupled with a new subscription-based business model and the deployment of vertical integration, where production processes see the promotion and distribution of original content, as well as stronghold licensing agreements.

The research maps countries that have grappled with the VUCA realities of managing unregulated, large-scale, cloud-based tech companies. Local governments and funding bodies have begun to deliberate this digital shift; looking at policies, pricing, media environments, and local content. Individually nations have had different outcomes. Most Scandinavian countereires have successfully co-produced the Nordic Noir genre with Netflix, and most recently Amazon Prime. Spain has seen Netflix contribute to their local productions.

Nations across Europe, South-East Asia, Australasia, and the Americas are working to defend their local productions. This paper will deconstruct the different territories, comparing their industry framework and practices, and will gauge how nations are responding to the proliferation of internet distributed television across the world.

Dr Matthew Guinibert

Defining digital media through New Zealand job advertisements

The term 'digital media' is nebulous. Academia often defines digital media in vague terms or avoids a definition altogether. This is not surprising as digital media is an emergent subject, changing rapidly to keep pace with technological innovation. This may have created fruitful opportunities for scholars to debate digital media; however, for the practitioners who operate within the digital media domain, the term has become a catch-all that lacks clarity. To elaborate, what does it mean to be a digital media practitioner? Those practitioners with a wealth of experience can draw on it to help define what it is they do. However, students majoring in digital media (or similar programmes) through communication, design, or computer science degrees lack this personal experience and may struggle to connect their education to the vagaries of digital media in real-world employment.

Job employment descriptions are also problematic as they can list 'digital media' skills as required, but with few specificities. Alternatively, the term 'digital media' can be given no weight in job advertisements, which instead comprehensively list all the roles-required competencies. The problem of scope becomes worse with interdisciplinary or t-shaped roles that require competencies from multiple fields, but may not delineate which competencies fall under which field.

This study attempted to clarify digital media

as a profession by scraping job descriptions from a leading New Zealand employment website that matched the search term 'digital media' over a 3-month period. The analysed results were then compared and connected to existing definitions of digital media in order to confirm and connect them to practice. Further, two recurrent themes of strategy and management were identified in the advertisements, but not in existing academic definitions of digital media. This may indicate a shift in digital media as a practice or identify complementary competencies to digital media. The results also confirm that digital media as a field is ill-defined and provides the top 100 mentioned skills and competencies. The outcomes of this research may aid both existing practitioners and novices by further explicating what digital media as a practice is. Educators may find the outcomes useful in setting and prioritising curriculum. Academics might also find the outcomes regarding strategy and management useful in further contextualising or operationalising definitions of digital media.

Dan Fastnedge

Advertising in a changing world

Like other commercial and non-commercial areas in today's world, advertising is undergoing change. The most obvious is the mediums in which it is used. From its origins as a print-based industry, advertising has been forced to evolve in order to survive the proliferation of mass media, and later social media platforms.

The academic discourse of advertising reflects this evolution. Daniel Starch's 1923 definition "selling in print" would exclude the majority of advertising today. However, not only has the medium changed, but the purpose of advertising is also evolving. In recent times, we can see an emphasis on building brand perception rather than solely selling products and services. In comparison to Starch, the more recent academic definition is far broader: it involves all "brand-initiated communication intended on impacting people".

This emphasis on strategically building brand perception has driven brands and advertisers to consider the varied approaches they can undertake to effectively achieve this. Contrary to the traditional 'inward' looking approach, concerned predominantly with their own services, products and customers, we are beginning to observe brands taking an outward look at society and what role they play in it. In recent times we have seen brands using environmental issues, sexual equality, diversity and political debates to reinforce their own role in society. This is a result of many factors. The development of technology has resulted in a more connected world, which in turn has changed audience expectations of how brands fit into their cul-

ture and society. This has also led to a refinement of ethical standards set by governments, advertising authorities and audiences. Higher product diversification is another factor in brands advertising.

Along with several examples of advertising campaigns, this paper investigates how the role of advertising has changed in an uncertain world. I hope to examine this shift and pose some important questions and concerns that need to be addressed by the public, the advertising industry, and by academia.

