
From Issue 1 in December 1999 to Issue 73 in October 2018 the AIIC webzine has published 530 articles, facilitating information on conference interpreting for people around the globe.

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Background

In the mid-1990s there was a growing awareness that AIIC needed to reach out beyond its own borders in a more purposeful and deliberate manner.

Previously the AIIC Public Relations Committee had produced a broadsheet, with the AIIC logo prominently displayed, for groups, regions and individuals to use in PR and outreach activities. Content revolved around AIIC values and activities. A message by then AIIC President Malick Sy was featured on the front page of the first issue, directly under the publication’s name: Communicate!

During this period we were also witnessing the growth of the Internet and fundamental changes in information technologies. In response, AIIC launched its first website in October 1998.

In 1997 AIIC Council had appointed a group to assess AIIC communications policy and practice and identify future needs. This reflected a significant shift from centralized production of
client-oriented PR materials to broad-based communication efforts. The group was given the remit to “reflect on past and present experience in the field of internal and external communication”. In regard to the latter, the group recommended that the focus be on projecting AIIC as “open, representative, expert and professional – an indispensable reference point”. And the AIIC website was identified as the main medium for doing so.

In April 1999, Vincent Buck suggested changing the static homepage of the AIIC website (above) with the addition of a webzine (then very much in fashion). Thus was Communicate! reborn as an online publication, coinciding with a new version of the website later that same year.

The advent of a online publication facilitated highlighting AIIC events and conveying the real diversity and intellectual curiosity existing within the association, while consistently directing readers’ attention to AIIC’s expertise and accomplishments. In addition, Communicate! added varied magnet content that pulled visitors into the website.

The webzine team, however, did not want Communicate! to be an association mouthpiece – and AIIC agreed. Opinion, debate, controversy were welcome; the group wanted to illustrate AIIC’s attributes and values, not preach them. The aim was to engage a broad audience and position Communicate! as a serious, practice-oriented publication somewhere between academic journals and professional association bulletins.

**Start-up: 1999 - 2002**

Throughout this period Communicate! was an integral part of the AIIC homepage, making the portal to the website more welcoming and dynamic. From its inception the webzine was clearly looking outward. Internal business (Assembly/Council reports, etc.) was to be treated on the member-only section of the website, while the public site was to address a broader community of shared interests – not only interpreters but all language specialists, students, teachers, potential clients, equipment manufacturers/suppliers, convention centers, architects, etc.

The first issue went online in December 1999. In the lead article introducing the webzine, Vincent Buck wrote:
Communicate! ... is aimed at conference interpreters, but not only at them. Communicate! aims to become an online community for anyone with an interest in the conference industry and multilingual communication.

At the beginning the webzine was run by the newly established Communication Committee, composed of Jean Pierre Allain, Silke Gebhard, Vincent Buck and Luigi Luccarelli. During the first year the committee lost two of them: JP Allain became President of AIIC and S Gebhard had to leave the group due to other commitments. Initially a freelance journalist was contracted to write an occasional article and to edit members’ effort, but due to problems with his availability, the collaboration was dropped early on.

The Communications Committee, considering its policy work finished, disbanded and its two remaining members gave all their attention to the communication projects that had been established (e.g. website and webzine).

Initially Vincent Buck led the webzine efforts, including posting of the webzine online. In late-2000 Luigi Luccarelli took on the task of coordinating preparatory work on articles. Then in July 2001 AIIC Council decided to create the remunerated position of Editor-in-Chief of Communicate!, with expanded duties and an ongoing commitment. Luigi Luccarelli was asked to submit a proposal, which was accepted. Soon after Andrew Dawrant joined the team for several years of this and the following period.

It should be pointed out, however, that the Communicate! team did not write everything themselves. As the webzine gained steam, members started to contribute articles and others from outside the association were recruited as well to provide content. AIIC groups also became aware of the possibilities an online publication offered.
Early on, **statistics showed the positive effect of the webzine.** From Dec 2000 through April 2002, *Communicate!* articles accounted for 43% of all page views on the AIIC website.

**Other developments:** In 2001 Luigi Luccarelli introduced a *Letter from the Editor* to head each issue. This served a double purpose: it ushered in an opinion column and it presented the contents of each issue.

The goal of 6 issues per year was a real challenge for a small team. In 2002 the number of issues was reduced to 5 annually.

