



ACADEMIC YEAR REPORT 2025-2026



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JAMES H. AND MARY B. QUELLO CENTER

Mission

Named after the late James H. and Mary B. Quello, the Quello Center is one of the leading U.S. academic centers in communication, media, and information policy. Our work examines the interactions between technology, policy, and society at the level of individuals, communities, and society. We collaborate with practitioners to translate rigorous academic research into the design and implementation of better information policy and governance. The Center's interdisciplinary research draws from multiple empirical methods and multi-disciplinary theoretical perspectives. The Center is based in the Department of Media and Information at Michigan State University (MSU). It consists of a core set of researchers, complemented by research associates across MSU as well as other U.S. and international universities and research centers.

Research Areas

ICTs & society	Interactions of ICTs and society, e.g., social media use and self-esteem; information seeking and COVID-19 beliefs; community impacts of ICTs.
Digital equity and inclusion	Several projects focus on broadband access and quality, digital skills, and barriers to use, across rural and urban communities, to inform decisions aimed at narrowing digital divides.
Governance of emerging technologies	Roles of policy in harnessing the benefits of emerging technologies (e.g., 5G, 6G, IoT, AI, quantum), public interest innovation, responsible innovation, and agile governance.
Platform and Internet policy	Our work covers a range of themes related to renewed efforts to design policy frameworks for digital platforms, to revisit Section 230, and to address the market power of big tech.
Information security	With researchers in computer science and criminal justice, we explore the economic, legal, behavioral, technical, and policy aspects of cybersecurity.
Foundations of information policy	Work in this area develops foundational methods and knowledge informing policy responses to challenges such as digital platform power, data ethics, and the governance of AI.

Advisory Board

As of May 1, 2026

Marjory S. Blumenthal, *Science and Technology Policy and Strategy Expert, MSBlumenthal, LLC*

Roderick S. Coy, *Retired Of Counsel, Clark Hill*

Vincent Curren, *Principal, Breakthrough Public Media Consulting*

Alyssa Harvey Dawson, *Board Member and Consultant*

David L. Donovan, *President and Executive Director, New York State Broadcasters Association, Inc.*

William H. Dutton, *Professor Emeritus at the University of Southern California, Senior Fellow, Oxford Internet Institute (OII) and former Quello Center Director*

John D. Evans, *Chairman and CEO, Evans Telecommunications Co., and The John D. Evans Foundation*

Brian Fontes, *former Chief Executive Officer for the National Emergency Number Association (NENA)*

Heidi Hennink-Kaminski, *Dean, College of Communication Arts and Sciences (ex officio)*

Grace Koh, *Vice President for Government Relations, Ciena*

Richard D. McLellan, *McLellan Law Offices PLLC and Trustee MSU College of Law*

Michael R. Nelson, *Senior Fellow, Technology and International Affairs Program, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*

Eli M. Noam, *Paul Garrett Professor Emeritus in Public Policy and Business Responsibility; Former Director, Columbia Institute for Tele-Information (CITI)*

Robert M. Pepper, *Technology Policy Expert*

Gary Reid, *Distinguished Senior Academic Specialist Emeritus; former WDBM-FM and WKAR Manager*

Michael J. Stern, *Chairperson, Department of Media and Information, MSU (ex officio)*

Shawn Turner, *WKAR Public Media General Manager and Professor of Strategic Communication, Department of Communication, MSU*

Steven S. Wildman, *Professor of Media and Information Emeritus, Michigan State University; former Director of the Quello Center; Senior Fellow with the Silicon Flatirons Center and a Visiting Scholar with the Interdisciplinary Telecommunications Program, University of Colorado, Boulder, CO*

Richard E. Wiley, *Chairman Emeritus, Wiley*

Leadership Team

Johannes M. Bauer, Director

Keith N. Hampton, Director of Academic Research

Jean Hardy, Associate Director

Ashley Wilson, Event & Project Coordinator

Quello Center Scholars, Research Fellows, and Associates

Senior Scholar

Sandra Braman, Scholar and Professor, Department of Media and Information, MSU

Research Fellows

Nelly Aghaei, Doctoral Student, Information and Media Ph.D. program, MSU

Young Anna Argyris, Assistant Professor, Department of Media and Information, MSU

Ava Francesca Battocchio, Assistant Professor, Northwestern University

Grant Blank, Survey Research Fellow at the Oxford Internet Institute and Senior Research Fellow of Harris Manchester College, UK

Adam D. Candeub, Professor, College of Law, MSU (on leave to serve as General Counsel, Federal Communications Commission)

Shelia R. Cotten, Associate Vice President for Research Development, Clemson University, Clemson, SC

Pierrette Renée Dagg, Director of Research, Merit Network, Inc.

Chuqing Dong, Associate Professor, Department of Advertising & Public Relations, MSU

Gabriel Hales, Post-Doc at University of Zürich, Switzerland

Thomas J. Holt, Professor, School of Criminal Justice, MSU

Megan L. Knittel, Digital Equity Manager, Merit Network Inc

Elizabeth Mack, Professor, Department of Geography, MSU

Angie Nam, Doctoral Student, Information and Media Ph.D. program, MSU

Ganchimeg Namsrai, Fulbright Scholar and Graduate Student, Department of Media and Information, MSU

Jonathan A. Obar, Associate Professor, Department of Communication & Media Studies, York University, Toronto, Canada

Tiago S. Prado, Consultant, Digital Development, Inter- American Development Bank, Washington, DC

Bianca C. Reisdorf, Professor, Department of Communication Studies University of North Carolina at Charlotte, NC

Colin Rhinesmith, Associate Professor, School of Information Sciences, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign

Arun Ross, Professor; John and Eva Cillag Endowed Chair in Science and Engineering; Site Director, Center for Identification Technology Research, MSU

Ruth J. Shillair, Assistant Professor and Director of MA Studies, Department of Media and Information, MSU

Volker Stocker, Head of Research Group, Weizenbaum Institute for the Networked Society, Berlin

Morgan Vigil-Hayes, Associate Professor, Department of Media and Information, MSU

Research Associates

Natascha Just, Professor of Communication, University of Zurich, Switzerland

Tai-Quan “Winson” Peng, Professor, Department of Communication, MSU

Valeta Wensloff, Director of Undergraduate Studies, Department of Media and Information, MSU

SUMMARY

Quello Center research and outreach during the past academic year continued to examine the interactions between socio-demographic factors, digital connectivity, educational outcomes, and psychological well-being as well as the assessment of federal and state programs supporting universal high-speed Internet access. The Center convened an interdisciplinary working group on the governance of artificial intelligence. Jean Hardy initiated a working group to address pressing issues related to data centers.

