

THE ISAAC COMMUNICATOR

September-October 2020

Message from the ISAAC President

Meredith Allan

In Melbourne, Australia, we are now in the longest lockdown in the world. We did not necessarily want that record but we are safe from the invisible virus that is taking so many lives all over the world.

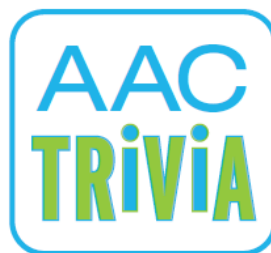
At the time of writing, it is now less than two weeks until I hand over the presidency of ISAAC to Juan Bornman. I know ISAAC is in very good hands.

I did plan to say lot of my farewells both publicly and privately at the conference in Cancún. Alas, it did not happen, so a lot of the space in this column is to publicly thank the outgoing members of the Executive Board, the staff of ISAAC, and all the incredible members of ISAAC who work tirelessly for the advancement of the AAC community.

...continued on page 2



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International AAC Awareness
Month 2020



Play **AAC Trivia** for prizes
courtesy of Attainment Company,
October 1st through 5th.
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July 31 – August 5, 2021

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Firstly, to the outgoing members of the Executive Board:

To Lateef McLeod, who I have worked with for the past four years on Executive Board (EB), thank you. Lateef and the LEAD committee have totally changed how LEAD works and have focused on the word “lead” to inspire more people who use AAC into leadership. The “Dare to Lead” workshop and the “Pathways to Leadership” webinars stand as a credit to Lateef’s own leadership.



*The dedication of
the ISAAC EB
cannot be
overestimated*

Lateef, together with Kevin Williams (who is incoming LEAD Vice-President on the EB) have moderated the eight or nine online chats ISAAC has held for people who use AAC over the past four months. Each online chat has been different, with people coming and going each fortnight.

To Dorothy Fraser, who has ably led the BUILD Committee for the past two years, thank you. Both as Chair of the BUILD committee and co-editor of the CSWN Newsletter, Dorothy has seen that resources and information has been shared throughout the world. Her knowledge and networking have been invaluable in connecting people with the information they need. Dorothy will be remembered for bringing a tape measure to Cancun, knowing we would be evaluating accessibility of hotels.

The dedication of the ISAAC EB cannot be overestimated. Gaby, Sally, Juan, Nadia and Signhild, together with Lateef and Dorothy, have all taken on additional roles and workloads when required. When I have asked for creative solutions to a problem, we have talked through an issue and come up with innovative resolutions. Indeed, it has been a year of creative solutions, where Executive Board meetings have gone for three hours, testing all of our internet connections!

To the Conference Committee, Gaby, Gabriela, Wendy, Marcella, Gloria, Sarah, and Tami, as well as the PCOs – Experient and BTC – my heart will forever cry remembering the incredible two months we had of meeting every week to prepare for the worst and renegotiating contracts. I am fortunate to have seen Cancún, the conference venues, hotels, restaurants, mariachi bands, and margaritas. I look forward to Cancún and the world being ready for the ISAAC conference again.

To the Research Committee and its chair, Beata Batorowicz, a big thank you for the time put in to developing new research participation and other guidelines. The research participation guidelines will be on the website soon.

To India Ochs, thank you for your over four years as By-Laws Committee chair. This year in particular we have certainly given India more than a few headaches.

The ISAAC Council met twice in August online. The first was a business meeting to pass new budgets



and other consequential matters arising, given that the conference had been postponed. The second meeting was an opportunity for “sharing” what Chapters have been doing over the past two years. It is always the favourite agenda item at Council meetings, to hear what each country is doing. Thank you to all the Council members who gave up their time to attend the Council meetings. I know it was a difficult time of day/night for some people to attend.

Finally, to the ISAAC Secretariat, Franklin, Heather, Carol, Teraiz, Judy, Tony, and Nola, who never fail to miss a beat, even when the world is turned upside-down: thank you on behalf of the membership and the Executive Board.



*Welcome to ISAAC's new
EB members!*

Welcome to ISAAC's new EB members: Tracy Shepherd (President-Elect), Kevin Williams (Vice- President, LEAD) and Miroslav Vrankic (Vice-President, BUILD).

Farewell from me, although I will still be around ISAAC and the AAC community. Let's hope we can travel soon!

Meredith Allan
ISAAC President, 2018-2020

*Messages from ISAAC's President and
Executive Director are available in
translation on our [website](#).*

From the Executive Director

Franklin Smith

Welcome to the September-October 2020 edition of The ISAAC Communicator.

Here in Ontario (Canada), we continue to still see new COVID-19 cases now numbering between 200 and 300 on a daily basis. This is up from just a few weeks ago, when the number of new and resolved daily cases were both hovering around 100. Thankfully, we do not see an increase in either general hospitalizations or deaths, meaning that at least for now, our health care system is easily able to cope. Unfortunately, and as seen in other parts of the world, it is our seniors and long-term care facilities that are most severely impacted.

We know that many other parts of the world continue to struggle, and we here at the ISAAC International office in Toronto send to all of our stakeholders around the world, only good wishes!

ISAAC Executive Board

We are preparing to welcome the 2020-2022 ISAAC Executive Board (EB). The ISAAC Council, at its Special Meeting held electronically via videoconference on July 31st, 2020, approved the new ISAAC EB as:

Juan Bornman (South Africa), President
Tracy Shepherd (Canada), President-Elect
Nadia Browning (Canada), Chair of the ISAAC Council

From the Executive Director (cont'd)



Signhild Skogdal (Norway), Chair-Elect of the ISAAC Council

Kevin Williams (USA), Vice-President for LEAD

Gabriela Berlanga (México), Vice-President without Portfolio

Sally Clendon (New Zealand), Vice-President without Portfolio

Miroslav Vrankic (Croatia), Vice-President without Portfolio

Members can find a report on this important Special Meeting of the ISAAC Council in the Members Only area of the [ISAAC website](#).

On behalf of the ISAAC International staff and office, I would also like to express our thanks and appreciation to the three departing members of the current EB, without whose efforts, skill, fortitude, and good humour ISAAC International could not possibly have been successful these past few years. Please join us in thanking Meredith Allan (Australia), Dorothy Fraser (UK), and Lateef McLeod (USA), for their insight and efforts. It has been an absolute pleasure working with you, and we all wish you only continued good health and success!

Conference 2020



As previously announced, Conference 2020 in Cancún, México has been postponed, and is now scheduled to take place between July 31st and August 5th, 2021.

As more details about the scientific programming and other areas of planning for ISAAC 2020 become available, we will share them with our stakeholders.

In the meantime, we have emailed all of our accepted paper contact authors to let them know that their paper submission will still be scheduled for Conference 2020, and that they will also have an opportunity in the coming few months to review and, as necessary, revise their presentation submissions. More details to come, so stay tuned!

Future ISAAC Conferences

At its recently held Special Meeting, the ISAAC EB advised the Council regarding planning for future ISAAC Conferences. In collaboration with our friends at ISAAC-Italy, the 20th Biennial Conference of ISAAC, originally scheduled to be held during 2022 in Rome, Italy, has now been postponed to 2024.

ISAAC International has now released an ISAAC 2026 Letters of Interest Announcement, that can be viewed [here](#) as well as on the [ISAAC website](#). There is a submission deadline of 5:00 pm Eastern (Toronto) time on November 27th, 2020, and ISAAC welcomes responses from any interested individuals, groups, or ISAAC Chapters.

In order to ensure a maximum two-year gap between major events, ISAAC International is also planning on creating and hosting an [“ISAAC Connects” all-virtual event](#), currently scheduled to take place in 2022. A Letter of Interest Announcement for this event has also been posted on our [website](#), with a submission deadline of 5:00 pm Eastern (Toronto) time on October 30th, 2020. Again, ISAAC welcomes responses from any interested individuals, groups, or ISAAC Chapters.

From the Executive Director (cont'd)



AAC Journal

ISAAC International recently bid Jackie Brown, our long-time AAC Editorial Assistant, a fond thank you for her many years of assistance and support to the journal, as she embarks on her retirement. In order to help celebrate her contribution to the field of AAC, ISAAC International was pleased to co-opt our Past President, Jeff Riley, to personally present Jackie with a token of appreciation for her many years of service. Thank you again Jackie, and please enjoy your retirement in good health. We look forward to hearing about your triumphs on the golf course!



As previously announced, Ian Maness of Kingston (Canada) has taken over Jackie's responsibilities, and is working directly with our AAC Editors, Ralf Schlosser and Rajinder Koul. Please join us in welcoming Ian to the ISAAC "team." He can be reached via email at ian@isaac-online.org

Webinars and AAC Awareness Month 2020

ISAAC International, in conjunction with our Chapters ISAAC-US (USSAAC) and ISAAC-Canada, continue to present interesting topics and speakers in the form of "free to register" webinars. This is an important benefit of ongoing membership in ISAAC, since members receive first chance to register for the limited seats that are available.

In time for AAC Awareness Month (yes, it is October once again!), ISAAC is pleased to offer a number of new

webinars, all of which are posted on the [ISAAC website](#). Recordings of past webinars are also available for viewing from the [ISAAC Webinar Archives](#).

At the recently held Special Meeting of the ISAAC Council, I also challenged other Chapters and Council members to make use of our webinar platform, to host their own webinars. I anticipate many more interesting webinars will be presented in the coming weeks and months, so please keep watching the website and your email.

ISAAC International Emergency Preparedness

The current COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the importance of risk management, emergency preparedness, and strategic planning. Fortunately, we here at the ISAAC International office remain well positioned to manage our Association during this challenging time, thanks to the efforts and ongoing positive engagement of our staff and volunteer leadership.

We have recently engaged in a formal emergency preparedness planning exercise, and will be sharing our experience and results with both the EB and Council. We will be able to share more information on this in the coming months.

Membership Renewal 2021

We are making ready for 2021 Membership renewal. ISAAC International will be in touch with all of our Chapters during next month (October), in anticipation. For members of ISAAC-Australia, ISAAC-Canada, ISAAC-US (USSAAC), and ISAAC International, renewal packages will be emailed to

From the Executive Director (cont'd)



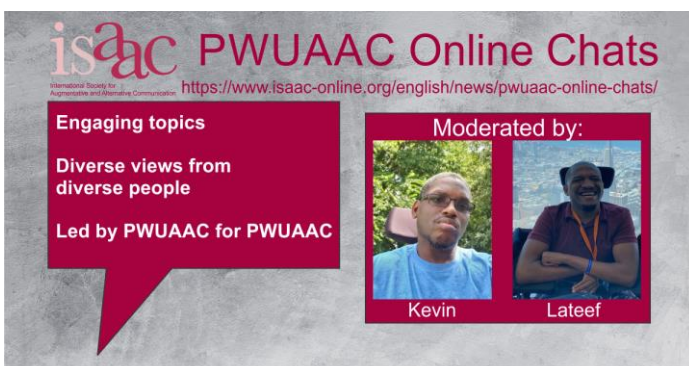
you directly in November. As with prior years, you will be able to renew your membership by way of VISA or MasterCard credit card, using the secure membership renewal functionality on our website. For members through any other Chapter, please do expect to receive communication from them directly.

As always, I welcome your thoughts and feedback. Please do not hesitate to contact me directly, at franklin@isaac-online.org, should you require any further information or assistance.

Regards and thanks,
[Franklin Smith](#)



The **Communication Support World Network Newsletter**, published twice yearly, focuses on emerging AAC nations. [Click here](#) to access our CSWN archives.



The next PWUAAC Online Chat is scheduled for October 5, 2020 @ 6 pm ET. For details, [click here](#).

ISAAC Council Update

Many thanks to those who attended and presented at our virtual 2020 Council Sharing Time on August 26th. It was wonderful to see the rich collaboration and creativity shown by our Chapters and members during these difficult times.

We reported on ISAAC's Working Groups, established in 2018. The UNCRPD group has met frequently to monitor how AAC and communication are reflected in the UN Convention. Another group is working on access to social media. Two Working Groups have completed their work. Meeting participants were asked to consult with their members about ideas for new projects, and to send them to nadiabrowning@gmail.com.

A reminder that October is International AAC Awareness Month. Our 2020 theme is "Bridging the Silence Through Solidarity." Please illustrate our theme by coming together to support awareness of AAC wherever you may live and work.

[Nadia Browning](#)
ISAAC Council Chair

COVID-19 Resources

Visit the [ISAAC website](#) for a list of **COVID-19 Resources** for people who use AAC during the pandemic, including resources compiled by the ISAAC UNCRPD Working Group. ISAAC Chapters in Australia, Brazil, Canada, Denmark, Israel, Netherlands/Flanders and the US have added to this page, which also features screening guidance kits available in Chinese, English, and Vietnamese.

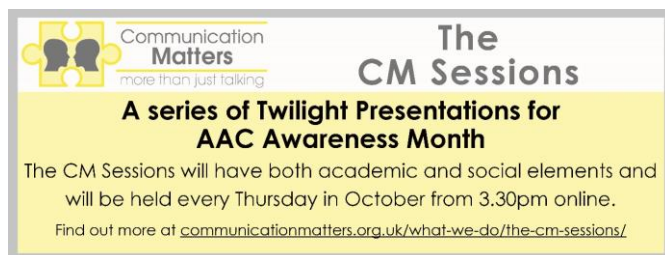
AAC Awareness Month

ISAAC celebrates International AAC Awareness Month each October. Our 2020 theme is *Bridging the Silence through Solidarity*. Let us know about your activities during AAC Awareness Month by sending an email to AACaware20@isaac-online.org and we will add your AAC Awareness Month news to our website.



Thank you for using the hashtag #AACaware20 on Twitter and Facebook!

Communication Matters (ISAAC-UK)



Communication Matters will be hosting a series of virtual events throughout October for AAC Awareness Month to help raise awareness of AAC and vital funds for the charity. Our main source of

funds comes from running events and the pandemic has had a huge impact on our income and our members this year.



The CM Sessions, with both academic and social elements, will be held every Thursday afternoon in October: 1st, 8th, 15th, 22nd and 29th from 3.30pm UK-time. All the resources will be available online for 30 days to watch in your own time. The sessions will feature a range of speakers, including a keynote speech from former ISAAC President, Meredith Allan, and innovative presentations by Gail M. Van Tatenhove (Speech-Language Pathologist in Florida), Gloria Soto (Professor in Special Education in San Francisco), Catia Crivelenti de Figueiredo Walter (Associate Professor in Rio de Janeiro) and several organisations in the UK, including ATtherapy (an independent speech and language therapy service), the Seashell Trust (a national charity for children and young adults with communication needs), as well as personal stories from members who use AAC. Last, but not least, there will be several short presentations from AAC supplier companies about their latest products.

For more information and how to register, please visit <https://communicationmatters.org.uk/what-we-do/the-cm-sessions>. It is open to everyone, so please!

- submitted by Emily Campbell, Charity Manager, Communication Matters

ISAAC EB 2020 - 2022



Gabriela Berlanga, ISAAC VP without Portfolio, is one of our Co-Chairs for ISAAC Conference 2020.

Gabriela completed, with Medal of Excellence and Dean's list distinction, her

degree in Speech and Language Pathology at the Universidad de las Américas, Mexico City. Gabriela was the 2004 recipient of The Bridge School / ISAAC Teacher in Residence Award. Gabriela has more than 15 years of experience serving people with disabilities.

In 2005, with her colleague Marcela Manzur, Gabriela founded CATIC, a therapy centre and transitional school for people with disabilities in Mexico City. She is the current director of CATIC, a professor at the Universidad de las Américas in the Master of Special Education program, and a consultant in the area of technology for disabilities for the Ministry of Education in Mexico.

As part of CATIC's mission, Gabriela has been involved in the organization of workshops and conferences in Mexico. She has also participated as a speaker in various national and international conferences in the field of AAC, technology and communication.

Juan Bornman, ISAAC President (PhD in AAC; M Communication Pathology; B Logopaedia) is a registered speech-language therapist and audiologist, and professor at the Centre for Augmentative and Alternative Communication, University of



Pretoria, South Africa. Throughout her career she has been actively involved in the disability field as trainer, researcher, and activist for one of the most vulnerable groups within the disability spectrum: those who are unable to speak. Her training and research comprise a variety of topics within rehabilitation by exploring strategies that increase participation, have an evidence base and are sustainable with a long-term impact. She also focuses on rehabilitation as a human rights issue for individuals with disability and how to ensure equal access to justice for persons with little or no speech.

She has published more than 50 papers in international peer-reviewed journals, four books and seven book chapters (some with a research focus and some with a clinical focus). She has done numerous presentations in South Africa and internationally on the topic of AAC, and has frequently been invited as a research fellow to more than 15 international universities. She has also participated in a number of large-scale international research projects on issues related to participation, multilingual issues in AAC assessment and intervention, and human rights.

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... Juan Bornman, continued

At the 2016 ISAAC conference in Toronto she received the prestigious ISAAC Fellowship Award for outstanding and distinguished achievement in the field of AAC.

Juan has been a loyal member of ISAAC for more than 25 years and attended her first ISAAC conference in Philadelphia in 1992. She has also served on the BUILD committee and on the Council in various capacities.



Nadia Browning, ISAAC Council Chair, has been an ISAAC member since 1987. Nadia is an Occupational Therapist with over 40 years' experience working with individuals with complex communication needs, their families, and team.

Nadia continues to work, lecture, and provide workshops and supervision, and assist with research in the field. Nadia has participated in and coordinated various community projects and camps for individuals with complex communication needs and their families. She has written articles in English and Portuguese and presented at many national (Canada) and international workshops, such as in Chile, Argentina, Brazil, Mexico, Portugal, Croatia, Germany, Poland, Czech, Russia, China, and the United States.

Nadia graduated in Occupational Therapy from the "Sociedade Unificada de Ensino Superior Augusto Motta" (Rio de Janeiro, Brazil) in 1978. She has a Master of Science from the University of Western Ontario (UWO), London, Ontario, Canada (2001), has worked 18 years with the Augmentative Communication Services team at Thames Valley Children's Centre (London, Ontario, Canada). She served several contracts with Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital with the Communication and Writing Aids Services (Toronto, Ontario, Canada) over a period of three years. She was a guest lecture at the Catholic School of Applied Sciences in Freiburg, Germany, for two years. From 2015 to 2017 she worked with the ACE Centre in the United Kingdom. She is currently working with ErinoakKids Centre for Treatment and Development with the Assistive Devices Resources Service Team (Toronto, Ontario, Canada).



Sally Clendon, ISAAC Vice-President without Portfolio, is a Senior Lecturer in speech and language therapy within the Institute of Education at Massey University in Auckland, New Zealand. Her research and clinical interests are focused around supporting

communication and literacy development for children with complex communication and learning needs. Sally was a Co-Chair for the ISAAC 2018 conference on the Gold Coast, Australia, and has served on the Executive Board since 2016. She is also an Associate Editor of the AAC journal.

ISAAC EB 2020 - 2022



Tracy Shepherd, President-Elect, is a speech language pathologist who has a longstanding passion for AAC. As a student she worked part time doing in-home support for a family who had two young girls who used AAC (a TouchTalk and a Light Talker). This sparked her interest and love of AAC that enables individuals the ability to communicate and connect with others. She has been practicing clinically in AAC since 1991.



Tracy works in the Augmentative Communication Service at Thames Valley Children's Centre in London, Ontario, Canada and as a Clinical Education Coordinator at the Centralized Equipment Pool (operated by Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital) in Toronto.

Tracy was President of the Canadian Chapter of ISAAC (2009 to 2013). She has held the position of VP without portfolio on the ISAAC EB from 2014 – 2018, her major responsibility being supporting conferences. Tracy co-chaired the 17th Biennial conference in Toronto, Canada in 2016, "Bringing us Together." In 2018 she traveled to Ethiopia to teach AAC at Addis Ababa University, to the inaugural class of speech therapists in the country.

Her research interests span many areas, including reliability of SGDs, abandonment of technology, outcome measurement, as well as other areas of

clinical interest (teamwork, listening, and family impact).

Tracy is excited and humbled to hold the position of President-Elect for ISAAC during this particularly difficult time in which we are seeing just how essential communication is across the world. The challenge is sure to be rewarding!



Signhild Skogdal, ISAAC Council Chair-Elect, is an associate professor in speech and language therapy at The Arctic University of Norway, Tromsø. Signhild has been working in schools with adolescents and adults using AAC, and her PhD concern is participation in regular school for students using AAC. Inclusive education and communication in a relational perspective are also a central interest.

Miroslav Vrankic, ISAAC Vice-President for BUILD,

is a founder and a CEO of E-GLAS, a university-based company from Croatia, which is producing assistive technology. He is also a professor at the University of Rijeka, Faculty of Engineering. His passion is building meaningful projects, by merging his scientific background in electrical engineering and digital signal



ISAAC EB 2020 - 2022



... Miroslav Vrankic, continued

processing with assistive technology applications that can change people's lives for the better. Miroslav is also a founder of ATAAC, a European conference focused on assistive technology and AAC.

Kevin Williams, ISAAC Vice-President for LEAD,

is a freelance web developer and the Chief Technology Officer of USSAAC, based in Charlotte, North Carolina, USA. He is a co-host of the ISAAC PWUAAC Chat. Kevin is committed to helping others become more independent through technology or personal development.



News

New AssistiveWare Online Resources

The [AssistiveWare AAC Training Series](#) is now available on-demand. Learn from world-renowned AAC specialists with the latest insights & practical strategies. Rent for 30 days and watch at your convenience.

