Access in the Making (AIM) Lab

Communication Protocol

Acknowledgement[1]

As we write our Communication Protocol, we want to acknowledge in bold letters that it was the methodological work of **the Civic Laboratory for Environmental Action Research (CLEAR)** that has inspired and guided us throughout the process.[2] We are extremely grateful to CLEAR Lab for the incredible amount of work that they have done in how to run a feminist and anti-colonial lab,[3] and their generosity in sharing this know-how with others. **We cannot cite you and thank you enough.**

Citation

Inspired by CLEAR Lab's work, AIM Lab has worked on this document over almost a process of ten months (and we are still and will be working on it). This document is the result of *labour*, including doing research, collective conversations, and editing. This

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[1] Please note that in our *Manifesto* and *Protocols*, we make the deliberate decision to use, not endnotes, *but footnotes*. In order to subvert the design hierarchy scripted into footnotes (which automatically decreases their font size vis-a-vis the font size of main text) we choose to use the same font size for both footnotes and the main body of the text, with the same line spacing. These design choices reflect our commitments to feminist ethics of citation. Through these choices, we seek to emphasize the shoulders we stand upon, and the various intellectual genealogies, activist, and artistic traditions that we draw from. Thank you, Annemarie Mol, Sara Ahmed, and Max Liboiron for teaching us about the importance of citations and the politics of footnotes (Mol, *The Body Multiple*; Ahmed, "Making Feminist Points,"; Liboiron, Pollution is Colonialism).

[2] CLEAR, *CLEAR Lab Book: A living manual of our values, guidelines, and protocols*.

[3] For methodological projects of the CLEAR Lab, see: https://civiclaboratory.nl/methodological-projects/

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document is a research output. This document is *a publication*. If you quote, use, or in any way benefit from this document, cite it.

Cite as:

AIM Lab. *Access in the Making (AIM) Communication Protocol*. Montreal: Access in the Making Lab, 2022.

As a lab committed to disability justice and feminist citational practices, we are especially concerned that the intellectual labour of marginalized folks (including BIPOC, disabled artists, activists, scholars) and those occupying precarious positions in the academia (graduate students, adjuncts, emerging scholars) are not properly (sometimes, never) recognized. Our own citational practices seek to dismantle that ignorance and erasure, and we hope that you, the reader, will do the same.

Communication protocol publication co-authorship

This publication emerged out of a series of numerous conversations within AIM as well as from a litany of members' own experiences in various academic and community spaces as well as activist and social movements. The writing of this manifesto was by and large produced by Amy Mazowita and Jessie Stainton in consultation with AIM's Steering Committee.

Communication Protocol

Would you like your latest research paper to be promoted on AIM's social media? Did Arseli ask you to post something to our Twitter? Do you want to share an event or news item that aligns with AIM's values and principles? Well keep on reading because this is the communication protocol.

Purpose of Communication Protocol

The AIM Lab's public communication channels include our Twitter (@AccessMaking) and Facebook (Access in-the-Making Lab) presences. There is potential for a future Instagram account, but we are currently only using Twitter (primary platform) and Facebook (secondary platform), and—last but not least—our beautiful new website, www.accessinthemaking.ca. Our social media profiles are updated by AIM's two communication coordinators (currently Jessie Stainton and Amy Mazowita). We strive to have two communication coordinators active at all times, with each person being responsible for posting to Twitter and Facebook several times per week (Twitter is our main source of engagement and we aim for a minimum of 5 tweets per week. Facebook is used on an as-needed basis—i.e., to promote an event, publication, etc.).

Communication coordinators are responsible for keeping the lab's social media active by liking, replying to, and following disability justice-related accounts at their discretion and keeping AIM's social channels up to date in terms of current issues, events and the sharing of our members' projects and accomplishments.

What are our posts about?
- Disability justice and critical disability studies
- Access
- Environnmental justice, climate chaos, environmental emergency

- Standing in solidarity with Kanien'kehá:ka Nation and other Indigenous nations and communities
- Indigenous survival and resistance; Indigenous sovereignty
- Land-based issues and "Land Back".
- Decolonization
- Intersectionality
- Anti-racism, anti-colonialism, anti-sexism, anti-war, anti-imperialism; anti-heteropatriarchal, anti-cissexism (especially in their specific intersections with ableism)
- Have something to add? Let us know because this is a living document!

Who is our audience?

- Community members in and out of academia
- Potential co-conspirators
- Disability justice activists
- People new to disability justice
- Disabled students, faculty, and staff members
- Artists, artivists
- People skeptical about academia
- Non-Canadian audiences
- Undergraduates and secondary school students

What types of things do we post about?

- Academic and non-academic research, community-led research, citizen science
- Past and upcoming scholarly and non-scholarly publications (books, articles, journal issues, magazines, newspaper articles, op-eds, etc.)
- Academic and lab-related activities (conferences, workshops, lectures, seminars, symposiums, etc.)

