Title: How ethical will you be with my deepest story?

Organizers (presenting the session):
Ass. Prof Theresa Dirndorfer Anderson (Connected Intelligence Centre, University of Technology Sydney)
(theresa.anderson@uts.edu.au)
Prof Ina Fourie (Department of Information Science, University of Pretoria)
(ina.fourie@up.ac.za)

Contributors to scoping content analysis – groundwork for the interactive session:
Prof Ina Fourie (Department of Information Science, University of Pretoria)
(ina.fourie@up.ac.za)
Anika Meyer (Department of Information Science, University of Pretoria) (non-attending) (anika.meyer@up.ac.za)
Liezl Ball (Department of Information Science, University of Pretoria) (non-attending) (liezl.ball@up.ac.za)
Ass. Prof Theresa Dirndorfer Anderson (Connected Intelligence Centre, University of Technology Sydney) (theresa.anderson@uts.edu.au)

Abstract: Transformation of digital worlds that secure social inclusion for all requires a deep understanding of information needs and lived experiences. Digital ethnographies and autoethographies explore digital and social media spaces to build up understandings of the communities represented in data downloads from these spaces. But when entering such a field, how does one ensure both the emic and etic (insider and outsider perspectives) that contribute meaningfully to the interpretive richness of ethnographic and autoethograpic approaches? Researchers must be prepared for crafting stories on deeply personal experiences, and the challenges of ethical research conduct: gaining approval from ethical review boards and funding agencies, the trust of those whose stories they collect, and for ethical research reporting. The session will develop awareness of ethical concerns, offer an opportunity for shared sense-making and co-design of ethical guidelines to engage in deeply personal forms of research inquiry. To kickstart the session, participants will use a template of ethical issues based on a scoping content analysis of reported ethical adherence, and participant input elicited prior to the session as a thought-starter. Glimpses from personal stories and a field exercise will unfold different experiences and add another lens towards a co-designed framework for ethical ethnographic research.

Description: (1,000 words)

- *Purpose and Intended Audience:* The interactive session is aimed at educators, supervisors, postgraduate students, practitioners and policy-makers interested in exploring the lived experiences and information needs of vulnerable and marginalised groups (especially from cultural perspectives) – those whose stories need to be told to develop inclusive and responsive digital worlds. The intended audience includes people from disciplines such as Informatics and those addressing the digital divide. The purpose is to:
    - develop awareness of autoethnographic ethical concerns and how to protect those whose stories are told or revealed in mindful writing
    - offer opportunities for input from different lenses and shared sense-making
    - build confidence in addressing ethical concerns and dealing with resistance to deeply personal research methods
    - establish a community of ethically minded and responsive autoethographic researchers sensitive to research opportunities relevant to the conference theme and prepared to acknowledge our humanity
    - present participants with a co-designed template on ethical adherence
    - lay foundations for further research community building.

- *Outcomes*: Participants would be able to:
    - collaboratively make sense of ethical challenges to address in authoethnographic research
    - map ethical concerns on a template for autoethnographic research (developed from a scoping content analysis and prior participant input)
    - make informed decisions in applying and writing up ethical research conduct
    - contribute to the generation of autoethnographic research topics relevant to the conference theme.

- *Proposed activities* − pre-, during and post-conference:
    - *Prior submission of lived experiences of conducting research on deeply personal information will be sought as part of the promotion of this session*
    - *As participants gather for the session, they will be invited to choose from one of a series of reflective activities (drawing, writing, reflecting)*

intended to put participants in the position of the 'vulnerable other' (5 minutes)

- *Raising awareness of, and sensitizing to, challenges*: brief introduction of ethical concerns, the scoping content analysis (developed with the input of two non-attending contributors) and development of the template (also based on prior participant input) (5 minutes)
- *Familiarising with the template*: the template will be the tool for capturing participant input to co-design and will be their take-away to continue growing and contributing to the conduct and reporting of ethically sound autoethnographic research (5 minutes)
- *Sharing lived ethical challenges in autoethnographic research*: Introducing drawings (*life in four frames*), reflective writing, and vignettes of stories shared prior by participants and from the literature. (15 minutes)
- *Pausing and reflection*: quiet individual time to think and make notes (5 minutes)
- *Collaborative sense-making*: Active participant contribution through small group discussion to give feedback on the template based on their own prior experiences of research methods involving vulnerable communities and the sharing of deeply personal experiences, as well as the lived ethical challenges shared in a preceding part of the session. Each group will report briefly. Their input will contribute to the adaptation and co-design of a template on ethical concerns and challenges in autoethnographic research (15 minutes for group discussion;10 minutes for report back = 25 minutes).
- *Field session - applying ethically minded writing as a small group*: Due to time constraints participants will work only with two of the most important ethical conditions (set by the organisers) for autoethnographic writing. They will experience the mindset needed to be sensitive and responsive to ethical concerns: (1) regarding explicit statements of adherence to ethical research conduct; (2) presenting content revealing vulnerability, issues of confidence, privacy, etc. Since time might not allow for each group to share, only overall challenges in adhering to ethically minded writing will be shared (15 minutes for group writing; and 10 minutes for feedback.)
- *Agreeing on further action and wrap up:* the focus will be on action to nurture ethical autoethnographic research conduct and report of ethical adherence (10 minutes)

- *Generating research topics*: the focus will be on suggestions for autoethographic research relevant to the conference theme with a specific focus on cultural vulnerability. A map of potential themes will be provided in a Google Doc document to which participants can add (Post-conference activities for two weeks after conference.)
- *Follow-up*: The template will be updated according to participant in-session input and will then be available for two weeks following the conference to capture further reflection and input. A new *co-designed version* will be shared with all participants. In addition, the spirit, flow, ideas and input generated from the session will be captured in an article to be submitted to an open access journal such as *Information Research* with acknowledgement of the contribution of participants.

Relevance to the Conference/Significance to the Field: Library and Information Science, as well as other students must be trained to embrace the challenges and opportunities of contemporary society. Digital worlds are associated with information and data management in a rapidly changing world. Transformation implies the urge to address all facets ranging from inclusivity, cultural awareness and diverse perceptions of information and how it needs to be captured, searchable, and shared. Autoethnography, with its close relationship to narratives and storytelling, lends itself very well to data collection from diverse cultural groups in terms of the potential of digital worlds to meet with a diversity of needs. Collaborative autoethnography and authoethnographic studies where researchers go beyond their own experiences and also collect the stories of others, are important. A serious challenge with autoethnographic research is ethical concerns and meeting with ethical requirements and approval. The theme of ethical research conduct and report on ethical adherence in qualitative research is thus very relevant to open research opportunities relevant to the conference, raising awareness and sensitivity and capacity building. The format will engage the audience on several levels: (1) sharing of lived experiences with deeply personal research; co-design of a template for ethical autoethnographic research conduct; exposure to mindful autoethnographic writing; contribution to the generation of research themes; and further development of a research community.

Duration: 90-minute session.

Special Requirements: None.