

**ICA 2020 Pre-conference call for papers:**  
**Storytelling, persuasion and mobilization in the digital age**

**Date:** Wednesday 20 May 2020, 9:00am-5:00pm

**Location:** Sydney Policy Lab, University of Sydney

**Sponsoring ICA Divisions:** Activism, Communication and Social Justice Interest Group; Political Communication Division; Public Relations Division.

**Organizers:** Dr Filippo Trevisan (American University), Prof Ariadne Vromen and Dr Michael Vaughan (University of Sydney)

Storytelling is central to the persuasion and mobilization strategies of advocacy organizations, activist groups, NGOs, political parties, and campaigns. However, technological, communicative, and political changes have challenged traditional storytelling practices and incentivized significant innovation in this area in recent years. Changes in technology have transformed the scale and pace at which individual stories can be collected, digitally archived, curated, and then distributed through online platforms. Changes in communication and politics have increased the emphasis on personalized advocacy strategies targeted at affective publics (Papacharissi, 2015), as campaigners seek to navigate an increasingly fragmented and polarised information environment. Researchers today face a challenge in representing both the continuity in the narrative dimension of politics while also interrogating emerging and impactful innovations. This raises important questions about power dynamics and representations associated with changing storytelling practices, roles, and relationships between individual storytellers, organizations, and social groups in a constantly evolving media landscape. These questions are relevant to multiple related fields including, among others, the sociology of political communications (Polletta 2006), policy studies (Jones, Shanahan and McBeth 2014) journalism studies (Polletta and Callahan 2017), and public interest communication.

This one-day preconference pays attention to these questions and brings together researchers from multiple disciplinary perspectives to discuss the impact of changing storytelling practices on individuals, groups, organizations, target publics, and public discourse more broadly. We welcome submissions from theoretical and empirical inquiries that examine the following areas:

- Reconciling conceptualizations of storytelling from intersecting perspectives in political life: in particular interest groups, social movements, NGOs, parties and political campaigns, as well as journalism;
- The impact of evolving digital communication technologies, including but not limited to social media, mobile devices, and database technology on the practice of persuasive storytelling;
- How publics and citizens respond to stories;
- The role of storytelling in response to changing political and media contexts, in particular the evolution of information consumption habits and the rise of “fake news;”
- The significance and impact of advocacy storytelling on the (in)visibility of groups that are traditionally marginalized and under-represented in public discourse (e.g. gender, LGBTQI+, race, ethnicity, disability, etc.);
- The outcomes of storytelling in politics, such as successes or failures in public policy;

- The ethics of storytelling and the power relationship between advocacy organizations and individual storytellers;
- Storytelling in a comparative and global context, such as the diffusion of storytelling practices between political actors and countries, as well as their relationship with culture and media environments;
- Innovative methodological approaches to study persuasive storytelling and analyze its impact.

**Submitting your abstract:** Please submit abstracts for 15 minutes paper presentations through this [Google Form](https://forms.gle/f5PBbd3KGd4NhdzR7) (<https://forms.gle/f5PBbd3KGd4NhdzR7>) no later than January 20, 2020. Abstracts are limited to a maximum of 4,000 characters including spaces (approximately 500 words).

Contributors will be selected by peer-review and will be notified of decisions on or before February 1, 2020. Authors are expected to attend the preconference and present in person.

All participants must register and pay fees. Registration costs will be approximately 50 USD and include coffee breaks and buffet lunch. To register, participants should follow the instructions on: [www.icahdq.org](http://www.icahdq.org).

**Key dates:**

- 20 January 2020: Deadline for abstract submission
- 1 February 2020: Corresponding authors notified of decisions
- 1 May 2020: Conference registrations close
- 20 May 2020: Pre-conference starts in Sydney

**Location:** Please note that this event will take place off-site at the Sydney Policy Lab, University of Sydney. The pre-conference will conclude at 5:00pm on May 20, leaving participants ample time to travel to Gold Coast for the opening of the main ICA conference in the evening of the following day (21 May).