

# *Covid, Culture and Communication (CCC)*

## **Program and Abstracts**

### *Programme et résumés*

- 9h00-9h15 Conference introduction / *Ouverture de la journée*  
Welcome / *Bienvenue* :
- H el ene Aji - Director of CREA Research Laboratory
  - Dani ele Kahn-Paycha - Dean of Foreign Languages and Cultures Faculty
- Introductory remarks: Elvis Buckwalter-Fiona Rossette

### **Session 1: Professional communication practices under Covid**

#### *Pratiques de communication professionnelle en temps de Covid*

- 9h15-10h15 Plenary Conference/Conf erence pl eni ere: Susanne Tietze, Sheffield Hallam University, UK: “Talking anytime, anywhere, with anyone?”: Virtual communication from a multilingual perspective”
- 10h15-10h35 Fiona Rossette, Universit e Paris Nanterre, France: “From public to private speaking: the rise of webinars since COVID-19”
- 10h35-10h55 Corinne Saurel, *Cultures et Strategy*, France, Management and communications consultant: “*L'identit e virtuelle du manager nomade*” (“The virtual identity of the nomad manager”) (Professional perspective)
- 10h55-11h15 Raili Marling, Marge K asper, University of Tartu, Estonia: “*Du privil ege au devoir: l' volution des repr esentations m ediatiques du travail   distance en France, aux USA et en Estonie*”; “From privilege to duty: changing media representations of remote work in France, the USA and Estonia” (paper given in French and in English/*communication en fran ais et en anglais*)
- 11h15-11h35 Discussion
- 11h35-11h50 Break/*Pause*
- 11h50-12h50 Plenary Conference/Conf erence pl eni ere: Almut K oster, Vienna University of Economics and Business: “Communication in crisis: Face-to-face versus virtual communication before, during and after the pandemic”
- 12h50-14h00 Lunch break/ *pause d ejeuner*

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### **Session 2: Covid and Culture**

#### *Covid et Culture*

- 14h00-14h20 Elvis Buckwalter, Université Paris-Nanterre, France: “Cultural differences in Covid communication according to public authorities: A comparative approach”
- 14h20-14h40 Tiffany Yating Yu, Hong Kong Polytechnic University: “Legitimising a global fight for a shared future: A critical metaphor analysis of the reportage of COVID-19 in *China Daily*”
- 14h40-15h00 Nadja Kerschhofer-Puhalo, University of Vienna: “Dynamics in the Fridays for Future protest communication in times of the Corona crisis”
- 15h00-15h20 Discussion
- 15h20-15h35 Break/*Pause*

### **Session 3: Covid and Work Practice**

#### *Covid et Pratiques de Travail*

- 15h35-16h35 Plenary Conference/Conférence plénière : Danièle Linhart, CNRS, France : “*Stagiaire en entreprise au temps de la covid*” (“Internships under Covid: A sociological approach)
- 16h35-17h Working during Covid: International professional testimonials / *Travailler en temps de Covid : témoignages de professionnels à l'international* : Samira Touam, Head of Internal Communications, Europe, PageGroup (Allemagne), Olivier Motard, Operation and Finance manager (d.light, Chine), Lucille Boulet, Talent Acquisition Partner, MI-GSO | PCUBED (Groupe Alten, Etats-Unis)
- 17h-17h20 Laurence Lucias, *Centre de techniques internationales (CTI)*, Paris: “*Le recrutement à l'ère de la Covid*” (“Recruiting and being recruited under Covid : changes in HR practice”) (Professional perspective)
- 17h20-18h10 Round table discussion/ *Table ronde de cloture*:
- Almut Köster, Full Professor of English business communication, Vienna University of Economics and Business;
  - Danièle Linhart, French labor sociologist, Emeritus research director, CNRS, France;
  - Joselyne Studer-Laurens, Vice President of the National Training Committee for French Foreign Trade Advisors (*Commission Nationale Formation des Conseillers du Commerce extérieur de la France*);
  - Susanne Tietze, Professor of Multilingual Management, Sheffield Hallam University, UK;
  - Mehdi Majidi, Full Professor of Intercultural Management, Fort Hays State University, USA, International consultant in sustainable socioeconomic development

