



# ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNICATION SCHOLARS & PROFESSIONALS OF NIGERIA

... the future is here

7th Annual ACSPN Conference  
in Collaboration with



A Virtual Conference  
September 2- 3, 2020

**Theme:** Communicating Identities and Nationhood: Promoting Inclusive Democracy through Access to Information and Knowledge Societies

## Background

Globalisation has caused significant transformation - political, economic, cultural and environmental, and technological, to varying degrees within nations especially in the field of artificial intelligence. Within these transformations established identities have been reshaped, remoulded and in some cases dissolved. Although the history of modern nation building suggests that the authority of a nation must be grounded in the common national values of its citizens, this posture has over the years been eroded by the effects of globalization with idealists constantly promoting the superiority of a universal norm that should be accepted by all. Recent discourse has also manifested evidence of consciousness or even strategic, reproductions of identity and nationhood.

New media, one of the highlights of technological convergence, is a critical driver of this process, representing and showcasing the identities of nation states. As a result of differences in technological competences, small nation states and even large ones with weak barriers are prey to external influences of major nation states and players in the global marketplace of information.

These disparities are even more pronounced with the unprecedented advancements in the field of Artificial Intelligence globally but not so much in Africa. There is a need to

develop a road map for the adoption of artificial intelligence in Africa and secondly, ensure that the Information Ethics aspects of artificial Intelligence is entrenched to facilitate quality exchange and exploitation of information.

Despite the challenges and gaps highlighted by the increased permeation of technology and artificial intelligence in everyday life, the vocabulary of identity and nationhood continues to dominate the public sphere, as the media, the government and the people, construct their sense of identity and nationhood with room for indigenous inclusion.

While technology, especially artificial intelligence needs to be understood, and leveraged in all fields, there are ever evolving and unpredictable threats to global and or national unity, two of which played out from the beginning of this year. The first, is the COVID-19 pandemic and infodemic, whose origins and management have affected countries all over the world. The other would be the George Floyd altercation with the police force and his subsequent death which led to the resuscitation of the #Blacklivesmatter, an affirmative action seeking to reinforce the nuances of membership in a united state of different nationalities. This threat is also replicated in Nigeria in the form of several existing groups agitating for ethnic recognition and independence as well as social media activism that seeks new definitions and ideas of citizenship and belonging within nations.

The difficulties in defining nationhood and identities have been heightened on the heels of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. **Rumours, fake news, hate speech and hate crimes** against various groups and nationalities as well as conspiracy theories about COVID-19 are proliferating online. Additionally, the gaps evident in the institutional responses to the pandemic, including lockdown decisions and provisions of palliatives have affected all sectors, further creating anxiety and uncertainty amongst citizens, threatening their health, and delegitimizing preventive measures.

Within this same period, globally there has been a pandemic of misinformation and disinformation affecting the fabric of societies already fractured by the unprecedented health crisis and its dramatic economic, political, and social consequences.

Communication is without doubt, essential for the proper articulation of national identities while defining citizens' sense of national identity, place and community and every technology including artificial intelligence that could help in bridging barriers and addressing the information gaps and challenges – both physical and non-physical need to be accepted and adopted.

The expectation therefore is that communication scholars and professionals are able to identify and map the underpinning dynamics of identity and nationhood and reinvigorate discussions within the perspective of media, government, people and technology with identifiable recommendations applicable across nation states.

This is the intent of the 7th Annual Conference of the Association of Communication Scholars & Professionals of Nigeria (ACSPN) and the Communication Sector of UNESCO Nigeria, with the theme "Communicating Identities and Nationhood: The Media, the Government and the People".

## The 2020 Conference: Abstracts/Papers

In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, the conference will be hosted in the digital space. With this changes in view, the schedule and pattern of the conference has been adjusted to capture as much value as possible within the present reality.

There would be different panel sessions as detailed below with roundtable discussions after the main presentations. All interested members of the public, including journalists, scientists, government representatives, communication scholars and professionals are invited to participate as the sessions promise to be illuminating and the discussions exciting and robust.

Interested participants should re[send] academic, professional and experiential abstracts and papers along lines of the themes indicated in the revised panels for the virtual conference as indicated below

### Day 1

Date: Wednesday, September 2, 2020

13h00 – 16h00 (WAT) GMT+1

### Opening ceremony

#### Welcome address

- a) **Chief Host/Moderator:** Vice President, North Central, ACSPN
- b) ACSPN President/ General Secretary
- c) UNESCO Regional Director for West Africa
- d) Keynote Address

### Special Panel:

The Media, Artificial Intelligence, Nation States, and the Future

**[All communication industries]**

Discussions, Questions and Answers

### Panel Discussions

#### Discussion 1

Flattening the Misinformation Curve in the Digital Age

#### Discussion 2

Reshaping Identities and Citizenship in the Evolving Media Landscape in Africa

### DAY 2

Date: Thursday, September 3, 2020

Time: 13h00 – 16h00 (WAT) GMT+1

**Opening Remarks** – Chief Host/Convener – Vice President, North Central, ACSPN

### **Discussion 1**

Redefining Fundamental Rights & Freedom of Expression: Lessons Learned from COVID-19

### **Discussion 2: Female Researcher's Panel**

The Woman's Identity, the Media, and Nationhood

### **Discussion 3**

Reimagining the future: Health, Wellbeing and People's Engagement

### **Closing Remarks**

### **Business Meeting [Restricted to ACSPN members]**

Annual General Meeting (AGM)/Conference Closure

### **Conference Platform: Zoom**

### **Abstracts**

The association welcomes academic, professional and experiential abstracts tailored to the themes of any of the sessions, in no more than 300 words (typed using Times New Roman font and 1.5 spacing format) should be emailed by 20 July, 2020 and full papers (typed using Times New Roman font and 1.5 spacing format) by 20<sup>th</sup> August, 2020 only to this address: [acspnpublicationshub@gmail.com](mailto:acspnpublicationshub@gmail.com) with the subject - 2020 Abstract or 2020 Conference Paper.

### **Conference Fees and Certificates**

There will be no conference fee, but members who have paid [or pay] their 2020 membership subscription on or before the conference date will be eligible to receive e-copies of the membership and conference participant certificates [must be present at all the panel sessions].

Membership payments can be made to:

### **Account Name: Association of Communication Scholars & Professionals of Nigeria**

Nigeria (Guaranty Trust Bank, Naira Account No: 0141407323)

Outside Nigeria (Guaranty Trust Bank, Domiciliary [Euro, Dollars, Pounds] Account No: 0141439012)

- Full members - N5, 000 (\$100)
- Student Members - Communication - N2, 000 (\$20)
- Institutional Members (Open) - N25, 000 (\$250)
- Associate Members (other Disciplines/Area of Work) - N5, 000 (\$100)
- Associate Student Members - Other Disciplines - N2, 000 (\$20)