

Maria D. Molina

Assistant Professor

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Executive Summary: Maria D. Molina (ABD) is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Advertising and Public Relations at Michigan State University. Her research lies at the intersection of communication technology, media effects, and computational social science. Her research has been supported by the U.S. National Science Foundation, Rita Allen Foundation, and Facebook, Inc. Maria's professional experience includes working as content developer for online education and instructor of theory and research methods courses. She has also served as reviewer for *Health Communication* and *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*.

Academic Positions

- **Assistant Professor**, Department of Advertising and Public Relations, Michigan State University, August 2020 - current

Education

- **Ph.D.**, August 2020, Pennsylvania State University, Mass Communications. GPA: 4.0/4.0
 - Focus area: Media Effects, Psychology of Technology
 - Adviser: Dr. S. Shyam Sundar
- **M.A.**, May 2014, New Mexico State University, Communication Studies. GPA: 4.0/4.0
 - Focus area: Intercultural Communication
 - Adviser: Dr. Eric Morgan
- **B.A.**, May 2012, West Texas A&M University, Mass Communications-Broadcasting and Speech Communication. GPA: 4.0/4.0

Publications

Sundar, S. S., Kim, J., Rosson, M. B., & **Molina**, M. D. (2020). Online privacy heuristics that predict information disclosure. *Proceedings of the 2020 CHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems (CHI '20)*, Paper 725. doi:10.1145/3313831.3376854

Molina, M. D. & Myrick, J.G. (2020) The 'how' and 'why' of fitness app use: Investigating user motivation to gain insight into the nexus of technology and fitness. *Sport in Society*, 1-16. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17430437.2020.1744570>

Wang, J., **Molina**, M. D., & Sundar, S.S. (2020). When expert recommendation contradicts peer opinion: Relative social influence of valence, group identity and artificial intelligence. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 107, 1-7. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2020.106278>

- Molina, M. D.** (2020). What makes an internet meme a meme? Five essential characteristics. In S. Josephson, K. Smith, & J. Kelly (Eds.), *Handbook of Visual Communication: Theory, Methods, and Media* (2nd., ed.). Routledge.
- Molina, M. D.,** & Sundar, S. S. (2020). Can mobile apps motivate fitness tracking? A study of technological affordances and workout behaviors. *Health Communication, 35*(1), 65-74. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10410236.2018.1536961>
- Molina, M. D.,** Sundar, S. S., Le, T., & Lee, D. (2019). “Fake news” is not simply false information: A concept explication and taxonomy of online content. *American Behavioral Scientist*.
- Molina, M. D.,** & Sundar, S. S. (2019). Technological affordances can promote misinformation: What journalists should watch out for when relying on online tools and social media. In J. E. Katz & K. K. Mays (Eds.), *Journalism and truth in an age of social media* (pp.182-197). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Cho, E., **Molina, M. D.,** & Wang, J. (2019). The effects of modality, device, and task differences on perceived human likeness of voice-activated virtual assistants. *Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking, 22*(8), 515–520. <https://doi.org/10.1089/cyber.2018.0571>
- Le, T., Shu, K., **Molina, M. D.,** Lee, D., Sundar, S. S., & Liu, H. (2019). 5 Sources of clickbaits you should know! Using synthetic clickbaits to improve prediction and distinguish between bot-generated and human-written headlines. *Proceedings of ASONAM’19 International Conference on Advances in Social Networks Analysis and Mining (ASONAM’19)*, 1-8. <https://doi.org/10.1145/3341161.3342875>
- Molina, M. D.,** Gambino, A., & Sundar, S. S. (2019). Online privacy in public places: How do location, terms and conditions and VPN influence disclosure. *Proceedings of CHI’19 Extended Abstracts on Human Factors in Computing Systems (CHI EA’19)*, 1-6. doi: 10.1145/3290607.3312932
- Molina, M. D.** (2019). I am what you eat: Effects of social support on meal selection online. *Proceedings of CHI’19 Extended Abstracts on Human Factors in Computing Systems (CHI EA’19)*, 1-6. doi: 10.1145/3290607.3308451
- Molina, M.D.,** & Avram, M. (2018, December). Response to “getting science in the picture”: Games with a purpose to curb misinformation. In B. G. Southwell & V. Boudewyns (Eds.) *Proceedings of Curbing the Spread of Misinformation Insights, Innovations, and Interpretations from the Misinformation Solutions Forum*, 26-27.
- Dylko, I., Dolgov, I., Hoffman, W., Eckhart, N., **Molina, M.,** & Aaziz, O. (2018). Impact of customizability technology on political polarization. *Journal of Information Technology & Politics, 15*(1), 1-15. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19331681.2017.1354243>