- Jean Hardy initiated the **Michigan Statewide Data Center Planning & Development Working Group**. The group brings together more than 70 stakeholders from across Michigan, representing state and local government, universities, industry, labor unions, community advocacy organizations, planning agencies, and more. The goal of the group is to offer assistance and resources to communities across the state as they approach the complex governance and planning landscape associated with datacenter development. In just a few months, the group has grown rapidly, demonstrating key needs for leadership and shared expertise around the issue.
- **The AI Governance Working Group** coordinated by Johannes M. Bauer and Sandra Braman held eight knowledge sharing events and facilitated cross-disciplinary networking across campus. During the spring semester of 2026, participants started to work on the development of grant proposals and on peer-reviewed conference papers and articles. Working Group members served on the Provost's planning team for the 2026 MSU Ethics AI Summit and had a strong presence at the summit on May 5, 2026. An interdisciplinary steering committee will guide activities during AY27.
- Our **digital connectivity** work focused on the development of evaluation and planning tools for State Broadband Offices. We were coordinating two national working groups on broadband policy evaluation and another one on data availability for researchers and practitioners. Building on this work, we secured a two-year grant from The Pew Charitable Trusts to continue our work on assessing broadband policy with a view toward future infrastructure needs through 2028.
- Work from these projects has been published in peer-reviewed venues, presented at professional conferences, such as TPRC, in workshops, and shared online. Center researchers published several technical reports and policy briefs for practitioners working on the implementation of the Infrastructure Act. Findings from our work are cited regularly in national and local media, in federal regulatory proceedings, and referenced on state government websites.
- Our **speaker series** continued to attract in-person and online audiences. Several talks dealt with emerging issues related to AI in the workplace and the governance of AI across the full stack. We continued to conduct online information sessions and webinars for professionals from the private sector, federal and state government agencies, and advocacy groups who were interested in learning more about the evaluation framework for digital connectivity. In addition, the Quello Center started to host the **Digital Policy Forum**, initiated by Eli Noam

and Ben Compaine in 2012 at CITI (the Columbia Institute for Tele-Information), Columbia University, an online expert group discussing current and emerging digital policy issues

As in past years, we disseminate working papers and penultimate versions of publications in online archives in addition to publications in peer-reviewed journals. One of our goals is to translate rigorous research into actionable insights. In pursuit of that goal, we gave presentations at practitioner workshops and training programs at the local, national, and international levels.

Like other universities, MSU continues to be affected by the changes in the federal funding landscape and the changing attitudes toward public support for science. We have teamed up with colleagues from the Department of Media and Information and from across the university to pursue new funding opportunities, in addition to continued efforts to increase the Center Endowment.

SPEAKER SERIES AND POLICY DISCUSSIONS

Speaker Series

Quello Center talks are typically archived at <https://vimeo.com/quellocenter>. Talks marked with an asterisk (*) are not archived based upon request of the presenter(s).

- **Han Ei Chew**, Institute of Policy Studies (IPS) in Singapore, *Measuring Digital Trust: A Framework for Smart Societies**
- **Milton L. Mueller**, Professor, Georgia Institute of Technology, Marília Maciel, Digital Policy Senior Researcher at Diplo Foundation, Bob Cannon, Internet Policy Analyst, *Declaring Independence in Cyberspace: Internet Self-Governance and the End of US Control of ICANN*
- **Han Ei Chew**, Institute of Policy Studies (IPS) in Singapore, *Borrowing Berlo: Singapore's Evolving Approach to Online Harms*
- **Shane Greenstein**, Harvard Business School, *The Digital Usage Divide: Evidence and New Measures from 40 Million Windows Devices*
- **Chris Adami**, Microbiology and Molecular Genetics & Physics and Astronomy, Michigan State University, *A Theory of the One Percent**
- **Laasya Koduru**, UC Santa Barbara, *Data-Driven Broadband Policymaking: Bridging the Data Gaps for Effective Policymaking with BQT*
- **Angela Xiao Wu**, New York University, *Translucent Atmospherics: Media as Utility in China*
- **Colin Rhinesmith**, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, *Digital Equity Ecosystems: How Community Coalitions Reduce Inequality and Strengthen Democracy*
- **Keith Hampton**, Michigan State University, *Mega-Silliness? Deconstructing the "Social Media Crisis" in Adolescent Mental Health**

ONGOING RESEARCH PROJECTS

Data Center and Emerging Digital Infrastructures

The infrastructures that power our digital lives are undergoing rapid transformation. As demand for cloud computing, artificial intelligence, and large-scale data processing accelerates, data centers have emerged as some of the most consequential, and contested, forms of physical infrastructure being built today. These facilities promise economic development and technological capacity, yet they also raise pressing questions about energy and water use, local tax structures, land use authority, community benefit, and the long-term obligations communities take on when they host them.

This research focus area examines how emerging digital infrastructures, with particular attention to data centers, impact the places where they are built and how we can develop better policy to address those localized impacts. We are beginning to study the policy frameworks, siting decisions, and development dynamics that determine who bears the costs and who reaps the benefits, with special concern for rural and under-resourced communities that are increasingly targeted for development. As part of this, Jean Hardy in his role at the Quello Center convenes the Michigan Statewide Data Center Planning & Development Working Group that brings together public and private actors across Michigan to address the most pressing issues facing communities around data center development. Through empirical research and outreach, we aim to inform more transparent, accountable, and equitable approaches to infrastructure governance. This work has already resulted in multiple invited keynotes around the state, and we will be presenting our first academic work in this area at TPRC 2026.

