Call for Participation: **Workshop on the Artful Integrations of Infrastructures by Community-Based Telecoms**

This one-day workshop will be hosted <u>both in Vienna and online</u> during The 9th International Conference on Communities and Technologies C&T https://2019.comtech.community/ 3 - 7 June 2019. It focuses on the experiences of communities that own and operate their own telecoms systems, such as local Wi-Fi networks and radio. We will consider what communities do to tackle the infrastructures, or taken-for-granted arrangements, that affect deploying and adopting telecoms.

ICTs involve many infrastructures that arise from and support social, technical, political, legal, administrative, methodological and institutional structures and processes. Infrastructures can be physical (e.g. cables); software (e.g. code); methodological (e.g. standards); organizational (e.g. engineering professions); institutional (e.g. academic structures); and, many more. Communities often devise ways to compensate for constraints and weaknesses of infrastructures in their local telecom projects. Communities have, for instance, tackled policy infrastructures, because laws do not support their telecoms, and integrated their own social infrastructures to align with their community values.

Workshop Activities

We will facilitate conversations between members and users of community-based telecoms, researchers, practitioners and activists. These conversations aim for these different groups to:

- learn from each other's experiences in responding to infrastructures;
- recognize the ways infrastructures affect community-based telecoms;
- identify how community-based telecoms can influence future infrastructures;
- form relationships to enable ongoing sharing of experiences around infrastructure.

We will use video-conferencing to connect directly to community-based telecoms. A community network in South Africa has already agreed to participate remotely, and we invite other community-based telecoms too (see 2. below).

How to Participate

We invite participation by members and users of community-based telecoms, researchers, practitioners and activists involved/interested in local Wi-Fi or GSM, hyperlocal radio or other local telecoms. To indicate your interest please submit by **April 20 2019** responses to the questions below.

You may respond using the online form https://forms.gle/7tdBeG7G4KA6bzGSA or by emailing your responses to: mdensmore@cs.uct.ac.za:

1. Your details (name, email, project)
2. Your participation – if you will participate in Vienna, Cape Town, or if you propose to host a workshop or participate remotely. If you propose to host a workshop or participate remotely, please use the questions in the form to guide you in providing details about how you will facilitate it.
3. Include a short file, which can be:
   - Media about a community-based telecom, e.g. a short text or audio description of an initiative
   - Art depicting interactions between existing infrastructures, community-based technologies and future infrastructures
   - A 2-page academic-style, position paper about infrastructures revealed by, or created for, community-based telecoms
   - Something else that pertains to the workshop topic and is accessible to both practitioners and academics

   You will be required to sign into Google in order to upload your document. Please submit up to one file (document, PDF, image, audio, video, zip) of up to 100MB in size. All submissions must be in English.

We will select participants based on how their submissions contribute diverse experiences in ways that are accessible to diverse perspectives.

Organisers

Nicola J Bidwell	International University of Management, Namibia
Melissa Densmore	University of Cape Town, South Africa
André van Zyl	OVCOMM cooperative, Ocean View, South Africa
Sarbani Banerjee Belur	Indian Institute of Technology Bombay, India
Nicolás Pace	Association for Progressive Communications and Altermundi, Argentina

Nic Bidwell is founding mentor of Groot Aub CN, Namibia, a mentor on Afchix's gender-sensitive CN project and, in 2018, conducted multiple case-study research on CNs in six countries in the global south. In 2013 she was awarded IFIP's inaugural award for interaction design for social and economic development for research that was a pre-cursor to Zenzeleni CN.

Melissa Densmore is a senior lecturer in UCT's Centre in ICT4D, South Africa. Her research explores community-based digital content creation for CNs, and has previously included studying telecoms adoption in an NGO in Uganda, and wireless infrastructure deployments in Ghana, India, and DR Congo.

Sarbani Banerjee Belur is a senior researcher on Gram Marg's rural broadband project, India, winner of Mozilla's Equal Rating Innovation Challenge. Since 2015 she has facilitated connectivity to remote villages. Her research focuses on gendered use of connectivity and seeding CNs in Indian villages.

Andrè van Zyl is a Computer/IT Teacher at Ocean View Secondary School, and a Director of the OVCOMM cooperative that administers a community network in Ocean View, a town-ship in Cape Town, South Africa.

Nicolás Pace is the Movement Building Coordinator for the Association for Progressive Communication's Local Access Networks initiative. He supports CNs around the world, is part of AlterMundi, that develops models and technologies for CNs, and REDES AC, that supports CNs in Indigenous Mexico.