Yini Zhang

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EDUCATION

School of Journalism and Mass Communication, University of Wisconsin–Madison
Ph.D. in Communication; Minor: Educational Psychology (quantitative methods) 2016–2020

School of Journalism and Mass Communication, University of Wisconsin–Madison
M.A. in Mass Communication 2013–2016

School of Journalism and Communication, Renmin University of China
M.A. in Journalism 2012–2014

School of Foreign Languages and Literatures, Beijing Normal University
B.A. in English Language and Literature (Highest Honors) 2007–2011

PROFESSIONAL APPOINTMENTS

Associate Professor, Department of Communication, University at Buffalo
2026–present

- Affiliated Faculty, Institute for Artificial Intelligence and Data Science
- Affiliated Faculty, Center for Information Integrity

Honorary Fellow, School of Journalism and Mass Communication, University of Wisconsin–Madison
2021–present

Assistant Professor, Department of Communication, University at Buffalo
2020–2026

Lecturer, School of Journalism and Mass Communication, University of Wisconsin–Madison
2020

Graduate Research Assistant, Department of Statistics, University of Wisconsin–Madison
2018–2019

Graduate Teaching Assistant, School of Journalism and Mass Communication, University of Wisconsin–Madison
2013–2018

Program Assistant, Maryland China Initiative, University of Maryland, College Park
2011–2012

RESEARCH AREAS

Social media, AI, media ecosystem, information flows, public opinion, political communication, computational social science.

JOURNAL PUBLICATIONS

+ *indicates a graduate or undergraduate student author at the time of manuscript preparation.*

32. Suk, J., Zhong, W., **Zhang, Y.**, Pruden, M., Yang, Y., Chen, C. & DiFranzo, D. (2026). Rethinking digital trace inference in political communication: evidence from a simulated platform experiment. *Journal of Information Technology & Politics.* https://doi.org/10.1080/19331681.2026.2731442
31. Lukito, J., **Zhang, Y.**, Chen, B., Prochaska, S., Pruden, M., Yang, Y., Zhong, W., Brown, M., Dahlke, R., Greenfield, J., Suk, J., & Borah, P. (2026). Cross-platformization: How U.S. right-leaning media curate their posts on Twitter and Truth Social. *New Media & Society.* https://doi.org/10.1177/14614448261470889
30. Levin, S.H.+, Wang, R.+, Seo, J+, Leong, Y.Y.+, Bennett, E.+, Yang, D.+, Yang, Z.+, Chen, M.+, **Zhang, Y.**, & Suk, J. (2026). From #StayWoke to "Culture Wars": How Social Justice Discourse is Separately and Synergistically Politicized on Twitter and YouTube *Political Communication.* https://doi.org/10.1080/10584609.2026.2717428

29. Suk, J.*, & **Zhang, Y.*** (2026). From Mass Media and Social Media to AI: A Multilevel Framework for Understanding Trust in Generative AI *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*. [*co-first authors] https://doi.org/10.1080/08838151.2026.2694048

28. **Zhang, Y.** & Cho, H. (2025). Advancing Agenda Building Theory: Conceptualizing and Analyzing Processes among Events, Publics, and Media in #StopAsianHate. *Communication Research.* doi: 10.1177/00936502251402961

27. Suk, J.,* **Zhang, Y.**,* Wang, R.$^{+}$, Yang, D.$^{+}$, Levin, S.H.$^{+}$, Seo, J.$^{+}$ & Dong, X.$^{+}$ (2025). From activism to polarization: temporal dynamics of #MeToo politicization on Twitter/X. *Information, Communication & Society.* [*co-first authors] doi: 10.1080/1369118X.2025.2581014.

26. **Zhang, Y.** & Lian, R^{+} (2025). How right-wing media, Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube circulated antipathy and threat cues about immigrants: A cross-media and cross-platform approach. *Mass Communication & Society.* doi: 10.1080/15205436.2025.2529999.

25. Wang, R.$^{+}$ & **Zhang, Y.** (2025). Partisan Response to Trump's Media Bashing on Twitter: From Synergistic Amplification to Strategic Avoidance, Countering, and Retooling. *Journal of Information Technology & Politics.* doi: 10.1080/19331681.2025.2508750.

24. **Zhang, Y.**,* Suk, J.,* Yang, D.$^{+}$, Yue, Z.$^{+}$, Wang, R.$^{+}$, Dong, X.$^{+}$, An, Z.$^{+}$, & Joseph, K. (2025). Center-Left and Right-Wing News, YouTube, and Twitter as Key Connectors in the Social Media System: A Cross-Media and Cross-Platform Analysis of Hyperlinks. *Journal of Quantitative Description: Digital Media.* doi:10.51685/jqd.2025.007. [*co-first authors]

23. Suk, J.,* **Zhang, Y.**,* Liu, J. & Yang, Y^{+}. (2025). Communicative AI in the Scientific Public Sphere: An Analysis of Twitter Discourse on Generative AI Tools. *Telematics and Informatics.* doi:10.1016/j.tele.2025.102261 [*co-first authors]

22. Li, M.$^{+}$, Suk, J., **Zhang, Y.**, Pevehouse, J., Sun, Y.$^{+}$, Kwon, H.$^{+}$, Lian, R.$^{+}$, Wang, R.$^{+}$, Dong, X.$^{+}$, & Shah, D. (2024). Platform Affordances, Discursive Opportunities, and Social Media Activism: A Cross-Platform Analysis of #MeToo on Twitter, Facebook, and Reddit, 2017-2020. *New Media & Society.* doi: 10.1177/14614448241285562.