Initial Resources

- Quello Center. (2026). [How Likely is a Data Center Developer Interested in My Community?](#)

AI Governance Working Group

This interdisciplinary working group, including faculty members and graduate students from the College of Communication Arts and Sciences, College of Business, College of Engineering, and College of Social Sciences, was convened during the 2025-2026 academic year by the Quello Center to address issues related to the governance of AI-enabled innovation.

Whereas there is a proliferation of national and international frameworks, developed by various stakeholders and very active legislative activity in U.S. states, much less attention is paid to the conditions required to harness the tremendous powers of AI in specific applications and services while mitigating potentially negative effects. This requires agile and flexible forms of governance that are aligned with the specific technological, economic, and social conditions of a use case.

The group enabled knowledge sharing and cross-disciplinary networking across campus. During the spring semester of 2026, participants started to work on the development of grant proposals and

on peer-reviewed conference papers and articles. The Quello Center was invited to serve on the Provost's planning team for the 2026 Ethics AI Summit at MSU and had a strong presence at the summit, including a flash talk and breakout session on AI policy.

To guide future initiatives, an interdisciplinary steering group was formed to scale the activities during academic year 2026-2027, including a public speaker series and collaborative research. The establishment of an interdisciplinary AI Governance Lab is envisioned for the fall of 2026.

Publications, Presentations, Policy Reports

- Namsrai, G., Bauer, J.M., & Shillair, R. (forthcoming). Civil Society and Agility in AI Governance. Paper to be presented at the 54th Research Conference on Communication, Information and Internet Policy (TPRC54), Washington, D.C., September 25-26, 2026.
- Bauer, J.M. (2026). The Economics of the Emerging AI Ecosystem. Workshop on AI Governance: New Tradeoffs for Sovereignty, Trust, and Sustainability. Ivey Business School, Toronto, May 11, 2026. Bauer, J. M. (2026). Harnessing the Benefits of AI Requires Good Policy. MSU AI Ethics Summit, May 5, 2026. Bauer, J. M. (2005). Ethics in AI, Workshop on Exploring the Intersection Between AI, Infrastructure, and Public Trust, AnchorNets 2025, Crystal City, VA, October 29-31, 2025.
- Namsrai, G. (2026). Roles of Civil Society in AI Governance. Master's Thesis, Department of Media and Information (Advisor Dr. Johannes M. Bauer), East Lansing, Michigan State University.
- Namsrai, G. (2025). Mapping AI Governance in U.S. States: Policymakers' Priorities. Presented at the 48th Annual Fulbright Association Conference, Miami, FL, October 24-28, 2025.
- Saxena, D., Moon, E., Kawakami, A., Jackson, C., Lee, M., Fox, S., Guha, S., Erete, S., and Hardy, J. 2026. Participation, Procurement & Proof of Impact in Public Sector AI Innovation. In Proceedings of the Extended Abstracts of the 2026 CHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems (CHI EA '26). Association for Computing Machinery, New York, NY, USA, Article 959, 1–6. <https://doi.org/10.1145/3772363.3778739>

Broadband Policy Assessment

We are continuing our research collaboration with The Pew Charitable Trusts to help states assess progress in implementing the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) program. We obtained funding for a two-year project through 2027, which will include Dr. Jean Hardy and Dr. Morgan Vigil-Hayes as principal investigators. The new project will build on earlier research that developed a framework for practitioners and researchers (Phase I, 2023-2024) and a system of indicators and metrics to evaluate broadband policy efforts based on that framework (Phase II, 2024-2026).

The research has generated several peer-reviewed reports, checklists for practitioners on the ground, and several research papers, some presented at national conferences, others under peer review. The team made more than two dozen presentations to professionals from states, federal

organizations, researchers, and advocates. The framework developed by the team is currently field tested. The project also spawned two national networks of professionals and researchers coordinated by the Quello Center, one related to the evaluation and design of large-scale infrastructure programs and one on the development of a digital connectivity data commons.

Publications, Presentations, Policy Reports

- Bauer, J.M., Nam, A., Mack, E., Lee, B., Humphrey, C. & West, L. (forthcoming). BEAD and Beyond: An Assessment of the Restructured Program, its Early Implementation, and Metrics to Guide States Forward. Paper to be presented at the 54th Research Conference on Communication, Information and Internet Policy (TPRC54), Washington, D.C., September 25-26, 2026.
- Bauer, J. M., Nam, A., Mack, E., & Lee, B. (July 2026). Indicators and Methods for the Assessment of BEAD Implementation at the State Level. East Lansing, Michigan: Quello Center at Michigan State University. <https://quello.msu.edu/divi/wp-content/uploads/2026/07/Phase-II-Indicators-and-Methods-for-the-Assessment-of-BEAD-Implementation-Practitioner-FINAL-20260708-R1.pdf>

Rural Digital Inequities in Academic Achievement Psychological Wellbeing

This research effort, led by Keith N. Hampton, studies the role of digital inequality on change in rural students' academic performance, educational aspirations, and psychological wellbeing, before, during and due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Utilizing survey data collected from a sample of students in grades 8-12 collected in 2019 and again in 2022 from 14 rural, Michigan school districts paired with student records from standardized exams (2019-2022). This work addresses the question of whether students with no or poor Internet access, and those with lower digital skills, experienced declines in academic performance, educational aspirations, or psychological wellbeing? And if initiatives by schools to “fill the gap” in the missing infrastructure for rural Internet access (e.g., deploying cell phone hotspots) was successful at preventing negative consequences to student performance, educational aspirations, and psychological wellbeing due to preexisting digital inequalities?