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## **Abstracts**

- I. Plenary papers**
- II. Academic papers**
- III. Professional perspectives**

### **I. Plenary papers**

**Almut Köster**, Vienna University of Economics and Business  
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#### **Communication in crisis: face-to-face versus virtual communication before, during and after the pandemic**

Virtual online communication was not a novelty when the Corona Virus pandemic swept across the globe at the beginning of 2020. Especially in the domain of workplace and business communication, various forms of digital communication had been in use at least in some form for many years. Even online virtual communication, for example in the form of virtual meetings or instant messaging, were increasingly being used in many areas of business, as attested by a range of research studies (e.g. Lee, 2010; Kupritz and Cowell, 2011; Lockwood, 2015).

Nevertheless, it was not until the COVID19 pandemic made much face-to-face communication difficult or impossible, that virtual online communication became a necessity for large portions of the global population. While online communication had previously been hailed as a beneficial technological development, enabling communication across geographical boundaries, during the pandemic, virtual communication (though allowing much work to continue “as normal”) has increasingly come to be seen as limited. Burnout from too many virtual meetings is a phenomenon experienced by many, and it has become increasingly clear that we miss face-to-face communication where we are co-present in the same physical space with our interlocutors.

After reviewing some findings comparing the effectiveness of different channels of communication in various domains of work, this talk will delve into the question of what sets face-to-face co-present communication apart from communication via other channels, especially virtual online communication. I will suggest that the notion of “involvement” (Chafe, 1982; Tannen, 1989/2007) provides a useful starting point for capturing the distinctiveness of face-to-face interaction. The talk will be exploratory in nature, inviting participants to reflect on the differences between virtual and face-to-face communication, and their respective benefits and drawbacks, after one year of living and working in a pandemic.

#### References

- Chafe, Wallace L. (1982). Integration and involvement in speaking, writing, and oral literature. In D. Tannen (Ed.), *Spoken and Written Language: Exploring orality and literacy* (pp. 35 – 53). Norwood, NJ: Ablex.
- Kupritz, Virginia W.; Cowell, Eva (2011). Productive management communication: Online and face-to-face. *The Journal of Business Communication* 48(1): 54–82.

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- Lockwood, Jane (2015). Virtual team management: what is causing communication breakdown? *Language and Intercultural Communication* 15(1):125-140
- Lee, Yuenjae (2018). Dynamics of symmetrical communication within organizations: the impacts of channel usage of CEO, managers, and peers. *International Journal of Business Communication*, published online 01.10.2018: doi.org/10.1177/2329488418803661.
- Tannen, Deborah (1989/2007). *Talking Voices: Repetition, Dialogue, and Imagery in Conversational Discourse*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

**Almut Koester** is Full Professor of English Business Communication at Vienna University of Economics and Business (WU), and, before that, was Senior Lecturer in English Language at the University of Birmingham in England. She is author of *The Language of Work* (2004), *Investigating Workplace Discourse* (2006) and *Workplace Discourse* (2010), and of numerous journal articles and chapters in edited volumes. Her research focuses on spoken workplace discourse and business corpora, and her publications have examined genre, modality, relational language, vague language, idioms and conflict talk. She is currently exploring the areas of language awareness and creativity and is interested in applying research findings to teaching Business English.

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**Danièle Linhart**, CNRS, France  
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### ***Stagiaire en entreprise au temps de la covid - Internships under Covid: a sociological approach***

*La pandémie a contribué à une diffusion rapide de la pratique du télé travail en France, alors que les dirigeants français étaient peu enclins à la développer auparavant pour des raisons essentiellement de méfiance et de volonté de contrôle (il y a de ce point de vue une spécificité française).*

*Mais l'expérience notamment lors du premier confinement, les a convaincus que les télé travailleurs respectaient les règles du jeu et l'idée d'une hybridation permanente entre télé travail et présence sur le lieu de travail pouvait être une solution intéressante, notamment par l'économie que cela pouvait engendrer en termes de m2 et éventuellement de hiérarchie de proximité.*

*Du côté des télé travailleurs, il y a eu une première phase de satisfaction voire d'enthousiasme, qu'ont montrés les sondages, mais qui est retombée lors des confinements suivants, les demandes de retour en présentiel (du moins une partie de la semaine) se faisant plus pressantes.*