21. Wang, R.$^{+}$, **Zhang, Y.**, Suk, J., & Levin, S.H.$^{+}$ (2024). Empowered or Constrained in Platform Governance? An Analysis of Twitter Users' Responses to Elon Musk's Takeover. *Social Media + Society.* doi: 10.1177/20563051241277606.

20. Kim, J.$^{+}$, **Zhang, Y.**, & Borah, P. (2024). Second-level agenda-setting effects of news media and public policy on social media discourse across platforms: Immigration during the COVID-19 pandemic in the U.S. *Information, Communication & Society.* doi: 10.1080/1369118X.2024.2380759.

19. **Zhang, Y.**, Wong, J. C. S.$^{+}$, An, Z.$^{+}$, Brimmer, M.J.$^{+}$, Joseph, K., & Yang, J. Z. (2024). Partisanship and Risk Talk on Twitter: A Multipronged Analysis of the Prominence, Targets, and Drivers of COVID-19 Risk-Related Expression by Democrats versus Republicans. *Journal of Quantitative Description: Digital Media.* doi: 10.51685/jqd.2024.009.

18. **Zhang, Y.**, Lukito, J., Suk, J., & McGrady, R. (2024). Trump, Twitter, and Truth Social: how Trump used both mainstream and alt-tech social media to drive news media attention. *Journal of Information Technology & Politics.* doi: 10.1080/19331681.2024.2328156.

17. Dahlke, R.$^{+}$ & **Zhang, Y.** (2024). Surviving or thriving political defeat on social media: A temporal analysis of how electoral loss exacerbates the gender gap in political expression. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication.* doi: 10.1093/jcmc/zmad051.

16. **Zhang, Y.**, Chen, F., Suk, J., & Yue. Z.$^{+}$ (2023). WordPPR: A Researcher-Driven Computational Keyword Selection Method for Text Data Retrieval from Digital Media. *Communication Methods and Measures.* doi: 10.1080/19312458.2023.2278177.

15. Jiang, X.$^{+}$, **Zhang, Y.***, Kim, J.$^{+}$, Pevehouse, J., & Shah, D. (2023). Talking Past Each Other on Twitter: Thematic, Event, and Temporal Divergences in Polarized Partisan Expression on Immigration. *Political Communication.* doi: 10.1080/10584609.2023.2263400. [*corresponding author]