Dylko, I., Dolgov, I., Hoffman, W., Eckhart, N., **Molina, M.**, & Aaziz, O. (2017). The dark side of technology: An experimental investigation of the influence of customizability technology on online political selective exposure. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 73, 181-190.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2017.03.031>

Refereed Conference Presentations

Wang, J., **Molina, M. D.**, & Sundar, S.S. (2019, November). *When expert recommendation contradicts peer opinion: Relative social influence of valence, group identity and artificial intelligence*. Paper accepted for presentation at the 105th annual conference of the National Communication Association (NCA), Baltimore, MD.

Molina, M. D., Wang, J., Lee, T., DiRusso, C., & Sundar, S. S. (2019, August). *Effects of bandwagon cues and automated journalism on reading, commenting, and sharing of real vs. false information online*. Paper presented at the 102nd annual conference of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC), Toronto, Canada.

Molina, M. D., & Sundar, S. S. (2018, November). *Can mobile apps motivate fitness tracking? A study of technological affordances, self-determination and workout behaviors*. Paper presented at the 104th annual conference of the National Communication Association (NCA), Salt Lake City, UT.

Molina, M. D. (2018, November). *I am what you eat: Effects of social influence on meal selection online*. Paper presented at the 104th annual conference of the National Communication Association (NCA), Salt Lake City, UT.

Molina, M. D., & Sundar, S. S. (2018, August). *Fake news: A concept explication and taxonomy of online news*. Paper presented at the 101st annual conference of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC), Washington, DC.

Cho, E., **Molina, M. D.**, & Wang, J. (2018, August). *Hey Cortana, wanna talk: The effects of modality, device, and task differences on human-likeness in virtual assistant interactions*. Paper presented at the 101st annual conference of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC), Washington, DC.

Molina, M. D., & Schmierbach, M. (2018, May). *The Effects of culture in website format preference: The role of collectivism in perceptions of technology*. Paper presented at the 68th annual conference of the International Communication Association (ICA), Prague, Czech Republic.

Oliver, M. B., **Molina, M. D.**, Myrick, J. G., DiRusso, C., & Chai, Y. (2018, May). *Creating and sharing love and kindness: Emotional implications of collaboration with digital media*. Paper presented at the 68th annual conference of the International Communication Association (ICA), Prague, Czech Republic.

Molina, M. D., & Erlichman, S. (2017, November). *The role of Internet memes in virtual communities: Can memes create sense of belonging and community in an online setting?* Paper presented at the 104th annual conference of the National Communication Association (NCA), Dallas, TX.

