



## The post-pandemic world: A bad picture or a good opportunity?

Edward Bernays University College, Institute for Social Research, Institute for Tourism



Zagreb, 19 and 20 March 2021



In addition to the health situation, the coronavirus pandemic has affected all segments of society. The economy and social life have entered a state of dormancy, interpersonal relationships take place under the influence of physical distance or have been transferred to the digital world, business travel has proved unnecessary in the world of teleconferencing, people's social lives have changed, young people are changing patterns for finding a partner, new practices have been introduced in the education system, the psychosocial health of individuals is under threat. At all levels, the pandemic has completely changed the outlook and functioning of the entire world. The question is in which direction will societies develop in the future, how will citizens behave after the pandemic, how will interpersonal relationships be established, but also how will employers and employees, whose attitudes have partially changed, behave?

One of the most affected economic activities is tourism. Due to the pandemic, the tourism industry has found itself under unprecedented pressure around the world. Most domestic and international travel has been canceled, leading to a significant reduction in revenue and liquidity problems for all of those involved in tourism, and the question arises as to how to reactivate the tourism sector in the future. Is the solution in launching a series of economic measures for the gradual and coordinated launch of tourist services and providing special support to tourism companies or will the solution be sought in the

transformation of mass tourism towards more individualized tourism, and priority given to sustainable destinations in the future, all supported by a series of marketing campaigns that will refer tourists to new models of tourist destinations?

In search of safety, people have begun turning to sources of credible and reliable information. In statements by the World Health Organization (WHO), addresses by national pandemic headquarters, doctors' statements, expert predictions, media reports, and even statements by politicians and companies racing to find an effective vaccine, they began to search for a benchmark for their own position in a changed society. Therefore, the importance of responsible and timely communication of all stakeholders who have taken on the role of creators of public opinion proved to be crucial. The question remains who to trust?

With the appearance of the pandemic, the consumption of media by media users also increased. On the one hand, people began to develop their own attitude towards the pandemic with the help of media reports and in accordance with their own media competencies, to filter and interpret certain news as reliable or fake, which could very well affect their reactions toward the entire pandemic. On the other hand, part of the population has become dependent on the media as the media has become the only available educational tool at all levels of education - from kindergartens, primary and secondary schools to higher education and lifelong learning. Educational workshops from all parts of the world have become available to everyone regardless of place of residence. The question is what position will the media assume after the pandemic, will they be able to defend themselves against fake news and sensationalism, or will they succumb to the pressure of profit and look for new sources of news in the world of sensationalism?

Aiming to bring together a wide interdisciplinary circle of researchers, the fourth edition of the conference, Communication Management Forum 2021, is tasked with answering the question of what awaits us after the end of the pandemic. Is the picture of the post-pandemic world positive or negative? What have we learned from the pandemic to become a better, healthier and happier society, but also more successful employees? Will the world continue to function as if nothing happened or will we, based on the knowledge and experience gained, make use of everything that has proven useful in the pandemic?

This raises key questions:

- What has changed in the past year? What has remained the same?
- What positives have we learned from the pandemic and can we apply in the future?
- What new practices have we introduced and which ones have we returned to?
- How much have occupations, economic activities and the way they function changed during the pandemic?

The answers to the previously asked questions are found in an interdisciplinary approach that, as a scientific basis and explanation, offers a symbiosis of sociology, psychology, communication, political and education sciences, economics and marketing. Combining knowledge from all of these disciplines leads to a qualitative shift that results in the creation of a broader understanding of the changes caused by the coronavirus pandemic, as well as how the overall situation will affect all spheres of human life with emphasis on interpersonal relationships, education, communication, as well as tourism as an important branch of the economy. Given the interdisciplinary nature of the conference topic, provided is an overview of related topics on which a quality academic discussion can be conducted:

- Impact of the pandemic on society and interpersonal relationships
- Impact of the pandemic on business and the employer-employee relationship
- Impact of the pandemic on the business productivity of the working age population
- Impact of the pandemic on business and private life
- Family and social entrepreneurship in the function of sustainable tourism development
- Consequences and results of socially responsible behavior of companies in the pandemic
- New forms and ways of business communication in the business world
- Crisis communication in response to the pandemic
- Public appearances of creators of public opinion (organizations, doctors, scientists, companies, politicians)
- The role of the media in education
- Online teaching - a necessary evil or a good solution
- Pandemic media coverage and the spread of mass panic
- Disinformation and critical evaluation of information
- The role of media and new technologies in tourism - a shift from manipulation to co-creation

- Metamorphosis of tourism through rural development
- New tourism products for tourism of the new age
- A new paradigm of tourism
- Networking by connecting special forms of tourism
- Emotional communication through experience and interpretation in a tourist destination
- Tourist destination as a place for personal development
- Creative industry in creating experiences in tourism
- Models of education of local community, employees and stakeholders in destinations

We invite scientists, researchers and doctoral students to submit presentations on these topics.



### ABSTRACT SUBMISSION

Papers proposed for the conference must be based on current and original research by the authors. In the paper abstract in Croatian or English, ranging from 300 to 500 words, it is **necessary** to state the goal and purpose of the paper, to provide a clear methodology, the key results and the practical application and social significance of the paper itself. In addition to the abstract, it is necessary to send information about the authors

(scientific-teaching grade, institution, address, telephone number, e-mail). Abstracts must be sent to [commforum@bernays.hr](mailto:commforum@bernays.hr) by 31 January 2021.



### OFFICIAL CONFERENCE LANGUAGES

Croatian and English



### HOLDING OF CONFERENCE

The fourth edition of the conference will be held completely online. Lectures will be held live in the virtual world. Conference participants will subsequently receive all necessary information on how to join and participate in the conference.