14. Suk, J., **Zhang, Y.**, Yue, Z.+, Wang, R.+, Dong, X.+, Yang, D.+, & Lian, R.+ (2023). When the Personal Becomes Political: Unpacking the Dynamics of Sexual Violence and Gender Justice Discourses across Four Social Media Platforms. *Communication Research.* doi: 10.1177/0093650223115414.
13. **Zhang, Y.**, Yue, Z.+, Yang, X.+, Chen, F., & Kwak, N. (2022). How a Peripheral Ideology Becomes Mainstream: Strategic Performance, Audience Reaction, and News Media Amplification in the Case of QAnon Twitter Accounts. *New Media & Society.* doi: 10.1177/14614448221137324.
12. **Zhang, Y.**, Chen, F., & Lukito, J. (2022). Network Amplification of Politicized Information and Misinformation about COVID-19 by Conservative Media and Partisan Influencers on Twitter. *Political Communication.* doi: 10.1080/10584609.2022.2113844.
11. **Zhang, Y.***, Chen, F.*, & Rohe, K. (2022). Social Media Public Opinion as Flocks in a Murmuration: Conceptualizing and Measuring Opinion Expression on Social Media. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication.* doi:10.1093/jcmc/zmab021. [*co-first authors]
10. **Zhang, Y.**, Shah, D., Valenzuela, S., & Pevehouse, J. (2022). Reactive and Asymmetric Communication Flows: Social Media Discourse and Partisan News Framing in the Wake of Mass Shootings. *The International Journal of Press/Politics.* doi: 10.1177/19401612211072793.
9. **Zhang, Y.**, Lukito J., Su, M.H., Suk, J., Xia, Y., Kim, S.J., Doroshenko, L., & Wells, C. (2021). Assembling the Networks and Audiences of Disinformation: How Successful Russian IRA Twitter Accounts Built Their Followings, 2015–2017. *Journal of Communication, 71(2), 305-331.* doi: 10.1093/joc/jqaa042.
8. Pelled, A., Lukito, J., Foley, J., **Zhang, Y.**, Sun, Z., Pevehouse, J., & Shah, D. (2021). Death across the news spectrum: A time series analysis of partisan coverage following mass shootings in the U.S. *The International Journal of Communication, 15, 20.*
7. Wells, C., **Zhang, Y.**, Lukito, J., & Pevehouse, J. (2020). Modeling the formation of attentive publics in social media: The case of Donald Trump. *Mass Communication and Society, 23(2), 181-205.* doi:10.1080/15205436.2019.1690664.
6. Chen, F., **Zhang, Y.**, & Rohe, K. (2020). Targeted sampling from massive block model graphs with personalized PageRank. *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society: Series B (Statistical Methodology), 82(1), 99-126.*
5. Lukito J., Suk, J., **Zhang, Y.**, Doroshenko, L., Kim, S. J., Su, M-H., Xia, Y., Freelon, D., & Wells C. (2020). The Wolves in Sheep's Clothing: How Russia's Internet Research Agency Tweets Appeared in US News as Vox Populi. *The International Journal of Press/Politics, 25(2), 196-216.*
4. **Zhang, Y.**, Shah, D., Foley, J., Abhishek, A., Lukito, J., Suk, J., Kim, S.J., Sun, Z., Pevehouse, J., & Garlough, C. (2019). Whose Lives Matter? Mass Shootings and Social Media Discourses of Sympathy and Policy, 2012-2014. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication, 24(4), 182-202.* doi:10.1093/jcmc/zmz009.
3. Suk, J., Abhishek, A., **Zhang, Y.**, Ahn, S.Y., Correa, T., Garlough, C., & Shah, D. (2019). #MeToo, Networked Acknowledgement, and Connective Action: How "Empowerment Through Empathy" Launched a Social Movement. *Social Science Computer Review, 39(2), 276-294.* doi:10.1177/0894439319864882.
2. Xia, Y., Lukito, J., **Zhang, Y.**, Wells, C., Kim, S., & Tong, C. (2019). Disinformation, performed: Self-presentation of a Russian IRA account on Twitter. *Information, Communication & Society, 22(11), 1646-1664.* doi:10.1080/1369118X.2019.1621921.
1. **Zhang, Y.**, Wells, C., Wang, S., & Rohe, K. (2018). Attention and amplification in the hybrid media system: The composition and activity of Donald Trump's Twitter following during the 2016 presidential election. *New Media & Society, 20(9), 3161-3182.* doi:10.1177/1461444817744390.

OTHER PUBLICATIONS

6. **Zhang, Y.** (2025). Message Amplification. In Nai, A., Grömping, M., & Wirz, D. (Eds). Elgar Encyclopedia of Political Communication. Edward Elgar Publishing.

5. Shugars, S., **Zhang, Y.**, & Jones, J. (2024). Editors' Introduction to Special Issue of JQD:DM in Collaboration with ICWSM. *Journal of Quantitative Description: Digital Media.*
4. Lukito, J., Brown, M.A., Dahlke, R., Suk, J., Yang, Y., **Zhang, Y.**, Chen, B., Kim, S.J., & Soorholtz, K. (2023). The State of Digital Data Research, 2023. [White paper].
3. Shah, D., **Zhang, Y.**, Pevehouse, J., & Valenzuela, S. (2021). Counter a Reactive Media System. In Hart, D. (Eds.), Fixing American Politics: Solutions for the Media Age. Routledge.
2. Lukito, J., Wells, C., **Zhang, Y.**, Doroshenko, L., Kim, S.J., S, M.H., Suk, J., Xia, Y., & Freelon, D. (2018). The Twitter Exploit: How Russian Propaganda Infiltrated U.S. News. [White paper].
1. **Zhang, Y.**, Wang, Y., Foley, J., Suk, J., & Conathan, D. (2017, July). Tweeting Mass Shootings: The Dynamics of Issue Attention on Social Media. In *Proceedings of the 8th International Conference on Social Media & Society* (p. 59). ACM.

FUNDED GRANTS

Multilevel Trust in Generative AI Across Four Countries (2027)
Office of International Education Research Grants, University at Buffalo — *PI* $5,000

AI-Driven Safety Judgments and Publicness Friction in Harm-Reporting, Support-Seeking, and Counter-Speech Discourse (2026–2028)
Institute for Collaboration on Health, Intervention, and Policy, University of Connecticut — *Co-PI* $15,000

Collaborative Research: SAI-R: Integrative Cyberinfrastructure for Enhancing and Accelerating Online Abuse Research (2022–2025)
National Science Foundation — *Co-PI* $375,000

SICSS Project: Examining multi-platform communication flows (2018)
Northwestern University — *Team Lead* $2,000

AWARDS

Thomas E. Patterson Best Dissertation Award. American Political Science Association. (2021)

Louise Elizabeth George Scholarship. University of Wisconsin–Madison. (2019)

Top paper in Political Communication Interest Group paper competition. The Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication. (2018)

Third place in the inaugural AEJMC Research Prize for Professional Relevance competition. The Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication. (2018)

Excellence in Teaching Award. University of Wisconsin–Madison. (2017)

Top Research Paper at Communication Crossroads. University of Wisconsin–Madison. (2016)

INVITED TALKS & PRESENTATIONS

An AI-Saturated Political Communication Environment? Elite Production, News Amplification, and Public Perception. Center for Communication and Civic Renewal (CCCR) Symposium at University of Wisconsin-Madison. October 16, 2026.

