The interdisciplinary research utilizes humanitarian, social scientific, and computational methods to understand platforms’ vulnerabilities to SIOs. The study uses a mixed methods design where each research finding informs the next step in the research process.

The research is being conducted by the Algorithms and Culture Research Group, which includes SJMC doctoral students Katy Biddle and Javie Ssozi as well as University of Iowa assistant professor of computer science Rishab Nityanand and computer science doctoral students Hussam Habbib and Sarmad Chandio.

External collaborators on the project include associate professor of communication arts and sciences at Penn State Andrew High, assistant professor of digital journalism at Appalachian State University Volha Kananovich, assistant professor of African and African American studies and film and media studies at Washington University in St. Louis Raven Maragh-Lloyd, and assistant professor of advertising at Drake Ryan Stoldt. Kananovich and Stoldt both received doctoral degrees from the School of Journalism and Mass Communication at the University of Iowa, while Maragh-Lloyd received her doctorate from Communication Studies at Iowa.

Building on her experience with community partners, Prof. Young developed the Coraville Media Collaborative. This initiative connects SJMC students and classes with community organizations and small businesses in Coraville, Iowa. The goal of the Collaborative is to help students learn professional media skills while supporting the transformative work already happening in Coraville. Students work with community partners in class settings and through a community-based internship program that Prof. Young launched and directs. Prof. Young is also the recipient of the 2023 Hubbard-Walder Award for Excellence in Teaching at the University of Iowa and the 2018-2019 Collegiate Teaching Award from the College of Liberal Arts in Sciences at Utoa.

While students were away and the Adler building was quiet, SJMC faculty and staff have been preparing for the new academic year and continuing to excel in their work. The two featured faculty stories in this newsletter reflect this work and commitment. Rachel Young won the national Scripps Howard Teacher of the Year Award and a team of researchers who won a $17 million grant to support their research on propaganda and radicalization online.

Faculty and graduate students participated in the AEJMC annual conference in Washington, DC, conducted field research in the U.S. and abroad, published new work, and planned new classes. Munachim Amah, Rachel Young, Javie Ssozi, and David Dowling all won awards at the AEJMC conference in recognition of their research. Alex Scott traveled to the U.S.-Mexico border to conduct fieldwork with photojournalists covering migration, and Sujatha Sosale traveled to France to conduct archival research on historical documentation of immigration to the U.S.

SJMC also hosted the Iowa Summer Journalism Workshop in July, which brought nearly 70 high school students to campus for a four-day camp. Students worked with faculty and area professionals to develop and hone skills in writing, graphic design, leadership, and photography. This was the first in-person camp since 2019, and we were so excited to have the students on campus.

As we wrap up the summer and head into fall, we’re looking forward to welcoming new faculty and students to campus and to staying connected with you throughout the year through our monthly e-newsletter and social media.

-Melissa Tully, Director