*On peut faire l'hypothèse que lors du premier confinement, il y avait chez nombre de salariés, le désir de prendre de la distance par rapport à des lieux de travail souvent peu stimulants (open spaces et concurrence entre salariés, pression et contrôle permanent de la hiérarchie) et un travail lui-même contraignant car organisé et pensé en dehors d'eux, et qu'ils ne peuvent influencer. Mais travailler dans son environnement privé exacerbe ces aspects délétères de l'activité professionnelle. Les relations avec les collègues (même concurrents) manquent cruellement et le travail devient encore plus abstrait, plus contraignant, perdant de son sens, de sa finalité, quand on est seul confronté de façon solitaire à un écran d'ordinateur, car le travail est une activité socialisatrice : on coopère avec les autres pour satisfaire les besoins d'autrui et l'on travaille pour sortir de chez soi et de soi.*

*Pour autant, lorsqu'ils retournent sur le lieu de travail (quelque peu réenchânté inconsciemment) ce sont les mêmes conditions de travail (parfois même détériorées avec la mise en place des flex office et le même travail contraignant et subordonné qu'ils retrouvent.*

In France, the pandemic has contributed to the rapid spread of telework, even though French leaders had not been inclined to develop it up until then. This was mainly due to mistrust and the wish to exert control - a specific feature of French work culture.

However, the experience of the first lockdown convinced leaders that teleworkers played by and respected the rules, and that a permanent hybrid between telework and presence in the work place could be an interesting solution, particularly due to the money saved in terms of office space and direct supervisors.

For the teleworkers themselves, surveys reveal that there was a first phase of satisfaction, and even enthusiasm, which fell however during the subsequent lockdowns, as requests to return on site (at least for part of the working week) increased.

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It can be posited that during the first lockdown, a number of employees were happy to take some distance from workplaces which are often not stimulating (cf. open spaces and competition between employees, pressure and constant control from hierarchy), and from the work itself which is often constraining because it is organized without them and upon which they have no influence. But working in a private environment can exacerbate these harmful aspects of professional activity. When employees are alone in front of their computer, relations with colleagues (even colleagues in competition) are sorely missed and the work becomes even more abstract and constraining, and loses its meaning and purpose. This is because work is a socializing activity: we cooperate with others in order to satisfy the needs of others, and we work in order to leave the house and to take us out of ourselves.

And yet, when people return to their place of work - somewhat re-encharmed unconsciously -, they find the same working conditions, which have sometimes even deteriorated due to the implementation of flex office, and the same constraining and subordinating work.

**Danièle Linhart** is a French labor sociologist, PhD in Sociology (*Université de Paris-Nanterre*). She is accredited to direct research in the field of Sociology (*HDR-Université de Paris-Nanterre*), research in managerial modernization, the evolution of labor in the public and private sectors, and the role of work in society. She is a first class CNRS emeritus research director, member of the CRESPPA research laboratory (UMR 7217-Gender-Labor, Mobility), member of the CESER Section for Prospective Planification *Île-de-France* since 2013 as an external consultant. Author of multiple books including *Burn out; travailler à perdre la raison* (Le Lombard, 2020) and *L'insoutenable subordination des salariés* (Sociologie Clinique, 2021).

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Susanne Tietze, Sheffield Hallam University

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### **‘Talking anytime, anywhere, with anyone?’: Virtual communication from a multilingual perspective**

I will speak to aspects of communications in terms of remote working and also about multilingualism as a phenomenon in virtual work teams: work groups have now moved towards communication modes mediated through technology and occurring in virtual spaces. From a multilingual perspective this is potentially quite problematic as virtual communication across languages are notoriously difficult to manage (there are a handful of examples in the literature). In particular I will review early literature about remote working based on my own work and also discuss two studies about multilingual teams working in virtual contexts. All contributions will be interrogated about to what extent they address issues of inequality and injustice.

**Susanne Tietze**, PhD, is Professor of Multilingual Management at Sheffield Hallam University, UK. She has a long-standing interest in language, discourse and meaning, including the exploration of hegemonic practices enacted through language. She is researching the role of English, language diversity and translation in the production of management knowledge. Her latest book, *Management Research: A Language and Translation Perspective on Knowledge Production*, is an innovative, language-and translation-sensitive take on research philosophies, research methods and the epistemology of writing in English. She has recently led a funded research project about the agency of translators within multilingual business communities.