Who Broke the News, and Can We Fix It? Buffalo Humanities Festival. September 26, 2026.

The Mutual Shaping Between Communication Technologies and Users: A Computational Approach. Department of Communication and Journalism at Texas A&M University. January 29, 2024.

Users, Spaces, Platforms, and Systems: A Multi-Level Framework for Social Media Research. Speaker for Brown Bag Series. Department of Communication at the University at Buffalo. December 8, 2023.

Hyperlinks and content: Two computational approaches to tracing information flows in the hybrid-media cross-platform information ecology. Speaker for Summer Institute in Computational Social Science-North Dakota State University (SICSS-NDSU). June 22, 2023.

Misinformation and extremism. Panelist at the Center for Information Integrity Conference, University at Buffalo. April 21, 2023.

Social media and mass shootings. Panelist at Buffalo Rising: Remembering the Past to Build a Stronger Community. Franklin H. Williams Judicial Commission, NYS Unified Court System. October 22, 2022.

New and emerging data tools. Panelist at the 2022 Digital Data Conference (D2C). University of Texas-Austin & The Social Science Research Council. April 14, 2022.

Rooted in community and toward a personalized SJMC experience. Keynote speaker at the 2021 Communication Crossroads Conference. University of Wisconsin–Madison. March 12, 2021.

A network approach to mapping out communication actors and tracing communication flows and influence. Speaker for Cutting-edge Communication Research at the Amsterdam School of Communication Research. University of Amsterdam. January 28, 2021.

Whose lives matter? Mass shootings and social media discourses of sympathy and policy, 2012-2014. Presented to School of Journalism and Mass Communication Board of Visitors. University of Wisconsin–Madison. April 12, 2019.

CONFERENCE PAPERS

59. Lukito, J., Borah, P., Suk, J., Yang, Y., Pruden, M., Smith, M., Stepniewski, J., **Zhang, Y.**, & Zhong, W. (2026). Dynamics between Media Consumption, Authoritarianism, and Election Trust during the Second Trump Administration. Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC) Conference, New Orleans, LA.
58. Suk, J., Lukito, J., Pruden, M., Borah, P., & **Zhang, Y.** (2026). Across the Gender Divide: Modern Sexism, Political Group Trust, and Asymmetric Partisan Media in the 2024 U.S. Election. Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC) Conference, New Orleans, LA.
57. Lee, B.H., **Zhang, Y.**, & Green, M. (2026). How Narrative and Non-Narrative Relate to User Engagement and Discourse Persistence in Social Media Activism. 76th International Communication Association (ICA) Conference, Cape Town, South Africa.
56. Suk, J., Zhong, W., **Zhang, Y.**, Pruden, M., Yang, Y., Chen, C. & DiFranzo, D. (2026). Attention and Engagement Are Weakly Coupled: Evidence from a Simulated Social Media Experiment. 76th International Communication Association (ICA) Conference, Cape Town, South Africa.
55. Suk, J., Yim, C., Seo, J., Levin, S.H., Romann, L., Guo, Y., & **Zhang, Y.** (2026). The Visual Politicization of "Woke": A Computational Analysis of YouTube Images. American Political Science Association (APSA) Conference, Boston, MA.
54. Kwon, H., Shah, D., Buttrick, N., Pevehouse, J., **Zhang, Y.**, Borah, P., & Lu, L. (2026) Mapping a Decade of NRA Messaging: A Computational Analysis of Visuals and Text in Member Emails, 2014–2024. 83rd Annual MPSA Conference, Chicago, IL.
53. Lukito, J., **Zhang, Y.**, Pruden, M., Prochaska, S., Chen, B., Zhong, W., Brown, M., Dahlke, R., Suk, J., Greenfield, J., & Borah, P. (2025). Cross-Platformization of Conservative Media: How U.S. Right-Leaning Outlets Curate Their Posts on Twitter and Truth Social. 75th International Communication Association (ICA) Conference, Denver, CO.
52. Lu, L., **Zhang, Y.**, Kwon, H., Borah, P., Buttrick, N., Pevehouse, J., & Shah, D. (2025). Framing Mass Violence on the Left and Right: A Multimodal Analysis of Textual and Visual Content in Partisan Media. 75th International Communication Association (ICA) Conference, Denver, CO.
51. Wang, R., Seo, J., Yim, C., Levin, S.H., Romann, L., Suk, J., & **Zhang, Y.** (2025). [Work In Progress] A cycle of contention: the politicized turn of discourse of AI on social media after ChatGPT. 75th International Communication Association (ICA) Conference, Denver, CO.
50. Suk, J., Wei, Z., **Zhang, Y.**, Pruden, M., Yang, Y., Mao, C., & DiFranzo, D. (2025). Unveiling Engagement and Platform Algorithmic Biases in Social Media Data Collection and Analysis: An Experimental Study. 75th International Communication Association (ICA) Conference, Denver, CO.
49. Shugars, S., Lukito, J., Pruden, M., Dahlke, R., Suk, J., **Zhang, Y.**, Yang, Y., Zhong, W., Chen, B., & Brown, M. (2025). An Ecosystem Divided?: Cross-Platform Election Information Flows in Alt-Tech and Mainstream Social Media Platforms. 75th International Communication Association (ICA) Conference, Denver, CO.
48. Kim, J., Kwon, H., **Zhang, Y.** & Shah, D.(2025). How Partisan Users Engage and Disengage with Each Other over Immigration: Fine-Tuning BERT to Explore Twitter Discourse between 2014–2017. 82nd Annual MPSA Conference, Chicago, IL.