**Highlights of this period** included:

- An issue organized by the Committee for Legal and Court Interpreting (No. 6 – 2000).
- An issue largely dedicated to multilingualism in Europe (No. 15 – 2001).
- Publication of the AIIC Workload Study (No. 16 – 2002).
- Articles on Nuremberg by Marie-France Skuncke and Patricia Vander Elst (No. 20 – 2002).
- Incorporation of annual updates of organizations by the Staff Interpreters Committee.

**Consolidation: 2003 – 2011**

The following years saw *Communicate!* evolve in ways that reflected maturation on the one hand, and adaptation to an increasingly tech-savvy public on the other.

A completely redesigned website came online in April 2003. The webzine no longer doubled as homepage but contents of the latest issue did appear in the right sidebar. This change served to accentuate *Communicate!*’s identity as a distinct, freestanding publication.

The range of topics broadened. A review shows multiple articles in the following areas:

- Community/public service interpreting
- Sign language interpreting
- Legal and court interpreting
- Language service intermediaries
Other developments: New ongoing features were introduced: the humor column Off mic with Phil Smith and the news review column Language in the News (2005), an annual Letter from the President (2006), and a series of interviews with AIIC members under the title Interpreter Voices (2007).

In 2008 the number of issues was reduced to 4 per year. (It should be noted that fewer issues did not necessarily mean fewer articles over the course of a year.)

Phil Smith joined the webzine team in 2003 and Mary Fons i Fleming signed on in 2009.

This period also saw a notable increase in the frequency with which Communicate! articles were cited in academic and other publications. The webzine reaffirmed its value as a means of adding compelling new content to the AIIC website, attracting readers and helping build a positive image of the association and the profession.

Highlights of this period included:

- Publication of the study “La relève/The next generation” by the AIIC Staff Interpreters Committee (No. 34 – 2005).
- An issue dedicated to technical standards and certification (No. 39 - 2006).
- Publication of the AIIC Lifespan Study (No. 58 – 2011).

The Present: 2012 - 2018

In 2012 the AIIC website received another makeover. One major change was the introduction of a blog, which made posting of new material immediate and no longer dependent on a quarterly schedule. A decision was made, however, to maintain Communicate!/The AIIC Webzine, by this time a widely recognized publication.

Luigi Luccarelli was asked to take on an expanded role as coordinator of both blog and webzine. To have one person in charge of both made sense - the two were not unrelated. Longer blog entries
could later be included in an issue of the webzine, and a blog was also a good way to get more people involved.

AIIC homepage in 2018. Most recent Communicate! and blog posts on right with hyperlinks below.

**Other developments:** The frequency of *Communicate!* was reduced to two issues per year, with the initial consequence of more articles per issue (10-11 vs. 5-7). The blog posted 3-4 entries per month, with the best in any 6-month period being incorporated into the webzine alongside new material.

An improved webzine homepage obviated the need for a general introduction to each issue and the *Letter from the Editor* was discontinued. The advent of an AIIC presence in the social media (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn) made *Language in the News* redundant and it was discontinued.

A new online publishing platform meant that all pre-publication work could be performed online, saving the coordinator and the AIIC secretariat time and improving layout (now visible before publication).

In late-2012 AIIC received an invitation from EBSCO Publishing to include *Communicate!* in its database system, used in many academic libraries.

**Highlights** of this period include:

- Focus on media interpreting and an interview with AIIC President Linda Fitchett (No. 60 – 2012).
- Focus on the travails of court interpreters in the UK, an interview with Maya Hess of Red T and another with the coordinator of the AIIC Sign Language Network (No. 62 – 2013).
- Articles on interpreting as a *communication profession* (No. 65, 68 & 71 – 2014/16/17).
Downloadable PDF version

In 2017 AIIC decided to create a PDF version of Communicate! (right) that AIIC regions, groups and individual members could use in outreach/PR efforts. Guido Rossi, an Italian graphic artist, came on board as designer of the magazine, and Luigi Luccarelli (Editor-in-Chief) was charged with writing additional content and a “From the Editor” column.

Summary

Communicate!/The AIIC Webzine has played a vital role in AIIC’s online presence and helped to increase the association’s visibility. More importantly, it has facilitated information on conference interpreting for people around the globe and is a frequently referenced source in research papers touching on the profession.

From December 1999 to October 2018: 73 issues offering 540 articles

Luigi Luccarelli was Editor-in-Chief of Communicate! from 2000 to mid-2018. He has served on AIIC's Council and Advisory Board, and was also a Vice-President of the association. He has taught interpreting and translation at universities in the USA, Spain, Thailand and South Korea. In 2018 he was awarded the Danica Seleskovitch Prize for outstanding service to the interpreting profession.

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