

Taking Action: Reimagining Just Futures in Technical Communication 2022 ATTW VIRTUAL CONFERENCE, JUNE 20–30

”The just use of imagination is not just conceptual. It must be enacted. Without this enactment, a re-envisioning is relegated to the realm of fiction and future. The just use of imagination is applicable (in that it must be applied) and employed in our current realities in service of justice and equality RIGHT NOW, not later.”

—Jones & Williams, 2020

We’re changing things up!

Forget what you thought you knew about conferences.

We’re not doing panels upon panels of papers and presentations read aloud. These presentations have their uses and their value, but this year, we’re trying something different.

We all know it’s 2022, and we are a far cry away from business-as-usual. We’re tired. Dealing with life during a pandemic that has exacerbated existing inequities, ongoing anti-Blackness and white supremacy, constant reports of anti-Asian hate, while seeing the day-to-day effects of climate change is No. Effing. Joke. How are we supposed to teach, mentor, caretake, research, write, and conference during these times? Or, what *could* conferencing look like in 2022?

We’ll cut to the chase. We’ve heard a lot of words. We’ve seen the statements affirming that Black Lives Matter put out by institutions that have done nothing else to change their white supremacist and anti-Black practices. Lip service is easy. Over the past couple of years, ATTW leadership and members have sent out several calls to action, urging that members of our professional and intellectual community take active steps [to redress anti-Blackness and white supremacy](#), [to challenge anti-Asian racism](#), [reimagine justice](#), and [attend to issues of inclusivity](#). We want to see more action--**thoughtful, critical action toward just futures in tech comm.**

Indeed, this means the 2022 ATTW Virtual Conference, scheduled for June 20–30, is going to be action-oriented.

For technical communicators invested in change-making, the current structures for gathering (e.g. traditional conferences) are limited in their potential to enact change across the field, our communities, and the world. Rather than stand-and-deliver opportunities, **we change makers** require spaces to build coalitions, to conduct meaningful research, to analyze mounds of data, and to make meaning. Structured by a series of interactive workshops (invited and proposed) and events over the course of two weeks, we are working to build spaces where participants can take action to build capacity, construct connections, and create new systems, assignments, and practices.

We're also going to take action to reflect on what conferences are for, why we attend them, and what, in the best circumstances, we hope to get from them. We're going to ask ourselves: What would a participant-centered—and not just speaking-role centered—conference experience look like? And how can we learn from the brilliance of our predecessors as we try to adapt what we've known and what we've done for an unprecedented context?

To that end, we invite proposals for **action-oriented workshops and activities** (up to 90-minutes each) that help us re-imagine what conferences can and should be. Proposals can be for individual or collaborative workshops, makerspace sessions, publication development workshops, project ideation spaces, feedback sessions, and more. The focus of these proposals should be on *doing*, not simply sharing out research.

Here are some ways you can re-imagine your presentation/panel as an action-oriented space:

- Proposing a capacity-building workshop for scholars who are new to tech comm and interested in social justice. How do we build capacities as social justice-oriented technical communicators?
- Proposing a grant writing workshop based on technical communication and your specific areas of expertise. How can we encourage collaboration in grant proposals across institutions and areas?
- Proposing an ideation space where early-career scholars work on articles, dissertation proposals, and more. What can you share to help amplify another scholar's work?
- Proposing a feedback session. Do you need space to workshop a work-in-progress and are you looking to share your ideas for other scholar's to help develop their work?
- Proposing a pedagogy workshop. Can you offer scholars practical, pedagogical advice for course design and assignment creation and then help them to begin to implement their ideas?
- Proposing a session on revising a TPC program in order to center inclusion and justice. Do you have expertise that you can share for program administrators looking to make social justice and equity a focus?
- Proposing a session that helps identify current opportunities and approaches for solving wicked problems. How can we, as technical communicators, work to address wicked problems like mass incarceration, climate change, COVID impacts, or access and inclusion?

Of course, these are just a small set of ideas, and we welcome your innovation. Some workshops might result in deliverables like collaborative publications, projects, or funding proposals. Some workshops may serve the purpose of creating cross-institutional, action-oriented coalitions developed to focus on problems or opportunities in our field. Some workshops may send participants away with fresh insights that they can apply to localized contexts. Either way, our hope is that participants can use our time together to improve our infrastructure and resources in support of our commitments to social justice.

We have a lot planned and will be rolling out more information about invited speakers, pre-planned workshops, and other ways to engage during the conference. Stay tuned for social

media updates and for more ways to collaborate about ideas. We encourage you to participate in the way that works best for you, your schedule, and your mental health. Finally, we invite you to shape this conference to your needs.

Please send a proposal of no more than 500 words to ATTW 2022 Conference Chairs, Drs. Jennifer Sano-Franchini, Donnie Johnson Sackey, and Kristen Moore at attwcon22@gmail.com by **Monday, March 7th**. Proposals should include the goals, planned activities, and any potential deliverables or outcomes, as well as a schedule outlining how you will use up to 90-minutes of allotted time. Notifications will be sent back to participants by March 21st.

All proposals will be peer-reviewed, and the conference co-chairs will be available to work with accepted participants to envision their participation in the virtual conference. We may ask participants to combine sessions, reimagine their proposals, and collaborate with others to ensure that we have a conference schedule that is productive and mindful of our current pandemic realities.