47. Wang, R. & **Zhang, Y.** (2024). How Political Influencers Responded to Trump's Media Bashing on Twitter? From Synergistic Amplification to Strategic Avoidance, Countering, and Retooling. Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC) Conference 2024, Philadelphia, PA.

46. Wang, R., **Zhang, Y.**, Suk, J., & Levin, S.H.(2024). Empowered or Constrained in Platform Governance? An Analysis of Twitter Users' Responses to Elon Musk's Takeover. Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC) Conference 2024, Philadelphia, PA.

45. Kim, T., **Zhang, Y.**, Yang, Y., & Lukito, J.(2024). After the Ban: Tracking the Migration from Twitter to Parler. Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC) Conference 2024, Philadelphia, PA.

44. Suh, Y.J., Suk, J., Kwon, H., & **Zhang, Y.** (2024). From Hashtag to Networked Hate: Analyzing cross-platform hate in the #MeToo movement in South Korea. Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC) Conference 2024, Philadelphia, PA.

43. Shugars, S., Lukito, J., Pruden, M., Dahlke, D., Suk, J., **Zhang, Y.**, Yang, Y., Zhong, W., Chen, B., & Brown, M. (2024). An Ecosystem Divided?: Cross-Platform Election Information Flows across Alt-Tech and Mainstream Social Media Platforms. International Conference on Computational Social Science 2024 (IC2S2) Conference 2024, Pennsylvania, PA.

42. Shugars, S., Lukito, J., Pruden, M., Dahlke, D., Suk, J., **Zhang, Y.**, Yang, Y., Zhong, W., Chen, B., & Brown, M. (2024). An Ecosystem Divided?: Cross-Platform Election Information Flows in Alt-Tech and Mainstream Social Media Platforms. American Political Science Association (APSA) Conference 2024, Philadelphia, PA.

41. Wang, R., Levin, S.H., Seo, J, Leong, Y.Y., Bennett, E., Yang, D., Yang, Z., Chen, M., **Zhang, Y.**, & Suk, J. (2024). From #StayWoke to "Culture Wars": How Social Justice Discourse Is Separately and Synergistically Politicized on Twitter and YouTube. American Political Science Association (APSA) Conference 2024, Philadelphia, PA.

40. **Zhang, Y.**, & Choi, H. (2024). Agenda building with social media in contemporary media ecology: Exogenous events and interpublic and intermedia processes surrounding #StopAsianHate. International Communication Association (ICA) Conference 2024, Gold Coast, Australia.

39. **Zhang, Y.**, Suk, J., & Lukito, J. (2024). A Multi-Level Framework for Social Media Research. International Communication Association (ICA) Conference 2024, Gold Coast, Australia.

38. Suh, Y.J., Suk, J., Kwon, H. & **Zhang, Y.** (2024). From Hashtag to Backlash: Unpacking Morality Across Platforms During the #MeToo Movement in South Korea. International Communication Association (ICA) Conference 2024, Gold Coast, Australia.

37. **Zhang, Y.**, Suk, J., Levin, S.H., & Wang, R. (2023). Elon Musk, Platform Ownership, User Participation, and the Governance of Twitter. American Political Science Association (APSA) Conference 2023, Los Angeles, CA.

36. Wang, R. & **Zhang, Y.** (2023). How News Media and Partisan Influencers Responded to Trump's Media Bashing. American Political Science Association (APSA) Conference 2023, Los Angeles, CA.

35. Yang, Y., **Zhang, Y.**, Lukito, J., Kim, S.j., Foley, J. & Suk, J. (2023). A Cross-Platform Analysis of Survivors of De-platforming after January 6. American Political Science Association (APSA) Conference 2023, Los Angeles, CA.

34. Kim, J., **Zhang, Y.**, & Borah P. (2023). Immigration during the COVID-19 pandemic: How news media and public policy influenced public agenda on Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube. Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC) Conference 2023, Washington DC.

33. **Zhang, Y.** & Jiang, X. (2023). Cueing "Bad Hombres": How Right-wing News Media, Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube Circulated Antipathy and Threat Cues About Immigrants. International Communication Association (ICA) Conference 2023, Toronto, Canada.