### PUBLICATION OF PAPERS FROM THE CONFERENCE

Peer-reviewed papers from the conference will be published in special editions of the academic journals *Tourism*, *Media Research and Sociology and Space* (indexed in Scopus and Web of Science Core Collection - ESCI) as well as the academic journal *Communication Management Review*. Articles should be written in English or Croatian in Latin script,

and should have between 5,000 and 6,000 words (font: Times New Roman, 12 pt, 1.5 line spacing). Detailed instructions will be given to the authors after confirmation of abstract acceptance.

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#### OFFICIAL CONFERENCE WEBSITE

[www.commforum.hr](http://www.commforum.hr)

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#### KEY DATES

- Abstract submission: 31 January 2021
- Confirmation of acceptance of abstract and presentation: 15 February 2021
- Conference: 19 and 20 March 2021
- Submission of full papers: 9 May 2021
- Publication of papers in scientific journals: end of 2021 calendar year

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#### REGISTRATION FEES

- Participation with presentation:  
100 HRK per author
- Participation without presentation:  
50 HRK

#### PROGRAMME COMMITTEE -

##### CO-CHAIRS

- Damir Jugo, PhD, Assistant Professor, Edward Bernays University College
- Damir Krešić, PhD, Assistant Professor, Institute for Tourism
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## Call for Papers

# Public Risk and Crisis Communication at BledCom 2021



BledCom is an annual gathering of scholars and practitioners in public relations and related disciplines to discuss contemporary communication and management problems. Organized annually since 1994, it is the oldest conference in our field that is not affiliated with a professional or academic association. So far, eight books and nine special issues or sections of peer-reviewed journals have been published based on previous symposia.

## CONFERENCE DATES AND VENUE



The 28th International Public Relations Research Symposium (BledCom) will be held on July 2-3, 2021 in Rikli Balance Hotel, Lake Bled, Slovenia.

## CONFERENCE THEME: PUBLIC RELATIONS AND PUBLIC RISK AND CRISIS COMMUNICATION



Perhaps now more than ever, risk and crisis communication have been thrust into the limelight. Individuals, organizations, and nations have all become the sources as well as recipients of information intended to alter their behavior owing to Covid-19 and its debilitating impact on everyday life globally. Some nations have been lauded for their ability to manage the spread of the virus through effective communication whereas others have been targeted for performing poorly. National performance has certainly hinged on the ability of the leaders of these nations to communicate effectively about the pandemic. Based on the innate relationship between communication and this pandemic.

BledCom 2021 seeks to analyze questions such as:

- What has been the role of public relations in communicating and managing the risks posed by this virus and the crises arising from it?
- How as the public relations industry contributed to public understanding of the pandemic and its ramifications on individuals, organizations, and society?
- What are some examples of the positive contributions that public relations as a practice has made vis-à-vis this pandemic?
- What are some examples of lacunae in the way public relations as a practice has conducted itself vis-à-vis this pandemic?
- How has the body of knowledge of public relations (especially concepts and theories of risk and crisis communication) measured up in the communication vis-à-vis this pandemic?
- What lacunae in the public relations body of knowledge can one discern based on the communication experiences during this pandemic?
- What role have public relations associations played in showcasing the practice as a useful tool in this pandemic?
- Has the public relations industry leveraged on its expertise well enough during this pandemic to advance the reputation of the field as a contributor to social good?
- How have social media been

used – especially by individuals – to communicate during the pandemic including for such things as “overcoming” the constraints posed by ‘social distancing’ requirements?

- How have individuals, organizations, and governments coped with balancing privacy and social media tools?
- How have organizations, in particular, used tools of internal communication to effectively engage their internal publics?
- Are there discernible differences between different regions and cultures in the way communication has been leveraged during this pandemic? Case studies from individual nations and comparisons between nations are particularly interesting in this regard

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### CALL FOR ABSTRACTS AND PANELS

We invite abstracts that are between 500 and 800 words (including title and keywords) with up to 5 references. Please note that as has been the norm in the past, BledCom welcomes ALL papers that are relevant to public relations and communication management and not just papers that discuss the conference theme. We also welcome panel proposals. Please use the following guidelines to present your abstract and kindly supply the word count at the end of the submission.

## FORMAT FOR THE ABSTRACT

Please note that the chances of your abstract being accepted are enhanced if you observe the following format in preparing it: Introduction and purpose of the study (and research question if there is one) • Helps summarize the purpose and rationale of your study. Literature review • Helps place your work in context with the existing body of knowledge. Methodology – Define the main method used for gathering data including sample size, and state the rationale for using this method. Results and conclusions • Helps summarize the answers to the research questions while also outlining the implications of the results. Also summarize the limitations of the study and offer suggestions for future research. Practical and social implications – Offer the potential implications both for practice and society. Also provide us with 3 to 5 keywords that highlight your study. Abstracts should come as blind copies without author names and affiliations, who are to be identified on a separate cover page. Please use the suggested headings to structure the abstract. A list of literature is not necessary, but if it is provided it is included into the word count.

Panel proposal are also welcome. The proposal should describe the title and focus of the panel, name of the chair of the panel, and names of every member of the panel and title or focus of each presentation.

## DEADLINE

Paper abstracts and panel proposals should be submitted via email to [bledcom@fdv.uni-lj.si](mailto:bledcom@fdv.uni-lj.si) no later than February 1, 2021. Decisions will be made by March 4, 2021 after peer review. Full papers not exceeding 6.000 words will be due by September 16, 2021. The organizing committee plans an edited book on the conference theme to be published by Routledge in 2022. A separate publication of the conference proceedings will feature the remaining papers.



## PROGRAM COMMITTEE

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