- Molina, M. D.** (2017, August). *What makes a meme a meme? Five essential characteristics*. Poster presented at the 100th annual conference of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC), Chicago, IL.
- Dylko, I., Dolgov, I., Hoffman, W., Eckhart, N., **Molina, M.**, & Aaziz, O. (2017, May). *Impact of customization technology on political participation*. Paper presented at the 67th annual conference of the International Communication Association (ICA), San Diego, CA.
- Molina, M.** (2016, April). *Venir sin temores a exponer la cultura: Factors impacting culture shock among some Ecuadorian sojourners in the U.S.* Paper presented at the 86th annual convention of the Southern States Communication Association (SSCA), Austin, TX. **Top paper.**
- Dylko, I., Dolgov, I., Hoffman, W., Eckhart, N., **Molina, M.**, & Aaziz, O. (2015, November). *The dark side of technology: An experimental investigation of the influence of customizability technology on political selective exposure*. Paper presented at the 103rd annual conference of the National Communication Association (NCA), Las Vegas, NV.
- Molina, M.** (2015, April). *Effect of the use of mock Spanish in public*. Paper presented at 85th annual convention of the Southern States Communication Association (SSCA), Tampa, FL.
- Molina, M.** (2014, April). *Venir sin temores a exponer la cultura: Factors impacting culture shock among some Ecuadorian sojourners in the U.S., a preliminary analysis*. Paper presented at the 84th annual convention of the Southern States Communication Association (SSCA), New Orleans, LA.
- Bardwell, M., Brazile, C., Hughley, W., Jenkins, J. J., Leach, G., **Molina, M.**, Pyle, A., Sewlyn, S., & Zamora, C. (2013, April). *Designed applied communication activities for communication studies panel*. Panel presented at the 83rd annual convention of the Southern States Communication Association (SSCA), Louisville, KY.
- Maria, M.** (2012, April). *Fulfillment through intercultural relationships: A rhetorical analysis of the Ecuadorian film "Que Tan Lejos."* Paper presented at the Undergraduates Honors Conference at the 82nd annual convention of the Southern States Communication Association (SSCA), San Antonio, TX.
- Molina, M.** (2011). *Effect of mock Spanish in Hispanic/Latino students*. Paper presented at the Texas Speech Communication Association Convention (TSCA), Dallas, TX.
- WTAMU Representatives.** (2011, April). *Digital landscape of student publications (a beta test): The revolutionary approach to new media technology and convergence*. Panel presented at the Broadcast Education Association (BEA), Las Vegas, NV.
- Molina, M.** (2011). *Effect of mock Spanish in Hispanic/Latino students*. Poster presented at the 17th annual West Texas A&M University Student Research Conference, Canyon, TX.

Molina, M. (2011). *Finding the hidden needs in Mars M&M campaign: A rhetorical analysis*. Paper presented at the 17th annual West Texas A&M University Student Research Conference, Canyon, TX.

Workshops and Other Presentations

Molina, M. D. (2020, February 24). *Evaluating Content Online: Can we Detect Misinformation?* Hacking the U.S. Election Symposium, Washington D.C.

Molina, M. D. (2015, November 7), Presentation to online education instructors at Universidad San Francisco de Quito, Ecuador, on how to create dynamic and engaging videos for online education.

Molina, M. D. (2015), Media training for Nestlé, Quito, Ecuador. The training covered topics such as group communication, small group communication, how to create effective presentations, among others.

Molina, M. D. (2011). Presentation to High School Students from the Texas Panhandle. The workshop covered reporting and interviewing strategies and was part of the 2011 Texas Association of Journalism Educators Biennial Workshop.

Research Experience

- **Project Coordinator, National Science Foundation Fake News Grant (PI: Dr. Dongwon Lee and Dr. S. Shyam Sundar):** Donald P. Bellisario College of Communications, Pennsylvania State University (Fall 2017 – present).
 - Coordinating efforts with Information Science Technology research team.
 - Managing a research team involved in design of experiments.
 - Design of research project, data analysis, and report writing.
 - Protocol development for Institutional Review Board.
- **Project Coordinator, WhatsApp Misinformation Grant (PI: Dr. S. Shyam Sundar):** Donald P. Bellisario College of Communications, Pennsylvania State University (Fall 2018 – Summer 2019).
 - Managing a research team involved in design of experiments, data analysis, and report writing.
 - Protocol development for Institutional Review Board.
- **Lab Group Coordinator, Dr. S. Shyam Sundar:** Donald P. Bellisario College of Communications, Pennsylvania State University (August 2018 – August 2020).
 - Managing and coordinating weekly meetings.
 - Collaboration on research projects.

Grant Writing Experience

- **Seeing is Believing: Is Video Modality More Powerful in Spreading Fake News? (August 2018).** WhatsApp Research Awards for Social Science and Misinformation, PI: Dr. S. Shyam Sundar (Funded).
 - Involved in writing and submitting the grant.
 - Protocol development, design of research project, data analysis, and report writing.