32. **Zhang, Y.**, Lukito, J., Suk, J., & McGrady, R. (2023). Too Big to Deplatform? Exploring Truth Social as Trump's New Twitter for Hacking Media Attention. International Communication Association (ICA) Conference 2023, Toronto, Canada.
31. Suk, J.,* **Zhang, Y.**,* Wang, R., Yang, D., Levin, S.H., Dong, X., & Seo, J. (2023). Fleeting Public Attention and Stubborn Partisan Passion: Politicization of #MeToo on Twitter. International Communication Association (ICA) Conference 2023, Toronto, Canada. [*co-first authors]
30. Jiang, X.,* **Zhang, Y.***, Lian, X., Zhang, Z., Wang, Y., Dounane, D., Hando, L., & Shah, D. (2023). Right-wing Drivers of Antipathy toward and Threats from Immigrants on Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube. International Communication Association (ICA) Conference 2023, Toronto, Canada. [*co-first authors]
29. Dahlke, R. & **Zhang, Y.** (2023). Surviving or Thriving the Moment of Defeat: Donald Trump, Bernie Sanders, and the Political Resilience of Populist Actors on Twitter. International Communication Association (ICA) Conference 2023, Toronto, Canada.
28. Li, M., Suk, J., Sun, Y., Lian, R., **Zhang, Y.**, Kwon, H., Wang, R., Dong, X., Pevehouse, J., & Shah, D. (2023). A Cross-platform Analysis of 2017-2020 #MeToo on Twitter, Facebook, and Reddit. International Communication Association (ICA) Conference 2023, Toronto, Canada.
27. **Zhang, Y.**, Suk, J., Yue, Z., An, Z., Yang, D., Wang, R., Dong, X. & Joseph, K. (2022). Mapping out Information Flow in the Social Media Ecosystem by Tracing Hyperlinks. National Communication Association (NCA) Convention 2022, New Orleans, LA.
26. **Zhang, Y.**, Chen, F., Suk, J. & Yue, Z. (2022). WordPPR: A New Keyword Selection Method for Social Media Data Retrieval. fifth annual Politics and Computational Social Science (PaCSS), Boston, MA.
25. Yang, Y., **Zhang, Y.**, Lukito, J., Kim, S.j., Foley, J. & Suk, J. (2022). The Chilling Effect of DePlatforming? Evidence from Trump Supporters Who Survived Twitter's Deplatforming post Jan. 6. 2022 Annual Conference of AEJMC, Detroit, MI.
24. **Zhang, Y.** (2022). Signaling Power: Attention Patterns of Heterogenous Networks in the #MeToo, #BlackLivesMatter, and #StopAsianHate Movements on Twitter. International Communication Association (ICA) Conference 2022, Hybrid.
23. **Zhang, Y.**, Yue, Z., Yang, X., Chen, F. & Kwak, N. (2022). Strategic Performance, Audience Feedback, and Media Amplification: An Analysis of the Behaviors and Influence of QAnon Twitter Accounts. International Communication Association (ICA) Conference 2022, Hybrid.
22. **Zhang, Y.**, Wong, J. C. S., An, Z., Brimmer, M.J., Joseph, K. & Yang, J. Z. (2022). Conservatives Talked about Risks in the COVID-19 Pandemic More Than Liberals Did: How Partisan Identities Shaped Risk Expression on Twitter. International Communication Association (ICA) Conference 2022, Hybrid.
21. Suk, J., **Zhang, Y.**, Yue, Z., Wang, R., Dong, X., Yang, D., Lian, R. & Kwak, N. (2022). "The personal is political": A cross-platform approach to how networked acknowledgment before and after #MeToo transforms into politicization. International Communication Association (ICA) Conference 2022, Hybrid.
20. Kim, J. & **Zhang, Y.** (2022). Rhetoric of Polarization: Partisan Language in the Immigration Discourse on Twitter, 2014-2017. International Communication Association (ICA) Conference 2022, Hybrid.
19. Gupta, S. & **Zhang, Y.** (2022). Brand Polarization on Social Media: A Cross-Cultural Study Using Computational Approaches. International Communication Association (ICA) Conference 2022, Hybrid.
18. Jiang, X., **Zhang, Y.**, Lian, X., Dounane, A., Hando, L, Wang, Y. & Shah, D. (2022). Real or symbolic threat: How real-world indicators and symbolic discourses shape negative expression about immigration on social media. International Communication Association (ICA) Conference 2022, Hybrid.