United Nations Update

As posted by Catalina Devandas on Facebook, August 31, 2020:

"Today is my last day as UN Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities. It has been my greatest honour to serve in this capacity during a period that has been extraordinarily intense. In these six years, people with disabilities experienced unprecedented accomplishments as a global community, and as a human rights movement. It has also been a time in which our strength and determination have been put to the test, like during the COVID-19 pandemic which has so virulently impacted our communities around the world.

"The global crisis we are experiencing now is a potent reminder to states and leaders around the world, that the only way forward for humanity is by #EmbracingDiversity and leaving no one behind.

"I'd like to thank all of those who collaborated with me and contributed their time, knowledge and efforts to shed light on the human rights challenges that people with disabilities face in every corner of our planet. My deepest gratitude goes to the disability community for their trust, partnership and support throughout these years. I hope that the work we have done together will pave the way for more victories in the fight for our rights and dignity in the coming years.

"I invite you to check out the overview of the mandate [here](#) and the portal of the [OHCHR](#), where you can find all reports published during my mandate."



Chapters



ISAAC-Australia • www.isaacaustralia.com

ISAAC-Brazil • www.isaacbrasil.org.br

ISAAC-Canada • www.isaac-canada.org

ISAAC-Denmark • www.isaac.dk

ISAAC-Francophone • www.isaac-fr.org

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ISAAC-Sweden • www.isaac-sverige.se

ISAAC-Taiwan • twsaac.blogspot.com

ISAAC-UK • www.communicationmatters.org.uk

ISAAC-US • www.ussaac.org

Contact Us

Do you have a question or comment?
Please feel free to send an email to
feedback@isaac-online.org

Upcoming Events

October 2020

[International AAC Awareness Month](#)

Theme: *Bridging the Silence through Solidarity.*
Attainment Company is our official sponsor.



Play AAC Trivia

October 1 – 5

[Click here to play!](#)

This event opens October 1st & closes on
Oct. 5th at 11:59 p.m. CST

ISAAC Webinars

Wednesday, October 14, 2020

7:00 - 8:00 PM ET

A Discussion of Empowering Autonomy
and Self in Individuals with AAC Needs
Part of the USSAAC Webinar Series

Stephanie Faso, Presenter

[Register Here](#)

Thursday, October 15, 2020

7:00 - 8:30 PM ET

Research Spotlight Webinar: A talented panel of
researchers will highlight their research and focus
on clinical/classroom implications and applications.

Sponsored by Attainment Company

[Click here](#) for more information

ISAAC VIRTUAL ONLINE LEARNING: DON'T MISS OUT!

Have you explored ISAAC's free online learning opportunities? ISAAC-sponsored online learning environments feature topical and practical presentations, often with take-away resources for people who use AAC and their families, students, teachers, therapists, researchers, and organizations.



Webinars sponsored by USSAAC are offered six times annually. A recent presentation featured tips from front-line staff working in hospitals experiencing a surge of patients temporarily unable to speak due to COVID-19.



An ISAAC-Canada series, new in 2020, had *Gaming and AAC* as its popular debut topic.



Spanish-language webinars are part of our ongoing special events.

The **ISAAC Online Journal Club** is held from time to time, as a forum for a discussion of issues around AAC.

ISAAC continues to offer **Sponsored Webinars**, featuring many of the key companies in the assistive technology industry. Additional sponsored webinars will continue to be announced by eblast and on the ISAAC International website at <https://www.isaac-online.org/english/webinars/>.



Watch for upcoming **Webinars** at ISAAC-online.org. Webinars are recorded and available for viewing later (unless otherwise indicated), in case the timing isn't right for you to attend the live event.



Join in on ISAAC's newest initiative, **PWUAAC Online Chats** – an opportunity for people who use AAC all over the world to meet virtually and chat informally.



Check out our **Webinar Archives** and discover a wealth of information!

Our Vision & Mission



ISAAC's Vision is that AAC will be recognized, valued and used throughout the world.

ISAAC's Mission is to promote the best possible communication for people with complex communication needs.

ISAAC is a Non-Governmental Organization in consultative status with the United Nations Economic & Social Council.

Stay Connected

ISAAC Chapters and members worldwide are invited to submit items of interest from your country or region. News, AAC practice tips, research, personal essays, in article format or as a link to online articles or resources, will be reviewed and made available on the ISAAC website as appropriate. Please send articles and photos to [Nola Millin](#).

Stay Social

Keep informed about ISAAC news & stay in touch with the AAC community on our social media!



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The ISAAC Communicator

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Comments welcome! Please
contact [Heather Stonehouse](#).