Publications and Reports

- Hales, G. (2026). The Digital Exchange of Human and Social Capital Over Adolescence: A Longitudinal Study of Youth Interaction, Digital Skills, and Achievement. Doctoral Dissertation, Information and Media Ph.D. Program (Advisor Dr. Keith Hampton), East Lansing, Michigan State University.
- Hales, Gabriel & Keith Hampton (2025). Rethinking screen time and academic achievement: gender differences and the hidden benefit of online leisure through digital skills. *Information, Communication & Society*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2025.2516542>.
- Hampton, Keith & Inyoung Shin (2023). Disconnection More Problematic for Adolescent Self-Esteem than Heavy Social Media Use: Evidence from Access Inequalities and

Restrictive Media Parenting in Rural America. *Social Science Computer Review*. 41(2), 626-647. <https://doi.org/10.1177/089443932211174>

- Hampton, K. N., Hales, G.E., & Bauer, J.M. (2023). Broadband and Student Performance Gaps After the COVID-19 Pandemic. James H. and Mary B. Quello Center, Michigan State University. <https://doi.org/10.25335/r71b-c922>.
- Hampton, Keith Craig T. Robertson, Laleah Fernandez, Inyoung Shin, Johannes M. Bauer (2021). How variation in internet access, digital skills, and media use are related to rural student outcomes: GPA, SAT, and educational aspirations. *Telematics and Informatics* 63, 101666. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tele.2021.101666>
- Hampton, Keith, Laleah Fernandez, Craig Robertson, and Johannes Bauer (2020). Broadband and Student Performance Gaps. Quello Center, Michigan State University. East Lansing, MI. <https://doi.org/10.25335/BZGY-3V91>

Using Game-Based Interventions to Address Rural Digital Infrastructure

This research, supported initially through a research gift from the Merit Network and subsequently by a United States Department of Agriculture subaward, uses design methods to understand experiences of infrastructural breakdown and support evaluation experiences of rural broadband taskforces in Michigan. Drawing from a year of ethnographic research in two regions of the Eastern Upper Peninsula of Michigan with widespread digital connectivity issues, our research team, led by Jean Hardy, developed an initial board game to facilitate rural community members sharing their experiences with infrastructural breakdown. Following this preliminary work, Cory Heald (a game design professor at MSU) was brought on to assist in the creation of a second board game, *Connected Community*. In this game, players take on the role of a leader of a rural community broadband taskforce and are tasked with addressing digital equity and broadband infrastructure issues in their communities. As of May 2026, *Connected Community* is completed and we will begin deploying it in the field in late 2026 to understand how game-based interventions can be used to measure the self- and collective-efficacy of rural leaders to address digital equity issues in their communities.

Publications

- Hardy, J., Gleason, M., & Battocchio, A. F. (2025). Playing with Rural Design: Design Probe Failure & Community Disconnections. *Proceedings of the 12th International Conference on Communities & Technologies*, 339–355. <https://doi.org/10.1145/3742800.3742830>

RECENTLY COMPLETED PROJECTS

Broadband Policy Assessment, Phases I (2023-2024) and II (2025-2026)

After several years of planning, the BEAD program is now advancing into its implementation phase. Since the passing of the Infrastructure Act in 2021, both the magnitude of the connectivity problem and the proposed solutions have changed. Preliminary data indicate that the number of BEAD-eligible locations has declined by more than 50% since 2022. The BEAD Restructuring Public Notice of June 6, 2025, made broad changes to the program that required additional state planning efforts.

Despite this improvement in connectivity, monitoring and evaluation of BEAD and the broader digital connectivity landscape remain important and are an integral part of good stewardship of public funds. This report proposes a prudent, multi-layer approach for the assessment of BEAD implementation. To keep assessment efforts streamlined, it starts with the compliance requirements established by NTIA to document the starting conditions from which eligible entities begin their journey toward universal connectivity. Based on this data, it proposes metrics that the states can use in their monitoring and assessment efforts.

In addition, the report recommends collecting selected additional data points related to adoption and pricing needed in a comprehensive assessment. These indicators and methods can be used to assess progress at given points in time and over time. They are designed for use by State Broadband Offices (SBOs). Metric design allows for calculating them at different levels of granularity, including project areas, sub-grantees that may serve multiple project areas, census geographies, and entire states. The latest report also provides guidance for the assessment of the broader community impacts of broadband investment.

Publications, Presentations, Policy Reports

- Bauer, J. M., Nam, A., Mack, E., & Lee, B. (July 2026). Indicators and Methods for the Assessment of BEAD Implementation at the State Level. East Lansing, Michigan: Quello Center at Michigan State University. <https://quello.msu.edu/divi/wp-content/uploads/2026/07/Phase-II-Indicators-and-Methods-for-the-Assessment-of-BEAD-Implementation-Practitioner-FINAL-20260708-R1.pdf>
- Bauer, J.M. (2025). Federal-state realignment of broadband and digital equity policy in the United States, in: M. E. Warner, N. A. Bravo, & D. Shen (eds.), Bridging the digital divide in the US: Planning innovative state and local approaches (pp. 27-42), Routledge.
- Bauer, J.M. (2025). An Assessment of Proposals to Reform the Broadband Equity Access and Deployment Program (BEAD). Quello Center Working Paper 01-25, June 5, 2025. Available at SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=5296353>
- Bauer, J.M., Mack, E., Nam, A., Lee, Boram, & Knittel, M. (2025). Assessing the Effects of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act on High-Speed Internet Access, Digital Equity, and Community Development. Revised and Updated, East Lansing, Michigan: Quello Center at Michigan State University.

- Mack, E., Bauer, J. M., Knittel, M., Nam, A., Lee, B., & Bhattacharya, D. (2025). The State of Bead: Assessing Progress Toward Universal Broadband Connectivity. Paper presented at TPRC53, Washington, D.C. September 19-20, 2025. Available at SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=5376286>.
- Quello Center (2025). Data Requirements for the Effective Evaluation of the Restructured BEAD Program. A Guide and Checklist for Practitioners. East Lansing, Michigan: Quello Center at Michigan State University.
- Knittel, M., Mack, E., Nam, A., & Bauer, J.M., (2024). Assessing the Effects of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act on High-Speed Internet Access, Digital Equity, and Community Development. Opportunities and Challenges of Measuring the Impact of Broadband Policy. East Lansing, Michigan: Quello Center at Michigan State University, October 2024.

MOON-Light

In 2022, Merit Network and Michigan State University received a \$10.5 million National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) Broadband Infrastructure Program Grant to connect Michigan's many disparate Internet pathways. Despite constraints in the advanced technology supply-chain, the project was completed at the end of May 2024. A ribbon-cutting celebration was held on September 10, 2024, on the campus of Michigan State University in East Lansing, Michigan.