- **Bandwagon Effect: How Other Users Make Us Susceptible to Fake News (August 2018).** WhatsApp Research Awards for Social Science and Misinformation, PI: Dr. S. Shyam Sundar (Not Funded).
 - Involved in writing and submitting the grant.
 - Involved with budget development for grant submission.
 - Budget development for grant submission
- **Misinformation Solution Forum – Graduate Student Fellowship (October 2018).** Rita Allen Foundation, Craig Newmark Philanthropies and Democracy Fund (Funded).
 - Served as discussant during the forum sessions providing context on critiques and pointing opportunities relevant to the misinformation solution finalist project.
 - Provided written feedback regarding one of six finalist projects.
- **PhDigital Bootcamp: Preparing Future Faculty to Lead Innovative Curriculum (May 2018).** Knight Foundation (Funded).
 - Participated on the hybrid (online and in-person) workshop covering emerging media, digital scholarship, and curriculum design in a digital world.
 - Learned about the efficient use of new media technologies including, social media analytics, digital product management, data journalism, web development and basic Java Script, computational data, drone journalism.
- **Pennsylvania State University Global Programs Travel Grant (Spring 2018 & Spring 2019).** Pennsylvania State University (Funded).
 - Involved in writing and submitting the grant.
- **Can Machines be Trained to Detect Fake News Better than Humans? (August 2017).** National Science Foundation, PI: Dr. Dongwon Lee and Dr. S. Shyam Sundar (Funded).
 - Involved in writing the grant. Assisted the PIs with literature review and draft revision.
- **Fit-ting in: The Role of Identity Customization in Online Learning Communities (2017).** Penn State Center for Online Innovation in Learning (COIL) Research Initiation Grant Program (Not Funded).
 - Research PI.
 - Writing and submission of grant.

Teaching Experience

- **Instructor of Record:**
 - **PR 305: Methods of Public Relations Inquiry**, September 2020 – December 2020
Department of Advertising and Public Relations, College of Communication Arts and Sciences, Michigan State University.
 - **COMM 304: Research Methods, Undergraduate Level**, August 2019– December 2019
Department of Film-Video and Media Studies, Donald P. Bellisario College of Communications, Pennsylvania State University.
 - **COMM 110: Media and Democracy, Undergraduate Level**, June 2018 – August 2018
Department of Film-Video and Media Studies, Donald P. Bellisario College of Communications, Pennsylvania State University.
 - **English (Online), Undergraduate Level**, January 2015 – December 2016
Instituto de Lenguas Extranjeras, Universidad San Francisco de Quito, Ecuador.

- **English, Undergraduate Level**, June 2014 - December 2014
Instituto de Lenguas Extranjeras, Universidad San Francisco de Quito, Ecuador.
- **Business English, Corporate Training**, June 2014 – September 2014
Instituto de Lenguas Extranjeras, Universidad San Francisco de Quito, Ecuador.
- **Public Speaking, Corporate Training**, June 2014 – August 2014
Instituto de Lenguas Extranjeras, Universidad San Francisco de Quito, Ecuador.
- **COMM 265: Principles of Human Communication (Online), Undergraduate Level**, May 2013 – June 2013
Communication Studies Department, New Mexico State University.
- **COMM 265: Principles of Human Communication, Lab Section, Undergraduate Level**, August 2012 – May 2014
Communication Studies Department, New Mexico State University.

- **Teaching Assistant**
 - **COMM 517: Psychology of Communication Technology, Graduate Level**, January 2019 – May 2019
Department of Film-Video and Media Studies, Donald P. Bellisario College of Communications, Pennsylvania State University.
 - **COMM 506: Research Methods, Graduate Level**, August 2016 – December 2016 & August 2017 – December 2017
Department of Film-Video and Media Studies, Donald P. Bellisario College of Communications, Pennsylvania State University.
 - **COMM 118: Introduction to Media Effects, Undergraduate Level**, August 2016 – December 2016
Department of Film-Video and Media Studies, Donald P. Bellisario College of Communications, Pennsylvania State University.