17. **Zhang, Y.** (2021). Signaling Power: Attention Patterns of Heterogeneous Networks in the #MeToo, #BlackLivesMatter, and #StopAsianHate Movements on Twitter. fourth annual Politics and Computational Social Science (PaCSS) conference, Virtual.
16. Fan, Y, **Zhang, Y.** & Zhang, S.F. (2021) Who am I Connected with? Community Detection and Effects in an Online Peer-to-Peer Support Forum. Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC) Conference 2021, Virtual.
15. **Zhang, Y.**, Chen, F., Lukito, J., & Rohe, K. (2021) Networked amplification: The role of networked elites in information diffusion surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic on Twitter. International Communication Association (ICA) Conference 2021, Virtual.
14. Jiang, X., **Zhang, Y.**, Kim, J. & Shah, D. (2021) Talking Past Each Other: Expression Polarization in Immigration Discourses on Twitter. International Communication Association (ICA) Conference 2021, Virtual.
13. **Zhang, Y.** (2021) An actor-centered network approach to tracing communication flows in the hybrid and hyperpartisan media system. Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC) Winter Conference 2021, Virtual.
12. **Zhang, Y.**, Shah, D., Valenzuela, S. & Pevehouse, J. (2020) A Reactive Media System: Mass Shootings in a Polarized Communication Ecology. International Communication Association (ICA) Conference 2019, Virtual.
11. Suk, J., Abhishek, A., **Zhang, Y.** & Ahn, S.Y.. (2019). A Temporal Analysis of the #MeToo Movement Discourses. International Communication Association (ICA) Conference 2019, Washington D.C, USA.
10. Lukito J., Suk, J., **Zhang, Y.**, Doroshenko, L., Kim, S. J., Su, M-H., Xia, Y. & Wells C. (2018). ero Day Twitter: How Russian Propaganda Infiltrated the U.S. Hybrid Media System. Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC) 2018. Washington, DC.

    ***Top paper in Political Communication Interest Group paper competition and third place in the inaugural AEJMC Research Prize for Professional Relevance competition.**
9. **Zhang, Y.**, Shah, D., Foley, J., Abhishek, A., Pevehouse, J., Lukito, J., Kim, S., Suk, J., Yang, F. & Garlough C. (2018). The Features of Tragedy, Expressions of Sympathy, and Debates over Policy: A Time Series Analysis of Mass Shootings and Social Media Discourses. International Communication Association (ICA) Conference 2018, Prague, Czech.
8. Wells, C., **Zhang, Y.**, Lukito, J. & Pevehouse, J. (2018). The formation of attentive publics in the hybrid media system: How Donald Trump assembled his amplification machine. International Communication Association (ICA) Conference 2018, Prague, Czech.
7. Suk, J, **Zhang, Y.**, Lukito, J., Su, M. & Foley, J. (2018). Tracing Twitter Buzz: Clustering Hashtags and Handles About Mass Shootings and Gun Control. International Communication Association (ICA) Conference 2018, Prague, Czech.
6. Graves, L., Gunther, A., Pelled, A., Su, M., Wang, Y., & **Zhang, Y.** (2018). Effects of Fact Checks on Partisan Beliefs and Perceptions of Bias. International Communication Association (ICA) Conference 2018, Prague, Czech.
5. Gunther, A., Graves, L., **Zhang, Y.**, Pelled, A., & Wang, Y. (2017). Effects of Fact Checks on Partisan Beliefs and Perceptions of Bias. Midwest Association for Public Opinion Research Conference 2017, Chicago, IL.
4. Yang, J., Sangari, A., Duncan, M., **Zhang, Y.**, ... & Wu, Y. (2017). Obamacare and political polarization on Twitter: An application of machine learning and social network analysis. International Communication Association (ICA) Conference 2017, San Diego, CA.
3. **Zhang, Y.**, Wang, Y., Foley, J., Suk, J., & Conathan, D. (2017). Tweeting Mass Shootings —The Dynamics of Issue Attention on Social Media. International Conference on Social Media and Society 2017, Toronto, Canada.

2. **Zhang, Y.** & Wang, Y. (2016). When Others 'like' it: Hostile Media Effect in the Era of Social Media. Midwest Association for Public Opinion Research Conference 2016, Chicago, IL.
1. **Zhang, Y.** (2016). The power of commenting? Analyzing modes of Weibo users' news comments in China. Big Ten Mini-Conference 2016, Iowa City, IA.

TEACHING

COURSES TAUGHT:

COM205 Research Methods. (F25, F23, S23, F22, S22, Summer21) University at Buffalo.

COM240 Introduction to Mass Communication. (Summer22) University at Buffalo.

COM337 Communication Theory. (S26, S23, S22, S21, F20) University at Buffalo.

COM466 Social Media & Society. (S26, S25, F21) University at Buffalo.

COM504 Research Methods. (F26, F25, F23, F22) University at Buffalo.

AIS501 Foundations of AI and Society. (F26) University at Buffalo.

COM686 Social Media & Society. (S25, F21, S21) University at Buffalo.

J566 Communication & Public Opinion (S20). University of Wisconsin–Madison.

J561 Mass Communication & Society (S18 as TA). University of Wisconsin–Madison.

J614 Communication & Public Opinion (F17, S17, & S16 as TA). University of Wisconsin–Madison.

J201 Introduction to Mass Communication (F16 & F13-F15, as (lead) TA). University of Wisconsin–Madison.