## **II. Academic Papers (in alphabetical order, by author)**

**Elvis Buckwalter**, Université Paris Nanterre, France  
[elvis.buckwalter@gmail.com](mailto:elvis.buckwalter@gmail.com)

### **Cultural differences in covid communication according to countries' public authorities: a comparative approach**

The COVID-19 health crisis has provoked a shift in communication approaches used by public health authorities in countries around the world—from a general, more *laissez-faire* style towards one which seeks to exercise specific control over populations' behavior and physical movement. As the pandemic continues to spread, public authorities strive to adjust their methods of communication according to cultural specificities of their nations and peoples in order to mitigate the risks posed by COVID-19.

This paper therefore serves to bring to light the need to adapt communication about the pandemic to suit cultural norms and demonstrate how control is exerted upon and within cultural spaces in order to attain public health authorities' objectives. First, we will examine the notion of “heterotopia”. Defined by Michel Foucault as “the space in which we live”, a heterotopia is a heterogeneous cultural space delineated by national boundaries, but can also be a sub-national, or trans-national grouping of persons with a common cultural identity. Then, we will examine these Foucauldian spaces through the prism of Geert Hofstede's cultural dimensions. A cultural analysis of these heterotopia not only explains how public authorities might wield control over their citizens, but also indicates the receptivity of this control by its citizens. Finally, we will study a sampling of communication styles employed by public health authorities around the world which exercise varying degrees of biocontrol over citizens, (obligation to wear masks, social distancing guidelines, lockdowns, vaccination passports, etc.) affording governments a predisposition towards exerting biopower in order to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

**Elvis Buckwalter** is Associate Professor at *Université Paris-Nanterre* in Applied Foreign Languages, specialist in International Marketing and Trade, over 25 years experience in teaching and research in France and the United States. He is member of the *Centre de Recherches Anglophones (CREA - EA 370)* and teaches students in the M2i (Intercultural and International Management) Master's degree program. Professional trainer at CTI (*Centre de Techniques Internationales*) and at CESCO (*Centre d'Etudes Supérieures du Commerce International*), co-author of several articles and books on culture and communication including *Business Communication Toolkit* (Eyrolles, 2013) and *Booster son anglais professionnel* (Eyrolles, 2020).

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**Marge Käsper, Raili Marling**, University of Tartu, Estonia  
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### **From privilege to duty: changing media representations of remote work in France, the USA and Estonia**

The current pandemic, with its lockdowns and quarantine measures, has deeply impacted work lives. While remote work and telecommuting used to be a privilege available to only a small percentage of workers, they became the new normal during the pandemic. What had previously been a special perk, became a duty, leading to the redefinition of both work and private life. Some of these new definitions are likely to persist, promising greater flexibility in work, but also increasing the blending of work and private life, erasure of leisure and the normalization of surveillance. This need not lead to better life-work balance, but to a culture of overwork.

In our paper, we will analyze media representations of remote work in Estonia, France and the USA to identify trends and concerns that are likely to influence the way in which institutions re-build their workplace culture. We will look at the perspectives of the employers, employees and the government, as they appear in media representations. The analysis of media representations from three cultures with radically different labor laws and workplace cultures will allow us to shed light on the cultural component of work and private life. Specifically, we will focus on the shifting perceptions of time and space, following Foucault's ideas from *The Archeology of Knowledge*. We propose that the home office has become something of a Foucauldian heterotopia, disturbing and contradictory, that has the potential to reshape the perception of both work and private life.

**Marge Käsper** is Lecturer and Researcher in French studies at the University of Tartu, Estonia. Her research brings together contrastive linguistics (between Estonian and French) and discourse analysis (contrastive culture and media studies in the framework of French Discourse Analysis methods), currently in the research project: PRG934 "Imagining crisis ordinariness: discourse, literature and image (1.01.2020–31.12.2024)", led by Raili Marling.

**Raili Marling** is Professor of English Studies at the University of Tartu, Estonia. Her main areas of research are contemporary culture, the politics of affect and discourses of gender and neoliberalism. She currently leads an Estonian Research Council research project on the representations and representability of crises.