- **Educational Development**
 - **Graduate Student Online Teaching Certificate**, Fall 2018
Pennsylvania State University.
 - **Practices to Improve the Academic Level of Online Classes**, November 7, 2015
Universidad San Francisco de Quito, Ecuador.
 - **The Role of the Instructor in the XXI Century**, August 27, 2015
 - **Advanced Instructional Strategies in the Virtual Classroom**, May 25, 2015
5-week course by University of California, Irvine offered through Coursera.
 - **Performance Assessment in the Virtual Classroom**, June 23, 2015
5-week course by University of California, Irvine offered through Coursera.
 - **How to Motivate and Interact with Online Students?** March 21, 2015
Universidad San Francisco de Quito, Ecuador.
 - **Teaching Scholars**, Spring 2014
New Mexico State University.
Effective teaching methodology and course design. The program specifically explored three areas of course design: (1) learning objectives, (2) assessment, and (3) pedagogy.
 - **Preparing Future Faculty Program**, 2013-2014

- New Mexico State University.
Nationwide program designed to develop the next generation of faculty at community colleges and institutions of higher education.
- **Teaching Academy “Team Mentoring for Grads” program**, November 2013
 New Mexico State University.
The program consisted of (1) weekly group meeting to support new teachers and share experiences (2) mentoring sessions with a professor to get advice on teaching strategies and other topics of relevance.

Industry Experience

- **Content Developer**, October 2014 – July 2016
 Online Education, Universidad San Francisco de Quito, Ecuador.
Creation of multimedia and interactive content for online classes, training teachers on good online education practices, and planning the development of Master Courses.
- **Accreditation Online Journalism**, May 2015
 Universidad San Francisco de Quito, Ecuador.
Helped writing the documents necessary for the accreditation process of the new online journalism program.
- **Confucius Institute Course Development**, April 2015
Development and design of online Spanish course for Chinese students.
- **Copenhagen Consensus Center Organizer**, March 2015
Organized the Post-2015 Consensus Youth Forum in Quito-Ecuador.
- **Graduate Assistant**, May 2013 – August 2013
 International Border Programs, New Mexico State University.
Assisted in logistics and coordination of the Ecuadorian government-sponsored program Go-Teachers. The program had the objective of sending Ecuadorian high school teachers to American Universities to learn pedagogical practices to teach English.
- **Consulting**, Fall 2012
 Jardín de los Niños, Las Cruces, NM.
Consulted as part of a class project for the non-profit organization and developed a report with suggestions to improve communication and media use across the organization.
- **Production Assistant**, July 2, 2012 - August 2, 2012
 180 Grados Producciones,
Ecuadorian television production company.
- **Editor**, August 2010 – May 2012
 The Prairie, West Texas A&M University’s student-run newspaper.
- **Editor Intern**, May 2011 – August 2011
 Top O’ Texas Football Magazine.
- **Radio News Package Production**, Spring 2010
 KWTS staff member, News Team.
- **Radio Host**, Fall 2010
 NotiU radio show in Spanish.
- **Reporter Intern**, Summer 2010
 30 Plus.

- Ecuadorian investigative journalism television program.*
- **News Director**, Spring 2010
Campus Beat Spanish.
Started the student organization, which produced news stories that aired on Telemundo, Amarillo, TX.
- **Character Generator**, Spring 2010
Live Crew.
Produced sports broadcast for West Texas A&M football and basketball games.
- **Reporter**, August 2009 - December 2009
Campus Beat.
Produced news stories that aired on KFDA NewsChannel 10, Amarillo, TX.

Professional Development

- **Professional Presentation Training: Improve the User Experience of your CHI Presentation**, May 6, 2019
CHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems.
- **Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly Reviewer Training Program**, 2018-2019
- **Teaching Academy “Unlocking the Door to Academic Publishing”: Writing Templates and Text-Structured Analysis**, July 31, 2013
New Mexico State University.