- Art events (exhibitions, vernissage, festivals, film screenings, performances, installations)
  - Academic, art, and other events should be shared with our networks one month in advance (or as soon as we are aware of it, whichever is earlier). We should also post/tweet reminders two weeks in advance of the event date, two days before the event, and on the day of event.
  - Please keep this timeline in mind when planning an event and contact the communication coordinators well in advance. We want to make sure we're sharing all AIM events and activities with plenty of time to spread the word!
- Important events, dates, periods from history and the recent past
- Archival material
- Anti-oppressive work done by local communities
- The work and accomplishments of our lab members
- To gain a better understanding of what we post about, check out our social media channels!

In addition to promoting AIM Lab events, projects, and disability-focused communication items, we are committed to supporting and promoting the work of our peers and related groups. These accounts include, but are not limited to, Concordia's Feminist Media Studio (@FemMediaStudio), Concordia's Intersectionality Research Hub (@intersect_hub), Concordia's Centre for Sensory Studies (@SensoryStudies), Concordia's Digital Intimacy, Gender, and Sexuality Lab (@thedigslab), Concordia's Centre for Oral History and Digital Storytelling (@COHDS), 4th SPACE Concordia (@cu4thspace), and Concordia's Milieux Institute (@Milieux_news). AIM's communication coordinators are committed to retweeting and circulating the pertinent news items and event notices shared on each of these platforms.

- **Important:** While we support and engage with groups that are part of our academic and extended communities, we only retweet and share their content when it is in line with our values as a feminist, anti-colonial, accessibility-focused lab. We should not uncritically retweet the content of the above (or any) accounts, but should ensure that the events, activities, or news items posted are in line with our access requirements and other non-negotiables. See below section on "What do we not post about?" for more information about what should not be posted/shared/retweeted when sharing the content of other groups.

When do we need to stay silent? Meaning, when do we <u>not</u> post? When do we need to take a pause?

Due to the nature of being a Lab within an academic institution, there are times that require a collective pause to reflect on our position as individuals working in this privileged space. During these times, our course of action should be to amplify the voices of others as opposed to taking up space and centering ourselves in the discussion. There are also times when we should choose to stay silent in order to show solidarity with others —this means that we do not simply make a post acknowledging an injustice, issue, crisis, etcetera, and then carry on with our posts as usual. Rather, we share information from those affected when it is asked of us (e.g., when oppressed people/groups ask for allies to post or retweet) and follow their lead on how to handle the sharing of content. We recognize that there will be times where we should not post at all, and that our silence will do more to amplify marginalized voices than our entering the conversation would.

We recognize that we won't always know the correct way to proceed and that we *will* make mistakes. To mitigate this, we encourage anyone in a communication or social

media-related role to reach out to other AIM members if you are unsure about sharing something. We also suggest taking a look at and following the guidelines set out in the Apology, Call In's/Call Out's Protocol in the event that we must make a public apology on one or more of our social channels.

How do we stand in solidarity? What does our allyship look like?

While solidarity and allyship are processes that extend far beyond social media, we take certain steps on our platform to maintain consistency in how we show up for those we stand with. We always reference the Indigenous Lands we occupy when discussing place, space, and geography (e.g. Tiohtià:ke, on Land stolen from the Kanien'kehá:ka Nation). Land Acknowledgements should be clear on all our social platforms (although the location of our members may be transient at times, our accounts "live" on Tiohtià:ke and this is the territory we reference on our public facing channels, public engagements, and formal reports).

Email signatures are another great place to acknowledge location and we encourage our core members to note their relationship(s) to the land if they are comfortable doing so.

We do our best to refrain from any type of performative allyship and recognize that allyship can take many forms. We understand that being allies to marginalized people/groups is a continued process and that this process takes work, commitment, and the openness to learn. If you don't know or are unsure about how to 'be an ally,' then do the work! Take it upon yourself to learn about the group/person, educate yourself on the history of their oppression, and never take for granted that a marginalized person should be the one to educate you. It is our responsibility to educate ourselves, and—should someone offer to lead us in this work—they should always be properly recognized, thanked, and compensated.

Aside from staying silent on certain issues and standing in solidarity with those who experience traumatic events, we use our media platforms to promote others and amplify others' events, books, art, etcetera.

What do we <u>not</u> post about?

So much of our work is working towards accessibility so we don't have many hard no's. That said, we don't:

- engage with trolls or in arguments.
- jump on social media bandwagons and/or make uninformed or empty posts of solidarity.
- share personal critiques or opinions on controversial (or any) topics.
- Share members' news, accomplishments, or activities without first getting permission to do so (e.g., check with the person if it hasn't already been posted by them).

Importantly, when posting about an event we always ensure that there is accessibility information available. If the accessibility of the event is unknown, we generally don't promote it through our channels. That said, there are always exceptions to the "rules" of what we do and do not share, and we try to mitigate this by being as transparent as possible with all content we share/post.

What is our tone?

Accessible, accountable, informative, self-aware, personable, flexible, and funny.

