

## 26th ISOJ Welcome Session

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- ISOJ Emcee: Summer Harlow, associate director, Knight Center
  - Rosental Calmon Alves, founder and director, ISOJ/Knight Center
  - David Ryfe, director and professor, School of Journalism and Media, UT Austin
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**Summer Harlow** There's also QR codes on the table tents in front of you. Slack is where all of you here on campus, as well as those participating virtually, will be able to post questions to our panelists during the panel Q&As. So if you have questions, we're not gonna do the traditional raise your hand and give you a microphone route. Instead, all questions for our panelists will be posed via Slack, so make sure you sign up for Slack. You'll see it's on channel number four that's called Q&A. Slack is also where you'll be able to connect and network, so make sure you stop by channel number three, which is called the ISOJ Lounge, and introduce yourself and say hi to everybody. The more you engage on Slack, the more likely you are to win some special ISOJ giveaways, right? Everybody likes free stuff. We're going to be giving away some free registrations to our amazing Knight Center online courses. Also, as I mentioned, the table tents in front of you have the QR codes, and the Wi-Fi information is also on the table tent in front of you. The QR code will take you to links for the Slack workspace, as I said, but it will also give you the full ISOJ program in English and in Spanish, as well as a list of the speakers.

Other quick bits of information that you probably want to know is we're going to, for lunch, we're going to have boxed salads and sandwiches. They'll be out here in the loja, as I mentioned. Restrooms are located out the left, down the hallway, kind of down the end behind me. Our coffee break meetups will also be out here in the loja, where we just had breakfast. And if you're joining us online, we're sorry that you're gonna miss out on the coffee and the conversation, but don't go anywhere because if you stay on Zoom during the coffee breaks, we're gonna have meet and greets with some of the different panelists. So, you'll get a chance to interact with them one-on-one. And in terms of seating, because I know it got a little bit crowded out there, if you go down the end of the hallway to the Santa Rita room, you'll be able to eat lunch there. You can eat lunch out on the balcony or any other place around here where you can find room. During lunch today, we're going to have a couple of workshops, one in English and one in Spanish, brought to us by the Google News Initiative, and there will also be another Google workshop during lunch tomorrow. So be sure to see your program for full details about where these workshops are and what time they'll be. And if you're participating virtually, you should have already received links for you to be able to attend the workshops.

And then tonight, of course, we're going to celebrate in true ISOJ style with our Moody Party, sponsored by the Moody College of Communication, here at UT, and that's also going to be out in the Loja. I know that social media is a little bit of a hot mess right now. So if you haven't abandoned it entirely, please use our hashtag, which is #ISOJ2025, and post about us on Blue Sky, LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram, anywhere else that you might still have a social media account.

And lastly, I want to take a minute to thank all of our sponsors this year. Our sponsors are central to helping make the 26th ISOJ a success. And so a big round of applause for the Knight Foundation, Google News Initiative, the International Fund for Public Interest Media, Texas Global here at the University of Texas at Austin, The American Press

Institute, the JSK Fellowship Program at Stanford, the Council on Foreign Relations, Uber Waymo, Yahoo News, and UT's Moody College of Communication. We are so grateful for all of their support. Please be sure to check out our sponsor tables that are also in the Loja and give them a little ISOJ appreciation.

And I also wanna give a special thanks to my Knight Center team. Teresa, Hugo, Maria, Camila, Michael, Veronica, Felipe, and Jorge. They have done an amazing job helping put this incredible event together while still keeping everything we do at the Knight Center, from our online courses program to our trilingual digital magazine and newsletter, going and running smoothly. So I just want to make sure that they know how much we appreciate their work. Now, it's time to introduce the person who started this all, Knight Center Founder and Director and ISOJ founder, Rosental Alves.

**Rosental Alves** Thank you, Summer. Thank you very much. And like I start my classes here at UT: Good morning, America. That's my style for many years. But here I have to say: Good morning, world. And, as I always say, very modestly, let's have the best journalism conference in the galaxy and beyond. Let's rock and roll. Woo! So welcome to all of you from dozens of countries, whether you are here coming from distant lands or are joining us through our innovative remote participation system, which goes far beyond simple conference streaming that you see everywhere.

