**ISISA 2018 Conference**

***“Island information ecosystems: exploring the role of the ‘Bōsai Musen’ emergency and disaster broadcasting system in the everyday life of Amami islands”***

Evangelia Papoutsaki & Sueo Kuwahara

UNITEC, New Zealand - Kagoshima University, Japan

[epapoutsaki@unitec.ac.nz](mailto:epapoutsaki@unitec.ac.nz) - [kuwahara@leh.kagoshima-u.ac.pj](mailto:kuwahara@leh.kagoshima-u.ac.pj)

*Shichōson bōsai gyōsei musen hōsō* (local government disaster administration wireless broadcast), or *bōsai musen* (disaster wireless) as it is mostly known, can be found in all Japanese islands which experience more heavily the typhoon season. While emergency broadcasting has been the main function for *bōsai musen*, local governments often use them to broadcast public announcements. They are both part of a national system that can send warnings to local governments in just a few seconds. This extensive nationwide disaster-warning network is currently shifting to a digital phase which can link to mobile phones, insert messages into radio and TV broadcasts and automatically update information on local government’s website.

This paper is based on research conducted in the islands which sought to map their communicative ecology. The islands have their own unique micro-communicative ecology makeup and distinctive identity within the Japanese archipelago which provided a rich case study for this approach. The researchers explored the Amami Islands communicative ecosystems that is part of existing island communities’ structures and identified communicative practices that contribute to sustaining island resilience and sociocultural cohesion.

One of the key findings from this research was the use of *bōsai musen* and its integration in the islands information ecosystem that has contributed to their resilience. Many island communities still rely heavily on this system to get information not only about weather emergencies but also vital community related news. Most island communities have either a loud-speaker mounted on a tall poll in a central location or a device installed in individual homes or a combination of both. The degree of access, frequency of use, amount and type of information and engagement with it, as well as their technology status (digital or analogue, single or multi-channel) varies significantly depending on individual island or island community communicative ecology. What has emerged from this research is a system that is well integrated into the everyday life of the islands and forms an integral part not only of their information ecosystem but overall communicative ecology.

Information ecoystems, island communicative ecology, bosai musen, local government disaster administration wireless broadcast, Amami Islands