Danni Mulrennan

Locked down but not out: How television news responded during Covid-19

The COVID-19 pandemic crisis has seen substantially increased news consumption for mainstream media around the world, with television news experiencing a significant leap in viewership between January and April 2020 according to the 2020 Reuters Institute Digital Report. Nightly audiences increased by 14 per cent across European Broadcasting Union countries, while the BBC's bulletins were up by around 30 per cent in March. Prime Minister Boris Johnson's address to the nation was one of the most-watched live broadcasts in the United Kingdom television history, with 27 million viewers. Networks in New Zealand also recorded a surge in ratings when the country experienced two lockdowns. During this period, television journalists were required to self-isolate or socially distance themselves, which had a significant impact on their ability to gather and produce news stories, especially those featuring visual narratives.

This presentation discusses early investigations into the alternative sources of video content used to tell television news stories, and sheds light on journalism's response to the changes in a globally connected society, and the effects on legacy television news.

Matt Halliday

Kiwis, Covid, and Cartoons: How an unlikely collaboration helped NZ squash the curve

Covid-19 has reshaped the world in 2020. It has made the core concepts of VUCA a constant in the everyday life of the world's population. A second wave of lockdowns is taking place across Europe, and while vaccines are being developed in a number of countries with varying indicative timeframes, there is no end in sight for the pandemic, or the uncertainty it has created.

Aotearoa's initial covid-19 elimination response has been lauded the world over; communication has been the cornerstone of this successful elimination campaign. While it is the government

response that is usually the focus of this praise, there are a small number of communicators from Aotearoa who have helped shape how New Zealanders, and the international community, have responded to the threat of Covid-19.

This presentation focuses on the collaboration of Dr Siouxsie Wiles, University of Auckland microbiologist and science communicator, and Toby Morris, illustrator and cartoonist known for his work at the New Zealand news website, The Spinoff. The presentation highlights the key communications Morris and Wiles created together and explores some of the reasons their work resonated so strongly, both in New Zealand and internationally. It takes a look at the communication choices made, specifically the use of animated gifs and human elements over the static graphs more widely used in the communication of the pandemic. This presentation will focus on two GIFs in particular, Morris and Wiles' interpretation of 'flatten the curve' and their re-interpretation of the exponential curve to show the spread of the virus and how to limit it. The presentation also explores how the research will analyse their work through a persuasive communication lens, to understand how Morris's background in advertising informs his style and the immediacy of the work he produces. It delves into the thinking behind the collaboration, why it worked so well and suggests some implications this might have for future crisis communication, arguably the pinnacle of VUCA communication.

Cindy Wang

### What VUCA communication strategies does WeChat use? An examination of WeChat Auckland's engagement of audiences during COVID-19

WeChat, the most popular Chinese instant messaging application, plays an essential role in the lives of expatriate Chinese in New Zealand and elsewhere. Content creators use VUCA strategies to attract their audiences.

This presentation shares findings from a qualitative textual analysis investigating posts from the top five Auckland WeChat news accounts between the onset of COVID-19 and the return from full lockdown in NZ. The contents of the WeChat posts were analysed with special attention given to their titles. The study produced evidence of common strategies used in WeChat news titles, such as leading the audience's mood through the use of ambiguous keywords or posing uncertain questions to guide the audience to think. It can be seen that VUCA as a communication strategy influenced these posts.

The results further reveal which strategic communication skills were used. Several creative strategies were implemented to enhance audience

engagement, and marketers potentially benefit from understanding what strategies effectively achieve audience attention. This study contributes to the social media communication strategies area, especially in context to title techniques.

### BOUNDARY BREACHES

#### Dr Helen Sissons & Dr Philippa Smith Technologies R Us: Adapt or die. The challenges facing the digital journalist

The digital technologies journalists use to capture, curate and disseminate news have become exponentially more convoluted in the last 15 years as the news industry struggles in a state of VUCA in the online environment. Every stage of the journalistic process has been affected by online and social media platforms (i.e. both the sourcing and production of stories) and journalists in turn are constantly redefining themselves and their capabilities as each new development challenges expectations of them. Many communications scholars have concluded that journalism is facing an existential crisis, where even the basic underlying philosophies about what it means to be a journalist are affected. Schlesinger and Doyle describe the current transformation in news media as 'creative destruction', adopting Schumpeter's term from his book Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy, and capturing the idea that in such times, businesses and workers either adapt or die. Other scholars have used terms such as 'precarious' or 'uncertain' to describe the zeitgeist of newswork in the 21st century. Drawing on S. A. Eldridge's 'appropriation thesis' this paper explores the ways in which journalists in New Zealand are responding to new technologies as part of their existing professional routines. We present examples from a video-ethnographic study of newsrooms to better understand the challenges journalists face when it comes to integrating the traditional and the new, and how normalised the use of digital technologies has become based on our observations of the varying degrees of acceptance and resistance they display.

We argue that while the role of the journalist has been transformed and their boundaries tested, the field of journalism has no option when it comes to digital adaptation as it seeks to re-state its claims to present a legitimate vision of the world.

#### Stefanie Martens Is the PESO model a fraud? An analysis of the changing use of media in New Zealand public relations practice

The PESO model is a well-known model that is commonly used in public relations research as well as by public relations practitioners to classify communication tactics into paid, earned, shared

and owned forms of media. Yet, public relations practice has observed a significant increase social media use. This development caused predictions of a shift in the use of media by organisations from the traditional PESO model towards an emerging SOEP (shared, owned, earned, paid) model that focuses on shared media and owned media as these media types outgrow traditional paid media and earned media in importance.

To fully understand this significant change in media use towards social media and to evaluate the relevance of this assumption for New Zealand public relations, we need to analyse the trends in the use of different types of media by New Zealand public relations practitioners. This paper reflects on the content analysis of 148 award-winning New Zealand communications campaigns that have been conducted between 2010 and 2019, and ten in-depth semi-structured interviews with New Zealand public relations practitioners based in Auckland.

It examines patterns in media use by New Zealand public relations practitioners as well as the practitioners' opinions on the importance of the different media types. The findings propose that the original PESO model is not only in constant flux due to the rapidly changing media landscape, but also poses difficulties when it comes to applying this model to categorise communication tactics. It raises the question if the PESO model might be even a fraud for New Zealand public relations and provides ideas how to adapt it to the New Zealand public relations practice.

Stephanie Sageo-Tapungu

#### The effects of Social Media on journalism in Papua New Guinea: The interplay between journalists, sources, and a no longer 'passive' audience

Social media has enabled Papua New Guineans to engage with one another, form online networks, share content, project opinion, promote debate and coordinate activities in ways that were not possible a decade ago. The rise of social media in PNG has seen the advent of a "digital generation of activists, thinkers, informers and influencers".

With social media, people can create news and decide what goes on the own front pages of whichever social media platform they choose to use. They are deciding what the point of their engagement will be — what application, what device, what time, what place. Thus, social media communication has blurred the traditional roles of the journalists, the sources and the audiences. This is creating an environment of volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity for the journalists, who once were the gatekeepers of information and content producers.

The research for this paper examined the current journalism and communication practices in PNG by providing specific examples of how social media interferes with, impacts, and influences the processes of news gathering, writing, editing, and news delivery. The study was conducted through semi-structured interviews with 16 journalists who are employed by two media organisations in PNG.

This paper attempts to shed light on the effects of social media on journalism practice in PNG. Social media has given people a voice and because of that journalism practice is challenged. The more people create and share content, the more fake news and misinformation is circulated, which creates uncertainty about the reliable and credibility of the information shared on social media. This leads to journalists feeling pressured to respond and results in the compromising of ethical journalism practices of fact checking and balancing, criticising and interrogating sources.

#### Daljit Singh Bedi & Dr Averill Gordon Contemporary Media Relations: Potential of Twitter in mediating relationships between healthcare public relations practitioners and journalists

Public relations professionals and journalists have a complex and ambiguous relationship, characterised by both conflict and cooperation. However, a changing media landscape raises questions about how new communication technologies affect this 'love-hate' relationship. Current research reports that the increasing influence of Twitter is changing the communication practice of public relations professionals and journalists.

The research also suggests ambiguity about the mediating role of Twitter between practitioners and journalists. Journalists are seen to use Twitter to contact their sources directly rather than using public relations practitioners, while public relations professionals liaise directly with their publics, bypassing the so-called 'media gatekeepers.' It is argued that this trend not only affects the process of newsgathering by journalists, but also the relationship with their public relations sources. This change in the relational dynamics can have profound consequences on media relations, particularly in the health care sector, as bypassing the process of fact checking can lead to uncertainty in the development of health news.

There is limited research in how Twitter is influencing relationships between public relations professionals and journalists involved in health news in New Zealand. This study uses semi-structured interviews of media professionals on their views of contemporary media relations and how the role of Twitter could influence professional outcomes.

The interim observations made during the process of data collection reveal the volatility, uncertainty and complexity of the changing face of media relations. Similar to previous studies on the conflicting public relations professional–journalist relationship, these observations indicate that although the journalists continue to use information from public relations professionals for developing their stories, they do not recognise that media relations, or their interaction with public relations professionals is important, unlike the public relations practitioners who view media relations as intrinsic to their profession.

## SOS EDUCATION

### Dr Petra Theunissen & Deepti Bhargava Learning and teaching in a VUCA world: Embracing the ‘experiment’

Learning is about acquiring knowledge and skills through various means, such as experiences, studying, or being taught something. Teaching, or the process of imparting knowledge and skills, is therefore integral to students’ learning.

As the world turned to online learning during the disrupted world of VUCA, teachers and students found themselves “forced into an education experiment”. This experiment was one where students and teachers had to navigate changing schedules and new modes of delivery, which posed unforeseen challenges. Classes were cancelled because of technical difficulties, Wi-Fi issues, or teachers who “were simply panicked over the prospect of teaching the full class over the new platform”.

Like everywhere else, Auckland University of Technology turned to online teaching, requiring lecturers to rapidly upskill and convert material to be delivered online. Confronted by various delivery modes with no clear guidance as to what the most appropriate or effective method might be, the teaching team from the Public Relations Department made the decision to use MS Teams as their preferred medium for delivery. This was based in the belief that the ‘experiment’ should at the very least assist in developing students’ professional capabilities and model professional practice. This was particularly important in the light that learning was likely to be impeded because of limitations in motivation and attention needed for online learning.

Thus, the team engaged in intentional learning combined with a team-teaching approach. Intentional learning is about following a deliberate approach where the material (or skills) is learned purposefully and committed them to memory. Incidental learning, on the other hand, is the learning that happens by chance while focusing on something else. A team-teaching approach enhanced intentional peer to peer learning and enabled a problem-solving approach to teaching.

Though the first semester’s experimentation was fairly challenging, it provided insights that aided in a smoother transition to online delivery in the second semester.

Using an autoethnographic approach, this presentation discusses the philosophy that led to the decision to use MS Teams as the medium for delivery in a third-year project-based paper. Autoethnography is both a process and a product. The authors use this approach to reflect on key practices and learnings from the experience of using MS Teams. They conclude that, while MS Teams has limitations, it connects more closely with students’ future professional practice and should be taught more intentionally in order to enhance students’ capabilities.

### Khairiah Rahman & Dr Wan Norbani Wan Noordin

#### Impacts of VUCA on teaching, learning, and institutional reputation

Tertiary education was temporarily halted and eventually migrated virtually as governments enforced lockdowns during the pandemic. Teachers became the first point of contact for students as they sought clarity, assurance, and confirmation of the overall institutional strategy for teaching and learning. Thrusted to the forefront by virtue of their roles, teachers were seen as representatives of the organisational voice, relaying first-hand information to students. The concept of VUCA, with its leadership foundation, underlines the role of the teacher as an authority in a subject area. In vulnerable and challenging times, the prominence of the teacher as a focal reference point cannot be underestimated as management collaborates with government and institutional partners behind the scenes to deliberate over the best approach that will sustain the organisation financially.

This research takes an analytical and conceptual approach comparing the impacts of VUCA observed by two senior lecturers in a New Zealand and Malaysian tertiary institution, respectively. Each researcher discusses their teaching experiences of handling student learning issues, managing virtual classrooms, and keeping abreast with management updates on teaching expectations during the pandemic. Their reflections examine the nexus between VUCA elements, management directives, the teacher as educator and students’ expectations and performance.

While low attendance in virtual classroom was an issue in the New Zealand study, attendance was high at 98-100% for the Malaysian cohort. In both countries, third year students showed more engagement in virtual classroom participation compared to their juniors. Resource materials in The Learning Management Systems, Blackboard

and MS Teams facilitated the learning process, while additional channels of communication meant that there was more workload and responsibility for teachers.

In terms of management directives and the teacher’s role as educator, both researchers found similar impacts on overall wellness and stress levels. The pandemic required teachers to manage deliverables in a vastly changed setting, handle increased communication relating to pastoral care of students’ learning, and meet management expectations. Issues of internet accessibility, financial pressures on staff and students, increased workload and the blurring of workplace boundaries also affected institutional reputation.

This paper recommends that institutions allow for flexible work arrangements so that teachers can adapt to the new normal while institutions formulate the next standard operating procedure. Institutions should avoid drastic changes during the pandemic and give tertiary teachers the mandate to address their students on the teaching and learning strategies for their respective areas of expertise. Any major changes in pedagogy should be discussed and implemented in non-pandemic times rather than be created in haste and applied during times of heightened volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity.

### Zak Waipara Seachange: Navigating uncertain currents

In the volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous present that we find ourselves in, a student asks, “When I can get everything online, what is the point of the university to me?” A challenging question at a challenging time, where not just change, but rapid and unexpected change, is the new normal. Another student commented on the lack of engagement they felt with a ‘2D video person’, while others asked for more directed teaching, to gain specific skills from lecturers, rather than being pointed to a limited set of online notes and links.

These examples of feedback reflect the anxiety some students have expressed about study in 2020, and in the times ahead, and they should prompt a serious call to action. What are we here for? What is the role of the teacher, during pandemic conditions or not, if a University decides all content can be delivered from afar, in online, video formats? While it is true that a vast sea of information is available to anyone with the desire to search out self-directed learning, students can flounder or drown without guidance. The key may be in how we communicate our role, both to our students and to ourselves.

Metaphors are powerful ways to frame ideas, and are present throughout mythology, storytell-

ing and visual design. They are a bridge out of our experience that reaches across to new understanding. How can we use metaphor, particularly indigenous ways of seeing, that might offer solutions for both student and teacher?

VUCA 2.0 uses this approach when it makes use of the idiom of the North Star, used to describe adherence to a purpose or vision. This metaphor could be expanded to include an entire compass of VUCA 2.0 principles, where each of the terms – Vision, Understanding, Courage and Adaptability – are the four directional compass points. The use of star imagery as guiding lights is also useful in this part of the world, as it taps into frameworks that draw on Pacific voyaging for “conceptualising the education of Pasifika peoples in the context of 21st century New Zealand.” This intersection of creative practice and pedagogy may offer some ideas to consider when confronting these challenges.

### Patrick Usmar Media literacy education for citizenship in a VUCA world

Popularly misunderstood as a ‘soft’ subject, media studies battles on, continually minimised by political will, under-investment, and in many cases little training for school teachers. Debates have raged for decades about teaching media studies in schools. Internet-connected technologies in schools are a given, with many New Zealand high schools operating a ‘bring your own device’ policy.

Recent developments value the capacity of young people to make meaning from their media skills, enabling them to participate in democracy in an increasingly diffuse media environment. That said, high school teachers are directed to keep politics out of the classroom, whilst attempting to integrate media studies and literacy into the curriculum. There’s a tendency to use media in class, but not to analyse it. This suggests that media studies in schools is important but we’re not sure how.

This research zooms in on media literacy as a critical discipline within media studies; the capacity to access, analyse, evaluate and create messages in a variety of forms. In the context of VUCA, we must ask questions about whether media literacy should be taught as a separate subject or integrated into other subjects (or both). This is vital to prepare young people to navigate the contemporary media environment.

Ideologically speaking, this research will interrogate the need for continued focus on critical thinking skills, especially where they intersect along the lines of power, gender, democracy and class. This presentation will summarise key arguments in maintaining a high standard of media literacy in schools, and the potential for additional training for school teachers.

## VUCA CREATIVE & LEADERSHIP

AD Narayan

### VUCA as design master: What UX designers can learn from perilous human-computer interaction

The human use of emerging media and communication technologies is often unsatisfactorily resolved in favour of pushing feature design over usability concerns. Non-intuitive or non-effective interactions with technical systems become particularly problematic in high intensity and crisis operations, where multiple complex tasks must be executed by relying on specialised technologies and processes. Extended Reality (XR), an umbrella term for Virtual, Augmented, and Mixed Reality, is such an area, where the promise of managing complex communications is tempered by unresolved UX.

XR is not simply about 3D representations or photorealism: immersive interfaces facilitate powerful, data-rich, virtual interactions in mixed virtual-physical spaces. Through well-designed, compelling, and meaningful information experiences, users can collectively 'extend' their lived experience within geographic spaces. Rescue missions, hazard management, and specialist medical procedures have all benefitted from the adoption of XR technologies. For example, by displaying live vital sign information along with real-time laboratory data and imaging on an augmented reality platform, medical specialists have been able to attempt extreme operations not possible without XR support.

The paper focuses on investigating the inevitable 'breaks' in highly critical communication scenarios, brought on by usability design that is informed by a focus on technical functionality rather than by a human communication perspective. This paper argues that in an environment of increasing VUCA, it becomes vitally important to design future XR for the unpredictability, inconsistency, and error-liability of human behaviour.

### James Nicholson & Dr Ross Brannigan Designing practice-led research experiments to assess the applicability of a VUCA approach to the professional communication practice of making short-form drama film

The application of VUCA to the practice of shooting short-form dramatic film is diametrically opposed to the traditional film producer's need to minimise risk and cost. However, VUCA are elements that can contribute to the potential for creative discovery.

This presentation addresses the problem of designing experiments that operate within the constraints of the traditional producer's imperative and yet also maximise the creative potential of

VUCA for the actor, director and cinematographer. The research project proposes to disrupt standard production practices through the application of documentary approaches to the preproduction of a short-form dramatic film. The paradigm of practice-led research underpins our approach.

The practical core of the project is the production of a short film. The story revolves around an ageing actor troubled by incipient memory loss who is playing the character of King Lear. Both character and actor are experiencing a loss of identity. Story content and form are designed to express uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity. It draws on the work of improvisation practitioner Keith Johnstone who uses volatility as an aid to creative process. It also looks to documentary practice, which developed cinematic methods that embrace the spontaneous and unpredictable. Specifically we will evolve characterisation through application of Rabiger's documentary research process in two iterations of the experiment. The first uses the observational documentary mode, as theorised by Nichols and Knudsen, to build character through non-structured conversational interviewing of actors preparing for the role of Shakespeare's King Lear. The second iteration uses a significantly different documentary mode, the performative, to explore the film maker's personal interaction with the character of King Lear.

The project is the latest of a series of collaborations between the researchers on screen productions that explore identity and character, and which have been positioned at the intersection between theatre and screen production. The focus of this presentation is the incorporation of VUCA elements in the preproduction phase of the film as part of the research design.

### Adriel Ade Nugraputra & Dr Dorien Kartikawangi

#### The influence of leaders' image on customer loyalty: A study of start-up companies and their Instagram followers

Young leaders of start-ups provide role models. In Indonesia, the government encourages the young to become entrepreneurs and to contribute to economic development. Thus, the relationship between the start-ups and the government plays a significant role in business development. Maintaining this relationship contributes to both sides' reputation. Social media are essential as the leaders use them to engage with their stakeholders. However, companies' and leaders' identity representations may be ambiguous, as to whether they are addressing the company or the individual. The start-up's use of social media, and the uncertainty

around reception, may lead to communication and image volatility. The social disclosure produced by and disseminated through social media can highlight people's negative sentiment, particularly customers.

This research explores the influence of a start-up leader's image on customer loyalty. The research is based on corporate communication theories, customer loyalty, leadership, public relations, and personal image. A quantitative approach is used for data gathering from 93 respondents. Results suggest a significant influence of a leader's image of a start-up business on customer loyalty.

Further findings show that based on personal image dimensions, which are awareness, action, acceptance, and attitude, a start-up leader is a person who has the responsibility and is capable of clarifying his statement. Based on customer loyalty dimensions, repeat purchase, retention, and referrals, respondents have demonstrated high loyalty. This loyalty is in product buying, the ability to co-op negative influence, and referencing the company's existence—the highest mean score in action, followed by retention and awareness.

The degree of relatedness between a leader's image and customer loyalty has been shown to be substantial. This means that if the image of the leader increases, customer loyalty also increases.

The study concludes with a recommendation that management should be paying attention to content production and dissemination, primarily through social media, to maintain the relationship with the government and its image.

### Justin Matthews

#### The value of futurecasting for navigating VUCA in a changing world

Future studies—and specifically the area of futurecasting—is a domain of knowledge systems and thinking tools that provide an approach to modelling and planning for the future. Outputs from futurecasting processes offer actionable and predictive scenarios that can be used as inputs into an organisations' specific operational plans to support decision-making for strategic initiatives.

In the context of 'change as the new normal' and a world influenced by the dynamics of VUCA, the knowledge areas of future studies and futurecasting offer a framework for producing science fiction prototypes that can be used to alleviate the impact of VUCA and to achieve clarity for future strategic opportunities. Therefore, science fiction conceptualisation and modelling offer a pathway and a value for overcoming the negative attributes of continual disruption, unpredictability, instability and obscurity, and instead offer a way to navigate the turbulent and shifting futures for organisations that embrace this thinking tool.

### Karl Udy

#### Finding an anchor in a VUCA world: What if we were guided by compassion instead of profit?

The constant chaos of VUCA can be disorienting. Organisations and their leaders can often feel the pressure to constantly change in response to rapidly changing circumstances they find themselves in. But change does not need to be the only response to a VUCA environment, and in fact, some changes can introduce even more destabilization.

But how can we know what the right responses for our organization in our particular VUCA circumstances are? How can we know when we should change and when we should persevere? VUCA by its very nature does not have roadmaps, but are there strategic principles we can apply to navigate a VUCA environment?

This paper draws from recent survey and interview data on Christian charities' attitudes and responses to the changing digital environment and reveals different approaches and frameworks for responding to their VUCA circumstances. With profit taken out of the equation of discovering an appropriate response to VUCA circumstances, it allows us to see what happens when people, organisational mission, tradition and compassion are at the forefront of the decision-making process. In a world where businesses increasingly see the value of having a double bottom line, could there be valuable insights from these organizations that have relevance beyond the charity sector? At a time when many organizations are wondering how they will last beyond the next year, what can we learn from those that draw from a heritage that is centuries old?

### Dr Rosser Johnson

#### CLOSING ADDRESS: Leading change

TOROA Communication Research has invited Dr Rosser Johnson, Head of Communication Studies at the Auckland University of Technology, to speak about his experiences of and insights into leading change at a time of unprecedented disruption of the regular teaching and learning models of the university.

Dr Johnson played an active role in the university's emergency management during the COVID lockdowns, responding to a call by his faculty to assist with strategic planning, while also managing the needs of the school, its departments and staff, and students' apprehensions. Operating in the crossfire of different and often conflicting demands and expectations, Dr Johnson's experience of leading disruption, innovation, and continuance during COVID and beyond is a prime case of VUCA governance.

# TOROA TALK SERIES

## TOROA TALK SERIES 1.0

### **Practice in and as Research**

Dr Gudrun Frommherz

Semester 2, 2019

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A/P Dr Petra Theunissen

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### **Writing for Publishing**

Dr Helen Sissons

Semester 1, 2021

## TOROA TALK SERIES 4.0

### **Research Funding**

TBC

Semester 2, 2021

# TOROA ACCELERATOR 02 CONFERENCE

19-20 November 2020

Auckland University of Technology

School of Communication Studies

City Campus, Sir Paul Reeves Bldg.

WG707-708—STUDIO 7

[toroa@aut.ac.nz](mailto:toroa@aut.ac.nz)

## TOROA Communication Research (TCR)

advances knowledge in applied and digital communication by researching the nexus of relationships between practice, research and scholarship, by promoting practice-informed research, and by facilitating practice-enabled researchers. TCR members, associates and interested researchers (new and established) meet every last Friday in a month. Visitors and new members are welcome.

Papers presented at the ACCELERATOR 02 Conference will be invited for submission to a **Special Edition** of the **Journal of Applied Journalism and Media Studies**.

TOROA ACCELERATOR 2020 provides two awards of recognition:

### **BEST PAPER**

(awarded by the Conference Committee)

### **POPULAR AWARD**

(nominated by the conference participants and audience)

Catering for the ACCELERATOR 02 conference has been generously supported by the Research Committee, School of Communication Studies.