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**Nadja Kerschhofer-Puhalo**, University of Vienna  
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### **“Treat every crisis” - Dynamics in the Fridays for Future-protest communication in times of the Corona crisis**

Since its earliest days, the Fridays for Future (FFF) movement has played a substantial role in the inter-discourse on climate change and has taken an intermediating position between science, politics, and everyday life and between younger and older generations. The massive social changes caused by the Corona crisis since March 2020 have led FFF-activists to move their activities to the digital space, at least until June 2020, when due to persisting regulations of the

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semi-lockdown the protest movement was forced to create new forms of protest. This contribution will analyse protest signs as a discourse phenomenon and as an established element in the action and communication framework of protesting. This paper will discuss processes of the entextualisation and recontextualisation of signs and protest practices of the Fridays For Future movement as they have evolved due to the massive social changes caused by the Corona crisis between March and May 2020.

**Nadja Kerschhofer-Puhalo** is a post-doc researcher at the Department of Linguistics, University of Vienna. PI of the Literacies and Multilingualism Research group. Main research interests: Discourse Analysis and Sociolinguistics with special focus on Literacies and Multilingualism

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**Fiona Rossette**, Université Paris Nanterre, France  
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### **COVID-19 and the rise of webinars, a new ‘hypergenre’ for digitalised public speaking: some discursive issues**

The Covid-19 pandemic has triggered immense upheaval within the field of specialised, spoken professional genres (Köster & Handford 2013). The swift and quasi-compulsory switch from in-person to online communication has for instance made online meetings, conference calls and online job interviews commonplace. Alongside these dialogic formats, *webinars* – of which the very name underlines their digital *raison d’être* - present an interesting example of a novel format which combines monologic speech or presentation (“public speaking”) style, within an inherently dialogic, interactive setup. Indicative of the horizontal knowledge sharing that characterises web 2.0 and the “new knowledge economy” (McElhinny 2012), they display a number of the linguistic features which inform late capitalist society (Fairclough 1993). While they are closely linked to the corporate world, webinars have been adopted by a vast array of social actors, serve a number of purposes, and can hence qualify as a “hypergenre” (Maingueneau 2010).

The purpose of this short paper is to provide an initial and brief overview of the vast array of discursive and cognitive issues raised by the webinar format, from for instance the ecology of interconnectedness (Ong, quoted in Walter 2005) and the enactment of community (Sergeant & Tagg 2014), to the question of the discursive embodiment by the speaker, or the problem of contextualization – some of which account for the challenges we have faced as we have engaged in spoken online communication over the past months.

Selected references:

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- Walter, J. (2005). Notes from the Walter J. Ong archives. Wednesday, May 04, 2005. <http://johnwalter.blogspot.com/2005/05/ive-mentioned-fact-that-our-plan-is-to.html>.

**Fiona Rossette** is Professor in English Linguistics at the Department of Applied Languages at *Université Paris Nanterre*, where, since 2016, she coordinates the Master M2i in Intercultural and International Management. She is a member of the *Centre de Recherches Anglophones* (CREA - EA 370). She is president of AFLSF, the French Association for Systemic Functional Linguistics. Her research applies theory from linguistics and discourse analysis to workplace communication, and more specifically to new forms of spoken and digital communication. She is the author of two books on oral communication in English: *Public Speaking and the New Oratory* (Palgrave Macmillan 2019) and *Prendre la parole en anglais* (Armand Colin, 2017) and has co-edited a volume on workplace communication and intercultural issues: *Langues et Pratiques du Discours en Situation Professionnelle* (Lambert Lucas, 2019).

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**Yating Yu**, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University  
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### **Legitimising a global fight for a shared future: A critical metaphor analysis of the reportage of COVID-19 in *China Daily***

“A community with a shared future for human kind” has become a dominant concept in China’s foreign policy in the last decade. Although this concept has been investigated by several studies in different domains, little attention has been given to its discursive legitimation in China’s media communication from a linguistic perspective. To fill this gap, the present study employs critical metaphor analysis to investigate how the aforementioned concept is legitimised via the predominant discourses associated with COVID-19 in 111 news articles collected from *China Daily*, a state-owned Chinese English-language newspaper. The findings show that COVID-19 is represented as a common enemy of humankind, other nations of the world are constructed as China’s allies, and the World Health Organisation is depicted as the leader of the global fight against the pandemic. These representations are constructed by the interplay of “war” metaphors and other linguistic processes, and hold ideological implications for collectivism and humanitarianism. The findings shed light on the use of language by *China Daily* in promoting

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official ideologies, projecting China's national image, and improving China's international relations amid a global health crisis.

**Yating Yu** is a postdoctoral research fellow in the Department of English, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University and a member of the Research Centre for Professional Communication in English (RCPCE). Her research interests are in gender studies, corpus linguistics, critical discourse analysis, and metaphor studies. She has previously published in SSCI-indexed journals such as *Social Semiotics*, *Gender and Language*, and *Feminist Media Studies*.

### **III. Professional perspectives**

**Laurence Lucias**, *Centre de techniques internationales (CTI)*, Paris  
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#### ***Le recrutement à l'ère de la Covid - Recruiting and being recruited under Covid: changes in HR practice***

*Le marché du travail vit depuis plusieurs années une réelle révolution. La crise du Coronavirus (Covid-19) qui a frappé le monde entier en début d'année 2020 aura d'ailleurs renforcé certaines transformations déjà à l'œuvre, jouant même parfois un rôle de catalyseur: digitalisation croissante du recrutement, onboarding virtuel du recruté, organisations internes modifiées, mise en place des conditions de reprise d'activité post-confinement. Plus disponibles, plus connectés... : le confinement peut-il être un moment propice à la recherche de nouveaux talents ?*

For a number of years now, the employment market has been undergoing a real revolution. The crisis of the Coronavirus (Covid-19) which hit the world at the beginning of 2020 will have had the effect of reinforcing certain transformations which were already underway, and sometimes even proving a catalyst for a number of practices: increased digitalization of recruitment procedures, virtual onboarding of the job applicant, modified internal organizations, and implementation of resuming post-lockdown activities. More available, more connected...: are lockdowns the ideal opportunity to search for new talents?

**Laurence Lucias** is Pedagogical director at *Centre de techniques internationales (CTI)*, Paris, and is also responsible since 2016 for professional insertion for the Master M2i in Intercultural and International Management at *Université Paris Nanterre*. She has over 25 years of experience in teaching and pedagogical innovation in international commerce and is the co-author of *Vendre plus, achetez mieux à l'international* (Vuibert, 2003) and *Réussir ses affaires à l'international* (Vuibert, 2006).

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**Corinne Saurel**, *Cultures et Strategy*, France, Management and communications consultant  
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#### ***L'identité virtuelle du manager nomade - The virtual identity of the nomad manager***

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*Corinne Saurel traitera les rapports de travail du manager international nomade et les défis du management à distance pour se créer de nouveaux territoires de sociabilité : comment le manager nomade investit son espace virtuel, élabore sa dynamique personnelle, forge son identité virtuelle en étant « avec » les autres et « sans » les autres ; comment il concilie autonomie et contrôle sur les équipes pour atteindre ses objectifs.*

*Nous verrons comment la distance culturelle, l'urgence, l'autonomie, l'incertitude surgissent comme autant d'éléments déterminants qui reconfigurent ses pratiques managériales et de communication à l'international.*

Corinne Saurel will address the working relationships of the nomad international manager and the challenges of distance management in creating new territories of sociability: how does the nomad manager occupy his/her virtual space, construct his/her personal momentum by being “with” others and “without” others, how does he/she reconcile being autonomous and at the same time controlling teams in order to reach objectives?

Focus will be placed on how cultural distance, urgency, autonomy, and uncertainty prove determining factors in reconfiguring management practice and international communication.

**Corinne Saurel** is Director of Cultures & Strategy ([www.cultures-strategy.com](http://www.cultures-strategy.com)), a consultancy and training firm in intercultural management which accompanies companies in order to anticipate cultural risks and secure their international sites. She helps expatriates and project managers in their international mobility or cooperation by taking into consideration socio-cultural factors in management. She holds a masters in organisational management (*Université Paris-Dauphine*) and is a former student of Philippe d'Iribarne, the pioneer of intercultural studies in France.