

25th ISOJ Opening Remarks

- ISOJ Emcee: **Summer Harlow**, associate director, **Knight Center**
 - **Rosental Calmon Alves**, founder and director, **ISOJ/Knight Center**
 - **Rachel Davis Mersey**, dean, **Moody College of Communication, UT Austin**
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Summer Harlow [00:00:46] Good morning. Woohoo, are we excited for ISOJ? Yeah, all right. I am Summer Harlow for those of you who don't know me, I'm the Associate Director of the Knight Center for Journalism in the Americas and welcome to the 25th anniversary of ISOJ. I am so happy to have all of you ISOJers here to celebrate this very special occasion with us.

It's hard to believe that 25 years ago we were singing along with Prince to "party like it's 1999" and we were all freaking out about the havoc that Y2K was going to bring. And 25 years ago, I was still a student. I was studying something called computer assisted reporting and I was convinced that I was going to be a print journalist. So what a thrill and a surprise that it is to my younger self to be here today, kicking off the best conference in the galaxy, as we so humbly like to say, that for a quarter of a century has been at the forefront of journalism's digital evolution.

There are more than 400 people here from around the world, and more than 500 people participating online and all of that just demonstrates how truly global and hybrid this conference has become since Rosenthal Alvez first created it back in 1999. At this year's conference, we have created so many opportunities for all of you to connect with each other over the next two days. We've got coffee breaks where you can meet up with people, we have lunch, we have tables in the back where you can learn about the different sponsors of ISOJ. And then of course we have tonight's reception and then online we have meet and greets with the speakers for the people who are participating through our virtual experience. If you are here in person in Austin or online, if you haven't already signed up for the new ISOJ Slack workspace, make sure you do so, because there are going to be so many great conversations that are going to be taking place on Slack over the next couple of days. In the various channels that we have set up for you, you can find a spot for Q&A; so for when you want to ask questions of the panelists, go to Slack into the Q&A channel and put your questions there. We also have the opportunity, though, for you to put your questions in a Google Doc and there is a QR code for you to be able to access that Google Doc. So make sure you take a quick snap of that now so that later on, when you have questions for any of the panelists throughout the next couple of days, you can be sure and put your questions there. But, like I said, you can also put your questions into Slack, other channels that we have on Slack. We have the lounge where you can hang out and talk to your fellow participants around the world. We have one for our Spanish speaking participants. And then we would like you to leave a message about what ISOJ means for you. So we have the 25th anniversary guest book channel on Slack as well.

I attended my first ISOJ back in 2005, and it's hard to verbalize how much I have learned from and been inspired by ISOJ over the years. One thing I know for certain, though, is how amazing the line of lineup of speakers and panel topics is for this 25th anniversary, and I can't wait to see

what the next 25 years will bring. Now, just a couple of quick housekeeping notes before I bring out the man of the hour. We have live interpretation into Spanish with headsets in the back passageway there. And if you're following online, if you click the interpretation globe on your Zoom screen, you can select the Spanish channel to listen to in Spanish. Lastly, I want to take a moment to thank this year's sponsors, including the Knight Foundation and Google News Initiative, who are two major sponsors that have loyally supported ISOJ throughout the years. I also want to thank our other sponsors, the International Fund for Public Interest Media, Type Network, the Center for News, Technology and Innovation, John S. Knight Journalism Fellowships, News Pack, the News Product Alliance, and UT's Moody College of Communication. Now, without further ado, I want to introduce to you the person who started it all, the founder and director of the Knight Center for Journalism in the Americas and creator of ISOJ. Please join me in a big round of applause for Rosental Alvez.

Rosental Alves [00:06:05] Good Morning America! This is this is how I start my my classes, every day here and even when they schedule a class in the afternoon, I do "Good Morning America." But today, I have to say good afternoon and good evening also because it is a real global event now. And we are like, Summer said, we have tons of people. I mean, in the first ISOJ in 1999, Janine Warren, who is here, was there, and others will remember that even in that time we would do the streaming and streaming at the time it wasn't real video and you had to get the app and we knew that basically zero people were watching because there was not broadband. But the reality is that, you know, the millions of people around the world who are seeing us. Now, it is I mean, like Summer said, we had more than 500 people registered for the, virtual experience that I want to put a sort of a trademark on that, saying beyond streaming, because as she was saying, we have lots of perks for people who are seeing from outside and there are dozens of countries, I think that we are in, in most of the time zones, we have people. And if you if you go to Slack, you're going to see the conversations that are already going on that, it's not been easy to put together this conference, you know, this year initially I would do it alone, but since 2003, I was lucky to have, every year, the help of the small team of the Knight Center for Journalism in the Americas at the Moody College.

I am so grateful to my Knight Center colleagues, like Summer Harlow, you have just heard from her, our associate director, that is merely the program coordinator and a dozen of other Knight Center colleagues, who really put together this conference. This year I also have a special thanks to Roger Black, the designer who has been venerated by the newspaper industry for many, many years, who offered last year to us, his pro bono work to help us with the design that is reflected in the quality of the our logo and, you know, our visual communication this year. I feel very lucky, to be at the University of Texas at Austin that, offers a space and support for faculty members, like me to, to be entrepreneurial and create crazy projects like ISOJ or the online courses that we have been offering to journalists from around the world who had, reached more than 300,000 people, students, and participants in our online courses in the last decade, and other projects that that we created. I have always counted with the institutional support of the Moody College of Communication and its School of Journalism and Media. So I'm very grateful to them.

ISOJ has become bigger and much, much more expensive to put together. But we kept it accessible by charging low fees for participation. And as Summer mentioned, that is only possible because of the support of our sponsors: Knight Foundation that has been with us since the very beginning. Not only helping the ISOJ but all other programs of the Knight Chair in Journalism that I'm honored to hold along with the UNESCO Chair in Communication. Also Google News Initiative that has been a major supporter for the last ten years, is the 10th anniversary of their support, so I'm very grateful for that too. The International Fund for Independent Media, there is a very interesting, new organized organization that is helping independent journalism all over the world. The TN type network that Roger founded and. Also CNTI, The Center for News Technology and Innovation. That is also a new organization that they have a table out outside, Amy Mitchell will be here explaining what they are doing, but extraordinary work they did. The JSK Journalism Fellowship at Stanford University, the News PAC, who is helping us again this year and the News Product Alliance and also my own Moody College of Community Communication.

And now, it is my pleasure to introduce you to the new dean of the Moody College Dr. Rachel Davis Mercy. She was gracious to honor ISOJ, kind of a tradition of having the dean coming here to help me to welcome all of you and for the first time, I'm asking the dean not only to do that, but also to moderate a panel that she is going to do this morning. A very important panel, the panel on press for this, incredible initiative. So, thank you very much and enjoy ISOJ, the best conference in the galaxy and vicinity. And now my wonderful dean here.

Rachel Davis Mercy [00:12:56] I learned so many things from my colleague Rosental. One is that I'm allowed to call it ISOJ, and two, that I'm the first dean that has been able to moderate another panel, so thank you for that. I should warn you, here at the University of Texas at Austin, we wear orange on Fridays. So, I want to prepare anyone online who's looking at this wondering why that lady wore that bright orange sweater on Friday. That's sort of part of the job of being a dean here.

I'm delighted to be here to welcome you to the 2024 International Symposium on Online Journalism. Since 1999...ISOJ now I can't get ISOJ out of my mind, has hosted journalists, scholars, students and media executives from around the world to discuss the impact of the digital revolution on journalism. This year, we celebrate its 25th year milestone. This symposium is organized by the Moody College's Knight Center for Journalism in the Americas, which was founded by Rosental Alves with the mission of educating journalists around the world through professional training and outreach. The real purpose I am here for today is I want to recognize Rosental for his dedication to uplifting journalists and championing press freedom from around the world. Both the Knight Center and ISOJ are a testament to the visionary spirit of the Moody College and UT Austin. We take seriously UT's mission "What starts here changes the world." This conference has been a beacon of knowledge and an annual barometer for the transformation of our industry through the years. Throughout the next couple of days, you and your fellow attendees from around the world, both here on campus and online, will have the privilege of learning about the pressing issues journalism is facing today. From the impact of generative AI to the ways we reach young audiences, to the challenges journalists face in

countries with governments hostile to press freedom. As Rosental mentioned, I'm looking forward to moderating a panel here soon about the role of philanthropy in revitalizing local news in the United States.

But before we begin all that, I want to echo Rosental's gratitude to all the sponsors of the 25th ISOJ that helped make this conference possible, especially the Knight Foundation, the main funder of the Knight Center, and ISOJ, as well as Google, which has been sponsoring ISOG for more than a decade, thank you. Finally, in true Texas fashion, I would like to invite y'all to celebrate tonight at the Moody Party, a special reception sponsored by our college. The party is becoming an ISOJ tradition, and I'm told by the team here there will be a few surprises tonight. So let's see what's in store and as I started with a little Longhorn Friday orange, I will end with another Texas tradition. Hook 'em.