

Каня Ричард
Университет Джексонвилл
г. Джексонвилл, США

STAYING CONNECTED WITHIN THE ACADEMIC WORLD

Keywords: academic world, face-to face contact, professional conferences.

I have been asked how people communicate in academia, and can answer only for myself. I use four main methods, which should be familiar to all academicians: the Internet, postal mail, face-to-face contact, and reading academic journals in my discipline.

Most commonly, today, I employ the Internet. I am a daily user of e-mail, and have a Facebook account. I have chosen not to use Twitter or LinkedIn, simply because they seem redundant and having more places to look for messages consumed too much time and effort. I have seen my own use of e-mail grow every year since I first began using its precursor Telnet in the late 1980s. Its ease of use and speed are big advantages, but it is somewhat impersonal and favors superficial over the substantive communication.

Once I was an avid letter writer, and maintained correspondence with colleagues via the posts. Also an avid stamp collector from my youth, I enjoyed both using and receiving unusual and colorful stamps on such correspondence. I kept files of most of my correspondence sorted by year or by topic. When I switched from a typewriter to a computer in the mid-1980s, I would print off an extra copy of each letter I sent, a great improvement over using carbon paper. Those annual print files now are quite slim, as few people write me and I write fewer people.

My preferred way of communicating with colleagues is face-to-face. To do so beyond my own university I make a point of attending several professional conferences each year. There I actively interact with old friends and meet some of the newer faces in my discipline. Often an existing colleague-friend introduces me to someone new who shares some of my scholarly interests, expanding my network of professional contacts. I keep a batch of business cards on hand for such encounters and solicit cards from these new faces. One such interaction with a colleague I met at a conference in Ireland in 2008 has led to a joint collaboration on a book we hope to publish in 2015.

Lastly, I subscribe to and read multiple scholarly journals in my discipline and make note of authors whose works interest me. Given the chance, I will look up these authors at professional meetings and chat with them about their recent work. I also keep computer reference files by topic into which I post the citation

data for such articles. On occasion I am asked to contribute a paper or article on a specific topic and turn to those reference files to initiate my research into the topic. For example, in 2014 I was asked to prepare two entries in a forthcoming social science encyclopedia, and was able to compile and review my background sources quickly from the reference files I had stored on my computer.

My personal preference is face-to-face contact, but the realities of staying connected in that way alone in a world-wide network of scholars is not possible. I have academic friends and colleagues all over the United States, in Canada, Bermuda, Britain, France, Italy, Estonia, Lithuania, Poland, Belarus, Ukraine, Russia, Moldova, Romania, Croatia, Turkey, Malaysia, and Singapore, Staying in touch with them all would be impossible via face-to-face contact alone. So I rely upon the Internet most of all. With its attachment features I can share articles and papers with my colleagues. It is a request sent via the Internet which invited me to write this, and it is via the Internet that I have submitted it.