Unlike closed (private) infrastructure networks that offer services from a single service provider to residents, the MOON-Light network will provide regional connectivity through an open-access network approach. Open-access

networks (OANs) are high-performance networks that are open to multiple providers that leverage the infrastructure to offer high-capacity broadband services to residents and businesses.

1. From Left to Right: Johannes M. Bauer, MSU Professor; Charlotte Bewersdorff, VP Community Engagement, Merit Network; Roger Blake, CEO, Merit Network; Kevin Guskiewicz, MSU President; Keith Hampton, Director of Academic Research, Quello Center

The recording of the event is available [here](#).

Information Seeking, Misinformation, Disinformation

This project, partially funded by a grant from the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, started with an emphasis on information seeking during the COVID-19 pandemic. It continued as a generalized program of research on how sources of information affect how individuals make sense of complex phenomena. The team continues to mine data collected in three waves of surveys to shed light on information seeking and how different practices influence knowledge about matters of public importance during periods of dynamic change. Such situations, exemplified but not limited to the coronavirus pandemic, necessitate that individuals and organizations make decisions based on

incomplete and changing information, often complicated by deliberately misleading information. Using the unfolding coronavirus pandemic as a case to study the broader phenomenon of information seeking and verification under conditions of uncertainty and rapidly changing information, the research project examines the interplay between political and health information seeking. Controlling socioeconomic and other factors, we are particularly interested in how sources and channels used to obtain, verify, and update information influence individuals' mental models and factual knowledge about the pandemic and appropriate responses.

A team of researchers from Michigan State University, University of North Carolina Charlotte, Oxford University, and Clemson University conducted two nationally representative surveys in the United States and the United Kingdom. We are currently examining four research questions pertaining to theories of information seeking, information verification, and trust in different information sources: (1) What online media, offline media, and other information sources do American and British Internet users rely on and trust during the COVID-19 pandemic, and how do socio-demographic factors influence these choices? (2) (How) Do people update and verify information to deal with incomplete information and uncertain knowledge? (3) How do socio-demographic factors, information sources, and the updating rules used by individuals relate to their perceptions and knowledge about political and health topics related to COVID-19? (4) How do socio-demographic factors, information sources, and the updating rules used by individuals influence behavioral intentions?

Publications, Conference Papers, and Policy Briefs

- Blank, G., Bauer, J.M., Knittel M., Ma, W., & Shillair, R. (2023). Formation and Fragmentation of Mental Models in Heterogeneous Media Ecosystems During Times of Complex Crisis. 73rd Annual Conference of the International Communication Association- Media Sociology Post-Conference, Toronto, May 31.
- Blank, G. & Reisdorf, B. (2023), Digital inequalities and public health during COVID-19: Media dependency and vaccination, *Information Communications and Society*, 26(5): 1045-1065. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2023.2166356>.
- Reisdorf, B.C., Blank, G., Bauer, J. M., Cotten, S., Robertson, C.T., & Knittel, M. (2021). Information Seeking Patterns and COVID-19 in the United States. *Journal of Quantitative Description: Digital Media*, 1. <https://doi.org/10.51685/jqd.2021.003>
- Reisdorf, B.C., Blank, G., Cotten, S., Argyris, A., Robertson, C.T., Knittel, M., & Bauer, J.M. (2021). Overcoming COVID-19 Vaccine Hesitancy. Quello Center Policy Brief 02/21, <https://quello.msu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Quello-Center-COVID-19-Policy-Brief-15-March-2021.pdf>.

Governance of Emerging Technologies

This multi-year research initiative seeks to inform policies toward advanced ICT service and applications in the United States, with a current emphasis on 5G wireless services, platform ecosystems, and systemic types of innovation (e.g., smart mobility). Many of the topics addressed will also apply to emergent technologies, including 6G and sub-THz services as well as the Internet of Intelligence (IoI). 5G, 6G and sub-THz wireless services will constitute an integral part of the future

gigabit communication network infrastructure. Platform ecosystems have been the focus of much criticism but the drivers of innovation in these markets, and positive and negative effects of digital platforms, are only poorly understood.

Projects in this area examined how policy choices affect innovation outcomes. A \$100,000 gift from Facebook helped launch work in this family of projects.

Publications and Working Papers

- Bauer, J.M. & Prado, T.S. (2024). Digital Innovation: An Information-Economic Perspective. In D.R. Raban & J. Włodarczyk (Eds.), *The Elgar companion to information economics*. Edward Elgar.
- Bauer, J.M., Stocker, V., & Pourdamghani, A. (2023). Innovation Dynamics in the Internet Ecosystem and Digital Economy Policy. Prepared for presentation at the European Conference of the International Telecommunications Society, Madrid, Spain, June 18-19, 2023.
- Prado, T.S. (2022). Emerging Policy and Regulatory Regimes for Digital Platforms: Lessons for U.S. Competition Policy. Paper to be presented at the 31st European Regional Conference of the International Telecommunications Society (ITS) and the 50th Research Conference on Communication, Information, and Internet Policy (TPRC50).
- Prado, T.S., & Bauer, J.M. (2022). Big Tech Platform Acquisitions of Start-ups and Venture Capital Funding for Innovation. *Information Economics and Policy*.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.infoecopol.2022.100973>.
- Bauer, J.M. (2022). Toward new guardrails for the information society. *Telecommunications Policy*, 102350. Published online April 6, 2022. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.telpol.2022.102350>.
- Bauer, J.M. & Bohlin, E. (2021). Regulation and innovation in 5G markets. *Telecommunications Policy*, 102260, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.telpol.2021.102260>.
- Knieps, G. & Bauer, J.M. (2021). Internet of things and the economics of 5G-based local industrial networks. *Telecommunications Policy*, 102261, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.telpol.2021.102261>.
- Bauer, J.M. and Prado, T.S., *Digital Platforms and Innovation: Lessons for Innovation Policy and Regulation* (December 15, 2020). Available at: SSRN or DOI.

Broadband and Educational Achievements

Initiated in 2019, this study was designed to understand the repercussions of absent or poor home Internet connectivity on student performance and the associated costs to society. The focus was on Internet connectivity outside of school among middle and high school students enrolled in rural and small-town schools. Inequalities related to income and race are often used to explain why some people still do not have Internet or broadband access at home. Often overlooked in this discussion is the role of geography and varying levels of infrastructure access. Our study allowed us to disentangle these factors.

The report published in March 2020 was widely read by policymakers and stakeholders. Building on the experience with the Broadband Gap project, we helped Merit Network to develop a toolkit that facilitates a highly granular assessment of the availability and quality of broadband connectivity. During the past year, the approach has been used by several counties across Michigan, including Washtenaw County, Berrien County, and Ottawa County, to assess the state of connectivity among their residents and to develop appropriate responses to overcome gaps and discrepancies. It was also used by several large organizations, including Wayne State University, to identify and help overcome connectivity gaps among students and faculty. The approach is scalable and applicable to state and national level information collection.

Publications and Working Papers

- Hampton, K.N. & Shin, I. (2023). Disconnection More Problematic for Adolescent Self-Esteem than Heavy Social Media Use: Evidence from Access Inequalities and Restrictive Media Parenting in Rural America, *Social Science Computer Review*, 41(2): 626-647. Download at <https://doi.org/10.1177/08944393221117466>.
- Hampton, K.N., Robertson, C.T., Fernandez, L., Shin, I., & Bauer, J.M. (2021). How variation in internet access, digital skills, and media use are related to rural student outcomes: GPA, SAT, and educational aspirations. *Telematics and Informatics*, 101666, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tele.2021.101666>.

COMMUNITY AND OUTREACH

Outreach and Public Service

We were involved in numerous outreach activities at the local, state, and national level, including more than two dozen presentations to practitioners working on BEAD implementation, have given talks at events on the translation of AI research into applications and services, on the role of AI ethics in safeguarding the benefits of AI, and on the community and economic impacts of data centers.

In the Media

In response to increasing coverage in news and other online events, we added a new page to our website. See <https://quello.msu.edu/in-the-media/>.

Video Library

We have steadily grown our library of archived talks and short interviews with our speakers, archived on Vimeo (see <https://vimeo.com/quellocenter>) and YouTube (<https://www.youtube.com/@michiganstateuniversityque7437>).

Online Presence

If you have not already done so, please:

- Check out the Quello Center website at <https://quello.msu.edu/>.
- Like our Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/QuelloCenter/>.
- Follow our LinkedIn page at <https://www.linkedin.com/company/quellocenter/>.

SSRN E-Journal

In addition, we have an online working paper archive on the Social Science Research Network (SSRN), currently featuring more than 100 working papers and reports. See: <https://www.ssrn.com/link/Quello-Center-PUB.html>

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS¹

Journal Articles and Conference Proceedings

- Hardy, J.** (2026). Legibility & Rural Development in the American High-Tech Economy. *Information Technology for Development*, 32(1), 311–332. <https://doi.org/10.17705/1ITD.032114>
- Saxena, D., Moon, E. S.-Y., Kawakami, A., Jackson, C., Lee, M. K., Fox, S. E., Guha, S., Erete, S., & **Hardy, J.** (2026). Participation, Procurement & Proof of Impact in Public Sector AI Innovation. In *Proceedings of the Extended Abstracts of the 2026 CHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems* (pp. 1–6). <https://doi.org/10.1145/3772363.3778739>
- Hales, G. & Hampton, K.** (2025). Rethinking screen time and academic achievement: gender differences and the hidden benefit of online leisure through digital skills. *Information, Communication & Society*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2025.2516542>.
- Mack, E., Bauer, J. M., Knittel, M., Nam, A., Lee, B., & Bhattacharya, D.** (2025). The State of Bead: Assessing Progress Toward Universal Broadband Connectivity. Paper presented at TPRC53, Washington, D.C. September 19-20, 2025. Available at SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=5376286>.
- Hales, Gabriel, and Keith Hampton** (2025). Gender Differences and the Hidden Benefit of Online Leisure Through Digital Skills. *Information, Communication & Society*.
- Hampton, Keith** and Kelley Cotter (2025). Disrupting Echo Chambers? How Social Media is Related to Social Tolerance Through Network Diversity: Linked Lives Over a Major Life Course Event. *Information, Communication & Society* 28(1), 150-168.
- Hardy, J., Gleason, M., & Battocchio, A. F.** (2025). Playing with Rural Design: Design Probe Failure & Community Disconnections. *Proceedings of the 12th International Conference on Communities & Technologies*, 339–355. <https://doi.org/10.1145/3742800.3742830>
- Hardy, J.** (2024). Transforming the Rural Asset: Advancing Rural Place through Cultural Assets in the American High-Tech Economy. *Community Development*, 55(6), 823-841, <https://doi.org/10.1080/15575330.2023.2301704>
- Hardy, J., & Thebault-Spieker, J.** (2024). A Turn to Assets in Community-Based Computing Research: Tradeoffs, Deficits, and Neoliberalism in Technological Development. *Proceedings of the ACM on Human-Computer Interaction*, 8(CSCW1), 14:1-14:20. <https://doi.org/10.1145/3637291>
- Bauer, J.M.** (2023). Federal-Local Realignment of Broadband Policy and Digital Equity in the United States. 2023 Urban Affairs Association Conference, Nashville, TN, April 26-29, 2023.
- Blank, G., & Reisdorf, B.** (2023), Digital inequalities and public health during COVID-19: Media dependency and vaccination, published online on 12 January 2023, *Information Communications and Society*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2023.2166356>.
- Bauer, J.M.** (2022). Toward new guardrails for the information society. *Telecommunications Policy*, 102350. Published online April 6, 2022. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.telpol.2022.102350>.

¹ In reverse chronological order within each subsection

- Hampton, K.N. & Shin, I.** (2022). Disconnection More Problematic for Adolescent Self-Esteem than Heavy Social Media Use: Evidence from Access Inequalities and Restrictive Media Parenting in Rural America, *Social Science Computer Review*, published online August 5, 2022. Download at <https://doi.org/10.1177/0894439322117466>.
- Prado, T.S. & Bauer, J.M.** (2022). Big Tech Platform Acquisitions of Start-ups and Venture Capital Funding for Innovation. *Information Economics and Policy*, Volume 59, June, 100973. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.infoecopol.2022.100973>.
- Shillair, R.,** Esteve-González, P., Dutton, W.H., Creese, S., Nagyfejeo, E., Von Solms, B. (2022). National Level Evidence-Based Results, Challenges, and Promise, *Computers & Security*, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cose.2022.102756>.
- Creese, S., **Dutton, W.H.,** Esteve-Gonzalez, P. & **Shillair, R.** (2021). Cybersecurity Capacity Building: Cross-National Benefits and International Divides. Forthcoming in the *Journal of Cyber Policy*. <https://doi-org.proxy1.cl.msu.edu/10.1080/23738871.2021.1979617>.
- Bauer, J.M.** & Bohlin, E. (2021). Regulation and Innovation in 5G Markets. *Telecommunications Policy*, 102260, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.telpol.2021.102260>.
- Knieps, G. & **Bauer, J.M.** (2021). Internet of Things and the Economics of 5G-based Local Industrial Networks. *Telecommunications Policy*, 102261, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.telpol.2021.102261>.
- Shin, I., & Hampton, K.N.** (2021). New Media Use and the Belief in a Just World: Awareness of Life Events and the Perception of Fairness for Self and Injustice for Others. *Information, Communication & Society*, 1-17. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2021.1950804>.
- Hampton, K.N., Robertson, C.T., Fernandez, L., Shin, I. & Bauer, J.M.** (2021). How variation in Internet access, digital skills, and media use are related to rural student outcomes: GPA, SAT, and educational aspirations. *Telematics and Informatics* 63, 101666, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tele.2021.101666>.
- Reisdorf, B.C., Blank, G., Bauer, J. M., Cotten, S., Robertson, C.T., & Knittel, M.** (2021). Information Seeking Patterns and COVID-19 in the United States. *Journal of Quantitative Description: Digital Media*, 1.
- Prado, T.S. & Bauer, J.M.** (2021). Improving broadband policy design using market data: A general framework and application to Brazil, *Telecommunications Policy*, 45(5), 102111, DOI.
- Banerjee, S.; Swearingen, T.; **Shillair, R.; Bauer, J.M.**; Holt, T.J.; & Ross, A. (2021). Using machine learning to examine cyberattack motivations on web defacement data. *Social Science Computer Review*. Published online on 23 February 2021, DOI.
- Holt, T.J.; Lee, J.R.; Freilich, J.D.; Chermak, S.M.; **Bauer, J.M.; Shillair, R.** & Ross, A. (2020) An exploratory analysis of the characteristics of ideologically motivated cyberattacks, *Terrorism and Political Violence*, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09546553.2020.1777987>.
- Feijóo, C.; Kwon, Y.; **Bauer, J.M.**; Bohlin, E; Howell, B.; Jain, R.; Potgieter, P.; Vu, K.; Whalley, J.; & Xia, J. (2020). Harnessing AI to increase wellbeing for all: The case for a new technology diplomacy, *Telecommunications Policy*, 44(6), 101988, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.telpol.2020.101988>.
- Hong, S.J.; **Bauer, J.M.**; Lee, K.; Granados, N.F. (2020). Drivers of supplier participation in ridehailing services, *Journal of Management Information Systems*, 37(3), 602-630.

- Robertson, C.T.,** & Mourão, R. (2020). Faking alternative journalism? An analysis of selfpresentations of “fake news” sites. *Digital Journalism*, published online 25 March 2020, <https://doi.org/10.1080/21670811.2020.1743193>
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- Robertson, C.T.,** Mourão, R.R., & Thorson, E. (2020). Who Uses Fact-Checking Sites? The Impact of Demographics, Political Antecedents, and Media Use on Fact-Checking Site Awareness, Attitudes, and Behavior. *The International Journal of Press/Politics*, 194016121989805. DOI.
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- Hampton, K.N.** (2019). Social Media and Change in Psychological Distress over Time: The Role of Social Causation. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*.
- Mack, E.A., **Dutton, W.H.,** Rikard, R.V., & **Yankelevich, A.** (2019). Mapping and measuring the information society: A social science perspective on the opportunities, problems, and prospects of broadband Internet data in the United States. *The Information Society*, 35(2), 57–68.
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- Reisdorf, B.C., Yankelevich, A., Shapiro, M., & Dutton, W.H.** (2019). Wirelessly bridging the homework gap: Technical options and social challenges in getting broadband to disconnected students. *Education and Information Technology*, 24, 3803–3821.
- Robertson, C.T., Dutton, W.H.,** Ackland, R., & Peng, T.-Q. (2019). The democratic role of social media in political debates: The use of Twitter in the first televised US presidential debate of 2016. *Journal of Information Technology & Politics*, 1–14.

Books and Chapters

- Bauer, J.M.** (2025). Federal-state realignment of broadband and digital equity policy in the United States, in: M. E. Warner, N. A. Bravo, & D. Shen (eds.), *Bridging the digital divide in the US: Planning innovative state and local approaches* (pp. 27-42), Routledge.
- Hardy, J.** (2025). Rural Expertise & the Sewer. In M. Gugganig, K. Bronson, and V. Mirza (Eds.), *The Smartification of Everything: Critical Analyses of a Ubiquitous Reality across Social Sciences, Humanities and the Arts*. University of Toronto Press.

- Bauer, J.M.** & Latzer, M. (2024). Co-evolution: Applications and Implications for Governance Research in Media and Communication Studies. In: R. Mansell, M. Puppis, & H. van der Bulck (eds.), *Handbook of Media and Communication Governance*. Cheltenham, UK & Northampton, MA: Edward Elgar.
- Bauer, J.M., & Prado, T.S.** (2024). Digital innovation: An Information-Economic Perspective. In D.R. Raban & J. Włodarczyk (eds.), *The Elgar Companion to Information Economics*. Edward Elgar
- Bauer, J.M.** (2022). A framework for 5G and 6G market design. In E. Bohlin & F. Cappelletti (eds.), *Europe's future connected: Policies and challenges for 5G and 6G networks* (pp. 20-30), Brussels, Belgium: European Liberal Forum.
- Bauer, J.M.** (2022). Agile Regulation: Towards Flexible Governance of the Digital Economy. In: F. Birke, G. Brunekreeft, V. Stocker, & H.-J. Weiß (eds.), *Perspektiven der Netzökonomie*. Baden-Baden: Nomos Verlag.
- Bauer, J.M. & Dutton, W.H.** (2021). “A nova agenda de cibersegurança: desafios econômicos e sociais para uma Internet segura,” in: NIC.br (ed.), *Segurança Digital: uma análise de gestão de risco em empresa brasileiras*, Sao Pãulo, Brazil: Cadernos NIC.br Estudos Setoriais.
- Hampton, K.N.** and Wellman, B. (2021). All the Lonely People? The Continuing Lament about the Loss of Community. In L. Lievrouw and B. Loader (Eds.), *Routledge Handbook of Digital Media and Communication*. Abingdon, UK. Routledge. 281-296.
- Fernandez, L.** (2020). Digital Advertising in Political Campaigns and Elections. In W. H. Dutton (Ed.), *A Research Agenda for Digital Politics*. Edward Elgar Publishing.
- Creese, S., **Shillair, R.**, Bada, M., **Reisdorf, B.C.**, Roberts, T., & **Dutton, W.H.** (2019). The Cybersecurity Capacity of Nations. In M. Graham & W.H. Dutton (Eds.), *Society and the Internet: How Networks of Information and Communication are Changing our Lives* (2nd ed.). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Dutton, W.H.** (2019). Wired City. In A.M. Orum (Ed.), *The Wiley Blackwell Encyclopedia of Urban and Regional Studies* (1st ed.).
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- Reisdorf, B.C.**, Blank, G., & **Dutton, W.H.** (2019). Internet Cultures and Digital Inequalities. In M. Graham & W. H. Dutton (Eds.), *Society and the Internet: How Networks of Information and Communication are Changing our Lives* (2nd ed.). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Technical Reports

- Bauer, J. M., Nam, A., Mack, E., & Lee, B.** (2026). Indicators and Methods for the Assessment of BEAD Implementation at the State Level. East Lansing, Michigan: Quello Center at Michigan State University.

- Hardy, J.** (2025). Building Capacity for Michigan's Future: A Policy Framework & Vision. Available online at <https://ruralcomputing.msu.edu/capacitymemo>.
- Bauer, J.M.** (2025). An Assessment of Proposals to Reform the Broadband Equity Access and Deployment Program (BEAD). Quello Center Working Paper 01-25, June 5, 2025. Available at SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=5296353>
- Bauer, J.M., Mack, E., Nam, A., Lee, Boram, & Knittel, M.** (2025). Assessing the Effects of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act on High-Speed Internet Access, Digital Equity, and Community Development. Revised and Updated, East Lansing, Michigan: Quello Center at Michigan State University.
- Quello Center** (2025). Data Requirements for the Effective Evaluation of the Restructured BEAD Program. A Guide and Checklist for Practitioners. East Lansing, Michigan: Quello Center at Michigan State University.
- Knittel, M., Mack, E., Nam, A., & Bauer, J.M.,** (2024). Assessing the Effects of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act on High-Speed Internet Access, Digital Equity, and Community Development. Opportunities and Challenges of Measuring the Impact of Broadband Policy. East Lansing, Michigan: Quello Center at Michigan State University, October 2024.
- Rhinesmith, C., Dagg, P.R., Bauer, J.M.,** Byrum, G., & Schill, A. (2023). Digital opportunities compass: Metrics to monitor, evaluate, and guide broadband and digital equity policy. Working paper, Ann Arbor, MI: Merit Network, Inc. and East Lansing, MI.
- Bauer, J.M.** (2023). US leadership in digital platform policy. AEI Digital Platforms and American Life Project. Washington, DC, American Enterprise Institute.
<https://platforms.aei.org/author/jbauer/>
- Reisdorf, B.C., Blank, G., Cotten, S., Argyris, A., Robertson, C.T., Knittel, M., & Bauer, J.M.** (2021). Overcoming COVID-19 Vaccine Hesitancy. *Quello Center Policy Brief* 02/21.
- Bauer, J.M., Hampton, K.N., Fernandez, L.H., & Robertson, C.T. (2020).** Overcoming Michigan's homework gap: The role of broadband Internet connectivity for student success and career outlooks. Quello Center Working Paper No. 06-20.
- Hampton, K. N., Fernandez, L.H., Robertson, C.T., & Bauer, J. M.** (2020). Broadband and Student Performance Gaps. James H. and Mary B. Quello Center, Michigan State University. 3 March 2020, DOI.

Selected Recent Conference Presentations

Quello Center-affiliated researchers presented papers at important national and international academic conferences and at professional meetings. Following is a small selection of a few recent ones.

- Hardy, J.** (2026). Crisis & Rural Innovation. People's Political Economy Conference, Ann Arbor, MI. April 26, 2026.
- Mack, E., Bauer, J. M., Knittel, M., Nam, A., Lee, B., & Bhattacharya, D.** (2025). The State of Bead: Assessing Progress Toward Universal Broadband Connectivity. Paper presented at TPRC53, Washington, D.C. September 19-20, 2025. Available at SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=5376286>.

- Hardy, J.** 2025. Legibility and Rural Development in the American High-Tech Economy. 2025 Annual Meeting of the Rural Sociological Society. Salt Lake City, UT.
- Hardy, J.,** McMillan Lequieu, A., Whitehead, E., Schupp, J. and Wornell, E. 2025. Motivations for Nonstandard Work in Rural America. 2025 Annual Meeting of the Rural Sociological Society. Salt Lake City, UT.
- Whitehead, E., **Hardy, J.,** and Wornell, E. 2025. Community or Commodity?: How the Rise of Gig Economy Platforms has Reshaped Nonstandard Workers' Motivations and Outcomes. 2025 Annual Meeting of the North Central Sociological Association. Lexington, KY.
- Hampton, Keith & Gabriel Hales** (2025, August). Misplaced Harms and Gender Differences in Adolescent Self-Esteem and Social Media Use: A Longitudinal Study. American Sociological Association, Chicago, IL.
- Hampton, Keith & Gabriel Hales** (2025, June). Social Media and Change in Adolescent Self-Esteem Over Time: Pathologizing Friendship and the Stand-in Theory of Informal Socializing. International Communication Association. Denver, CO.