

Quello Center



**INTERNATIONAL COMMUNICATION ASSOCIATION (ICA) 2019**

**Washington, DC**

**PRECONFERENCE WORKSHOP**

**May 24, 2019**

**Taming and Nurturing the Wild Child:**

**Government and Corporate Policies for Social Media**

**Call for Papers**

The impact social media have had on social networking, political information, advertising and corporate communications make it hard to imagine that platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and WhatsApp are less than a decade and a half old. In this short time frame, they have proven their potential time and again both for good and bad: while catalyzing pro-democracy movements worldwide, and promoting activism against sexual harassment, they have also become pre-eminent forums for the dissemination of misinformation and “fake news,” and for racist, xenophobic and misogynistic propaganda. While connecting people through building (and buttressing) social, business and political networks, they have also raised concerns regarding privacy and misuse of personal information.

Due to this explosive growth and the ensuing concerns, societies are struggling to fashion policy responses that will preserve social media’s vibrancy as spaces for unencumbered speech, while minimizing the potential harms from privacy violations, hate speech and the diffusion of misinformation into political discourse. Indeed, in some countries governments and civil society organizations have called for steps to address these abuses, yet in others, social media policy has become a pretext for governments to curb freedom of expression and muzzle critical voices.

We invite papers that examine policy responses to these developments. How can policy be developed, while protecting societal values such as freedom of speech and information? Policy is defined broadly, including government policies, regulations and laws and the policies of corporations including algorithmic screening of content and emergent norms (in the spirit of North/Williamson, who define governance as formal and non-formal rules of the game). We are also interested in analyses that address how the business model of social media (e.g., for profit, not-for-profit) interacts with alternative policy approaches. We particularly encourage international comparisons, including contrasting approaches to social media policy adopted by national governments. For example, what impact do the EU’s GDPR and the Chinese 2016 Cybersecurity Law, both which came into effect in 2018, have on social media?

Potential papers may address the impact of these policies on issues including but not limited to freedom of speech, democratic discourse, political activism, network security, national security and surveillance, commercial speech, privacy protections and transborder data flows.

This preconference workshop is jointly organized by the [Institute for Information Policy](https://bellisario.psu.edu/research/centers/iip) (IIP) at Penn State University and the [James H. and Mary B. Quello Center](http://quello.msu.edu/) at Michigan State University. Papers presented in the workshop will be considered for publication in the IIP’s [Journal of Information Policy](http://www.psupress.org/Journals/jnls_JIP.html). The Journal is an open access, peer-reviewed, scholarly journal, published by Penn State University Press and archived on JSTOR.

Abstracts of up to 500 words and a short bio of the author(s) should be submitted to pennstateiip@psu.edu by December 15, 2018. Please write IIP\_SOCIALMEDIAPOLICY: YOUR NAME in the subject line. Presenters will be notified by January 12, 2019 regarding acceptance. Accepted papers will need to be submitted by May 1, 2019.