Honors and Awards

- **2019 AEJMC News Audience Research Paper Award**, August 2019
Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication.
- **Third Place Student Research Competition**, May 2019
CHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems.
- **Excellence in Communications Doctoral Award (Funding Source: Dr. Marie Hardin and Mr. Jerry Kammer)**, May 2019
Donald P. Bellisario College of Communications, Pennsylvania State University.
- **International Communication Association Travel Grant**, May 2018
- **International Communication Association Travel Grant – Communication and Technology Division**, May 2018
- **Second Place Graduate Exhibition Award**, Spring 2018
Pennsylvania State University.
- **Outstanding Graduate Student Award for the College of Arts and Sciences**, 2013-2014
New Mexico State University.
- **Honors Graduate Student**, Spring 2014
New Mexico State University.
- **Teaching Academy Distinguished Member**, 2013-2014
New Mexico State University.
- **Rebecca M. Verser Memorial Scholarship**, 2014
New Mexico State University.
- **Raymond J. and Nylda L. Zakahi Endowment Scholarship**, 2013-2014
New Mexico State University.
- **Research Award, Communication Studies Program**, 2012

- West Texas A&M University.
- **Outstanding GPA, Communication Studies Program, 2012**
West Texas A&M University.
 - **Top GPA Senior, Communication Studies Program, 2012**
West Texas A&M University.
 - **Frank Buckley Scholarship, 2012**
Texas Intercollegiate Press Association.
 - **First Place Spanish News Writing On-Site Competition, 2012**
Texas Intercollegiate Press Association.
 - **Second Place General Column, 2012**
Texas Intercollegiate Press Association.
 - **Third Place Best Recurring Podcast, 2012**
Texas Intercollegiate Press Association.
 - **Honorable Mention Spanish News Writing, 2012**
Texas Intercollegiate Press Association.
 - **Honorable Mention Photo Illustration, 2012**
Texas Intercollegiate Press Association.
 - **Second Place Audio News Package, 2011**
South Central Regional Conference and Competition, National Broadcasting Society.
 - **Honorable Mention Spanish News Reporting On-Site Competition, 2011**
Texas Intercollegiate Press Association.
 - **First Place Undergraduate Poster Presentation, 2011**
17th Annual West Texas A&M University Student Research Conference.
 - **Third Place Communications Oral Presentation, 2011**
17th Annual West Texas A&M University Student Research Conference.
 - **The Good Neighbor Scholarships, 2009 – 2010, 2010 – 2011, 2011–2012**
West Texas A&M University.
 - **President’s Honor Roll at West Texas A&M University, Fall 2008- 2010.**
West Texas A&M University.
 - **Outstanding Undergraduate, Communication Studies Program, 2010-2011**
West Texas A&M University.
 - **Top GPA Junior, Communication Studies Program, 2010-2011**
West Texas A&M University.
 - **Top GPA Sophomore, Speech Communication Program, 2009-2010**
West Texas A&M University.

Service

- **Journal Reviewer**
 - Health Communication.
 - Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly.
- **Conference Reviewer**
 - International Communications Association (ICA).
 - National Communications Association (NCA).
 - Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC)

- **PR Chair**, August 2013 – May 2014
Communication Studies Graduate Student Association, New Mexico State University.
Initiated a monthly newsletter for the Communication Studies Department.
- **Faculty Liaison**, August 2012 - August 2013
Communication Studies Graduate Student Association, New Mexico State University.
- **Parliamentarian**, March 2011 – March 2012
Texas Intercollegiate Press Association (TIPA).

Skills and Software Proficiency

- JMP, SPSS, AMOS, Adobe Photoshop, Avid Editing Software, Final Cut Editing Software, SoftChalk, Articulate Engage, Articulate Presenter.
- Basic: data journalism and computational data analysis (data scraping, topic modeling), web development (HTML, CSS, Java Script), social media analytics, digital product management, Adobe Audition, Adobe After Effects, R Studio.

Academic Affiliation

- Student Member, Association for Computing Machinery (ACM).
- Student Member, International Communication Association (ICA).
- Student Member, National Communication Association (NCA).
- Student Member, Association of Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC).