

# INTERNATIONAL COLLOQUIUM “COMMUNICATION IN THE AGE OF TECHNOLOGICAL CHALLENGES”

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**Abstract.** The International Colloquium “Communication in the Age of Technological Challenges” brought together scholars from Europe and the Americas in Buenos Aires on May 9th, 2023, in a blended format. The event aimed to facilitate interdisciplinary discussions on the influence of technology on communication within academic fields. With a focus on epistemological, anthropological, and ethical challenges, experts in the fields of sociology, linguistics, media studies, and law explored the implications of technological innovations like big data, machine learning, and AI. The colloquium was jointly hosted by the Universidad de Flores in Argentina and the University of Warsaw in Poland. The program featured two panel discussions and a keynote speech. The first panel examined technological challenges from an international legal perspective, covering topics such as human rights, aviation communication testing, and international law’s response to ASAT weapons. The keynote speech by Dr. Maria Cristina Paganoni delved into the discursive aspects of big data. The second panel focused on technological challenges in social sciences, including sociology of law, media studies, and higher education. Presentations in Spanish, English, and Portuguese showcased research on topics such as AI algorithms in legal decisions, technology integration in teaching practices, online echo chambers, and the societal impact of technological innovations. The colloquium provided a platform for interdisciplinary collaboration, enabling scholars to identify common concerns and emphasizing the significance of interdisciplinary approaches to address technology-related challenges.

**Keywords:** communication, technology, law, media, Artificial Intelligence

The International Colloquium “Communication in the Age of Technological Challenges” was held in Buenos Aires on May 9th, 2023, in a blended format with participants from Europe and the Americas. The colloquium aimed to foster interdisciplinary discussions on the impact of technology on communications within various academic fields. Scholars from

disciplines such as sociology, linguistics, media studies, and law came together to explore the epistemological, anthropological, and ethical challenges posed by technological innovations like big data, machine learning, and AI. It was hosted by the Licenciatura en Sociología, Facultad de Psicología y Ciencias Sociales at the Universidad de Flores (Argentina) and the Department of International Legal Communication at the University of Warsaw (Poland).

The colloquium consisted of two panel discussions<sup>1</sup> and a keynote speech. The first panel focused on exploring technological challenges from an international legal perspective. Three distinguished speakers discussed various topics related to the use of technology and its impact on human rights, communication testing in aviation, and the response of international law to the use of ASAT weapons. In the first presentation, Prof. Ryszard Piotrowski, PhD, from the Department of Law and Administration at the University of Warsaw, urged a reflection on our increasing dependence on artificial intelligence. After endorsing voices of warnings, such as Geoffrey Hinton's depiction of AI as an existential threat to mankind or Shoshana Zuboff's conceptualization of surveillance capitalism, Prof. Piotrowski proposed that new human rights could be enacted on the constitutional and international level to guarantee principles such as *habeas potestatem humanam*, *habeas mentem*, or human dignity. Second, Prof. Izabela Gawłowicz, PhD, from the Department of Law and Administration at the University of Zielona Góra, Poland, reflected on an important and urgent topic, given the current war in Europe, with her presentation "The Response of International Law to the Use of ASAT Weapons - a Communication Approach». After reviewing the development of a legal regime for space law and identifying its limits and challenges, Prof. Gawłowicz argued that soft law, such as United Nations resolutions, could be a viable path towards enhancing space security. Next, Prof. Anna Borowska, PhD., from the Aviation Communication Research Laboratory of the University of Warsaw, gave a presentation titled "Heading to Safety: Legal Challenges for Pilots' Communication Testing", in which she analyzed the communicative dimensions of aviation training, practices, and regulations, as well as the challenges arising from the introduction of technology and the lack of shared standards. At the conclusion of the three presentations, Prof. Joanna Osiejewicz, PhD, and Head of the Department of International Legal Communication, Institute of Specialized and Intercultural Communication, at the Faculty of Applied Linguistics of the University of Warsaw presented the International Legal Communication Master Program, which specializes in three areas of intersection between law, communication, and linguistics: design thinking in law, transference of legal knowledge, and the epistemology of lawyering.

The Keynote Speech was given by Dr. Maria Cristina Paganoni from the Department of Languages, Literatures, Cultures and Mediations, Università degli Studi di Milano (Italy). Her presentation, titled "The Discursive Worlds of Big Data," followed the path opened by her book *Framing Big Data: A Linguistic and Discursive Approach* (Paganoni, 2019). In her presentation, Dr. Paganoni analyzed recent changes in the big data narrative, covering topics such as attitudes towards data governance and regulations, the use of data during the COVID-19 pandemic, and the shift in public attention to artificial intelligence.

The second panel took place in the afternoon and focused on technological challenges from the perspective of social sciences. Scholars illustrated their research in fields such as

<sup>1</sup> Video recordings of the panels are available at <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLf1wJeC17bll6xCrew2vVjGOZV2ShisVy>

sociology of law, media studies, epistemology of social sciences, and challenges in higher education, with presentations in Spanish, English, and Portuguese. The first intervention was made by Dr. Artur Stamford Da Silva, Professor of Sociology of Law at the Universidade Federal de Pernambuco (Brazil), who talked about legal decisions and artificial intelligence algorithms. Prof. Da Silva argued for a balanced stance that would not fall for pessimism or optimism about the incorporation of technology in decision-making processes but instead rely on empirical research -such as his investigation on the use of AI in the Brazilian judiciary power- to identify the most pressing challenges and opportunities. Second, Dra. Selediana de Souza Godinho, Professor of Psychology at Universidad de Flores (Argentina), showed some preliminary advances in her research on the integration of technology within teaching practices, including a survey about the use of large language model tools, such as ChatGPT, at her university. Next, Emerson Rodrigues da Cunha Palmieri (PhD Student in Sociology at the University of São Paulo, Brazil) presented his recent research on the phenomena of echo chambers and online bubbles in social media, which adopted the perspective of social systems theory and focused on the issue of contingency. A more detailed account of this work has recently been published in the renowned journal *Kybernetes* (Rodrigues da Cunha Palmieri, 2023). The final presentation of the panel was given by Dr. Gastón Becerra, Head of the Licenciatura en Sociología at the Universidad de Flores (Argentina), and discussed the social, ethical, and epistemological issues of technological innovations, such as big data or artificial intelligence. Then, following a conceptual framework derived from constructivist epistemology, further elaborated in a recent publication (Becerra & Castorina, 2023), Dr. Becerra proposed a way to synthesize these debates and reflected on the challenges of the computational turn of sociology.

Overall, the colloquium provided a platform for scholars from diverse disciplines and latitudes to share their insights and perspectives on the impact of technology and its communication across various academic fields. The presentations and discussions contributed to identifying some common concerns among the different research teams and institutions and fostered collaboration, emphasizing the importance of interdisciplinary approaches in addressing the challenges posed by technology.

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