STUDENT ADVISING:

Doctoral Dissertation Committee (2021 to present):

- Department of Communication: Anita Kuei-Chun Liu (assistant professor at National Taiwan University), Sneha Gupta (industry research position), Rui Wang (assistant professor at Loyola University Maryland);
- Department of Computer Science and Engineering: Zijian An (Meta)

SERVICE TO UB

Co-Organizer of "From Social Media Feeds to AI Systems: Rethinking Persuasion" Symposium (2026)

Co-Organizer of "Content Analysis with AI Readers" Workshop (2026)

Co-Organizer of Brownbag Talk Series (2025-)

Co-Organizer of Graduate Student Professional Development Workshop on Publishing (2025)

Member of the Graduate Admissions Committee (2021 & 2022)

SERVICE TO THE FIELD

Editorial Board of The International Journal of Public Opinion Research (2023-)

Member of Media and Democracy Data Cooperative (2021-)

Top Student Paper Committee of the Computational Methods Division (ICA, 2024)

Secretary/Treasurer, Political Communication Section (APSA, 2022-2024)

Guest editor for Special Section of JQD:DM in Collaboration with ICWSM (2023)

Thomas E. Patterson Best Dissertation Award Committee (APSA, 2022)

JOURNAL REVIEWS

Journal of Communication

Communication Research

Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication

New Media & Society

Political Communication

International Journal of Press/Politics

Human Communication Research

Public Opinion Quarterly

Mass Communication & Society

Social Media + Society

International Journal of Communication

International Journal of Public Opinion Research
Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media
Policy & Internet
Journalism Studies
Social Science Computer Review
Computational Communication Research
Science Communication
Environmental Communication
Journal of the Association for Information Science and Technology
Atlantic Journal of Communication
Annals of the International Communication Association
PNAS Nexus
Humanities and Social Sciences Communications
Political Psychology
Journal of Political Marketing
Social Science Research
EPJ Data Science
Sociological Inquiry
Routledge book proposal review
Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF) proposal review

CONFERENCE REVIEWS

International Communication Association (ICA)
Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC)
International Conference for Computational Social Science (IC2S2)
International Conference on Advances in Social Networks Analysis and Mining (ASONAM)

MEDIA INTERVIEWS

Social Media's Broken Promise with Yini Zhang (October 6, 2026). *Driven to Discover Podcast.*
UB researcher examines political communication processes in everchanging media ecosystem (May 12, 2026). *UBNow.*
Going Nuclear Trump's media company keeps getting weirder. (May 6, 2026). *Columbia Journalism Review.*
QAnon Faithful See Validation in the Epstein Files (Feb 28, 2026). *The New York Times.*
Protesters, immigration agencies battle — on social media (Jan 29, 2026). *USA TODAY.*
Minnesota shows what happens when governing and content creation merge (Jan 16, 2026). *NPR.*
Trump Once Again Inserts Black Women Into A Dizzying Rant About Chicago — Experts Know Why (Aug 28, 2025). *Huffpost.*
Study shows tale of two social media platforms for Donald Trump (May 6, 2024). *UBNow.*
Dark Brandon popping off: is Joe Biden's 'cringe' TikTok helping or hurting him? (May 3, 2024). *The Guardian (UK).*
The Media Show: Building Trump's social media app (April 11, 2024). *BBC*.
Donald Trump's use of Truth Social is harming his ability to reach voters, research shows (March 26, 2024). *Fast Company*.
Big questions, big data: A conversation with Yini Zhang, Ph.D. (October 09, 2023). *Conversations about Communication: a podcast hosted by the Department of Communication at the University at Buffalo*.
Misinformation Defense Worked in 2020, Up to a Point, Study Finds (April 13, 2023). *The New York Times*.
Study examines how QAnon went from fringe to mainstream on Twitter (April 10, 2023). *UBNow*.
The White House is turning to TikTok stars to take its message to a younger audience (October 9, 2022). *NPR*.

'Bite-sized' TikTok draws a Gen Z tired of Google. But misinformation remains rife. (September 18, 2022). *USA TODAY*.

Instagram post falsely promises leaked call between Biden, FBI (August 17, 2022). *Agence France-Presse*.

What's the prevailing opinion on social media? Look at the flocks, UB researcher says (March 21, 2022). *UBNow*.

Rumble Mixes Cat Videos With Covid Misinformation — and the Right Is Loving It (January 4, 2022). *RollingStone*.

ALUM YINI ZHANG (PHD'20) WINS THOMAS E. PATTERSON BEST DISSERTATION AWARD (October 8, 2021). *UW-Madison School of Journalism and Mass Communication*.

On the internet, nobody knows you're a dog – or a fake Russian Twitter account (July 16, 2021). *UBNow*.

Chinese-made vaccines are being subject to misleading narratives (May 11, 2021). *First Draft*.

Post-Shooting Sentiments 'As Intense As They Are Fleeting' (August 9, 2019). *PBS HERE AND NOW.*

Most major outlets have used Russian tweets as sources for partisan opinion: study (March 8, 2018). *Columbia Journalism Review*.

Why social media appeals after mass shootings have done little to change gun laws (February 20, 2018). *Washington Post*.

SKILLS

network analysis, natural language processing, data visualization, experiment design, survey design, multi-level analysis, time series modeling, structural equation modeling.

Last updated: November 2026