Our social media platforms have an informal yet always informed tone. Accessibility is at the core of our social media personality, and we strive to be welcoming while always

engaged in the issues circulating in both academic and non-academic communities. Tone goes hand in hand with language. We try to avoid jargon and over-complicated language, and never name-drop for the sake of name-dropping. While keeping an approachable and inclusive tone can be difficult at times, especially when engaging with academic topics, our goal is for no one to feel excluded by the terminology that we use. We like to use a bit of humor (when appropriate) and can be a bit cheeky when highlighting blatant issues of access and ableism.

Regular tone workshops

Developing the tone of our lab is an ever-adapting work in progress. It's a team effort and we do not want our personality to become stagnant or inflexible. With this in mind, we have decided to have a yearly "Tone Workshop" in which the communication coordinators will organize an AIM meeting dedicated to brainstorming, discussing, and updating the tone of the AIM Lab's public facing channels.

Our first of these workshops was held in June 2022 and led by Jessie Stainton and Amy Mazowita. Steering Committee members of AIM can find this workshop's notes and presentation slides on Teams at Documents > General > Meetings > AIM Tone Workshop_17 June 2022.

- Since the tone we use can be situational, the content we share and how we approach it may not always seem uniform. We try to be consistent, of course, but as mentioned above—our tone and personality will flex and develop as we continue to grow as a lab. We strongly recommend all AIM members (especially those in communication roles) review the current Tone Workshop notes and presentation slides to get a better sense of how we try to present ourselves and the content we share with our broader communities. These documents cover a

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variety of nuanced questions and ideas and provide a consensus of the lab's most recent perspective of our collective tone.

- As always, the Tone Workshop docs (and this protocol itself) may not always have a definitive answer to specific and/or complex situations! When in doubt, use our inter-lab communication protocols (more on this below!) to chat with other AIM members so we can come up with a solution together.

We encourage the celebration of our work and achievements, and we take pride in our peers' accomplishments! If you have something to share, please email the communication coordinators (currently Amy or Jessie) and include:

- All relevant information.
- Any links or contextual information (e.g., if you are awarded a grant, you may wish to include a link to your personal website).
- Sometimes we queue up tweets for the following week so let us know if it is time sensitive.
- If using images, please also include image descriptions.
- Also keep in mind that "news" can be about anything, and we do not "measure" the success of any news. If you have a project that is starting, and that you are excited about, then it is news! If you are just happy that something happened in your research, art, and activism life, then it is news! We want to share the joy about anything that makes us happy regardless of whether they are valued by the academia or not.

How to give an image description

An image description is a written caption that provides a general description and context of an image. We reject the idea that image descriptions have to be accessibility

"add-ons," (which are oftentimes boring) instead we regard them as a creative opening – an opening to be fun, inventive and relational. Remember, access is about relationality. It is not about codes and rules (at least not to us!) For more context we invite you to check out our Audio Description in the Making page

Three things to keep in mind when writing an image description (via Alt Text As Poetry)[4]

1. Word Choice: Write with intention; what is your tone? What do you wish to convey?
2. Word Economy: Keep things concise; aim for 1-2 sentences
3. Experimental Spirit: This is a creative process of thought and care ... so have fun!

Email Signature

If you are a Lab Member, we invite you to include the AIM logo in your email signature. The logo is in the Teams via **General > Design Process > AIM Logos by Roi > Letterhead and email signature**

Inter-lab Communication:

All of our lab happenings (project progress, group writing activities, meeting notes, etc.) are saved on Teams. We have a group email—the Lab Flight Deck Google group—which we use to circulate news, announcements, and any information that needs to reach all active members. Contact information for all core members can also be found in the Member Address Book in Teams (General > Admin + Task Assignments > Member Address Book).

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[4] Coklyat, Bojana and Shannon Finnegan. "*Alt-Text as Poetry Workbook*".

As decided during our Spring 2022 AIM Lab retreat, we try to avoid spamming the Lab Flight Deck email with too many messages—there are members who are not involved in AIM's day-to-day functioning and ongoing projects who are on this email list, and we don't want to overload anyone with unnecessary correspondence or risk important messages being lost in anyone's inbox. To mitigate this, we have created an AIM Lab Discord, which has separate channels for all of our ongoing projects. This allows members to toggle their notifications to best suit their individual needs and responsibilities, and to be able to easily find updates on the projects they are involved with. For example, AIM members who are part of the Book Club committee can make plans and have discussions in the Book Club channel, and members who are not part of the Book Club can opt to turn off notifications for that channel if they wish.

It should be noted that the separate channels are still welcome to all members, and that anyone is free to pop in to see what's happening with other projects at any time. These channels should not be considered 'private conversations' and should remain respectful and welcoming!

Possible additions to communication coordinator responsibilities:
- The lab has discussed developing a biannual newsletter at some point in the future. Stay tuned for further details!
- We are currently not using a social media management platform (e.g. Hootsuite, etc.) to manage our social accounts, but are tweeting and posting manually from each platform. The possibility of using a management platform is always up for discussion and may be incorporated based on lab/communication coordinator needs.

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