

Remote Access Archive Submission

I am Danielle E. Lorenz (she/her), a PhD candidate in the Faculty of Education at the University of Alberta and the Social Media Editor for the *Canadian Journal of Disability Studies (CJDS)*. Over the past few years, I have managed the *CJDS*'s social media accounts (Facebook and Twitter). Part of my role involves knowledge mobilization: promoting *CJDS* when new issues are published, connecting events in the news to previously published articles, or posting about academic items of interest such as calls for proposals for conferences. This is standard fare for a lot of academic social media accounts.

I was aware that a number of disability communities used Twitter as an avenue to socialize. Simply, virtual forums do not have the same access barriers as flesh realm gatherings (e.g., physical barriers, environmental barriers, financial barriers). Twitter in particular facilitates the ability of folks to participate on their own time. Users can respond to a tweet seconds, minutes, hours, or days later, all while being part of an ongoing conversation. For disabled people in general, and chronically ill folks in particular, the asynchronicity of Twitter reduces some of the barriers to participation that arise when events are bound by timeframes.

As such, I thought it might be possible to use the *CJDS* Twitter account to create a community for conversations that would allow people across and throughout Canada and elsewhere to be “together.” From January 2020 until September 2021, I hosted 15 *CJDS* Chat events.

To participate, Twitter users engaged with the chat's hashtag ([#CJDSChat](#)) and answered the questions I posed as the chat moderator. These simultaneously synchronous and asynchronous events allowed Twitter users to connect, discuss, and explore a number of topics related to disability. Some of the topics included Creating Community Online (March, 2020), Disability, Academia, and Complaint (August, 2020), The *Accessible Canada Act* (January, 2021), and 12 Months of Covid-19: A Check-In (March, 2021).

As a whole, I believe that [#CJDSChat](#) functioned as a way for disability communities to interact with each other across time zones and geographies: something that would not have otherwise been possible. This was especially true during the first several months of the COVID-19 pandemic, when travel to academic conferences--a locale where some disability communities will congregate--was impossible.

As the COVID-19 pandemic has continued, however, the capacity people have had for conversation has waned. Simply, disabled people are putting their energy into survival. The reality is that governments have created a discourse that the pandemic is “over,” which has been propagated further by our employers and even our loved ones. It is nearly impossible to talk

about disability concerns and issues when the biggest one--staying alive--is mostly ignored by the general populace.

Therefore, for the time being, CJDS Chat is on hiatus. One day I hope to bring it back, but that time is not now.

Materials to include:

- Posters that advertised the chats
- Lists of the questions asked in each of the chats