For the 26th time, I have the honor to open another international symposium on online journalism at University of Texas at Austin. I had the idea of creating this annual conference during the academic year of 1998, 1999, at the dawn of a new century. Of course, I couldn't have imagined back then that ISOJ would still be going strong, well into the first quarter of the 21st century. But we are still here.

Once again, hundreds of journalists, media executives, journalism professors, and the students are gathered, both in person and online, to address some of the most pressing challenges facing journalism during this long ongoing transition to the digital era. When ISOJ began in 1999, the dot-com bubble hadn't yet peaked. Google had just been created and was still a small startup. In the news industry, especially in the still highly profitable newspaper sector, most people, leaders and journalists alike were skeptical about the internet's potential impact on their business. Over the years, ISOJ has helped thousands of people understand the profound changes brought about by the web, social media, mobile devices, and other digital communication technologies, changes that have reshaped journalism, our lives, and our fundamental rights to access and share information. Back then, I was often called an exaggerator. Some people still referred to the internet as a fad that would go away. I remember being introduced at a conference as a cyber enthusiast. I responded, "Yes, I am a cyber-enthusiast, but rest assured I am not a cyber utopian." In fact, ISOJ was created precisely because I believed we were entering dangerous uncharted waters, while many in traditional media insisted it was just business as usual. They reminded us that newspapers had survived the arrival of radio, and radio had survived television, each time with some adaptations. They claimed the web was just another medium, and traditional media would adapt as it always had. That idea was well articulated in *Mediamorphosis: Understanding New Media*, a 1997 book by Roger Fidler, a great guy from Knight Ridder, a pioneer in bringing computers into newsrooms in the United States. I was impressed by the book, but in 1999, the same year I launched ISOJ, I also presented a paper in a conference that later was published in a British journal, arguing that what lay ahead would be much more dramatic. Instead of mere metamorphosis, I proposed a more radical term, *mediacide*, as in homicide, suicide. I predicted that the death of the old media system and the rise of a new digital media

ecosystem, one that would grow radically different from what came before. 26 years later it remains vital to have a space like this to discuss ongoing impact of the digital revolution on journalism and how journalism must continue to transform in order to survive in and thrive amid new technological shocks and aftershocks.

Today, we stand at the edge of another digital tsunami. The rapid development of artificial intelligence. I admit, I have a sense of *deja vu*. I feel the same excitement about the potential of AI to transform journalism, given its vast and powerful impact. But if you call me an AI enthusiast, I will repeat my old caveat. "Yes, I am an AI enthusiast, but I am not an AI utopian." Once again, we are navigating dangerous, very dangerous, uncharted water. The program we are about to begin continues ISOJ's tradition of focusing on the most urgent and relevant issues facing journalists and news organizations today, including, of course, the impact of AI. As in past years, we'll explore how journalists and news organizations are responding to attacks by their own governments, especially in this era of democratic backsliding and mis- and dis- information at epidemic levels. Hostility toward the press has even increased here in the United States of America, and that will also be an important part of the conversation at ISOJ.

I want to conclude by thanking all of the sponsors that Summer has just mentioned, but especially Knight Foundation and Google. Without Knight Foundation, I wouldn't be here. I moved to this country from my native Brazil 29 years ago to become the Knight Chair in International Journalism at UT Austin. Later I founded the Knight Center for Journalism in the Americas, which organizes this event. And here, a huge thank you to the Knight Center's amazing team, especially Summer, Teresa Mioli, and their teams that have been doing the hard work. We would not be here without them. In the beginning, I would do everything. Then, there was this very small team. Now we have wonderful and creative people. And I thank you, Google, which has supported ISOJ for 12 years, 12 consecutive years, so that is really amazing. I also want to thank the University of Texas at Austin for the ongoing support. And now, I'd like to invite Dr. David Ryfe, Director of our School of Journalism and Media at the Moody College of Communication, to say a few words on behalf of UT Austin to welcome you all to ISOJ and to our beautiful campus. Thank you very much.

**David Ryfe** Good morning. So I came to my first ISOJ conference nearly 15 years ago as a newly minted associate professor, and I have to admit to you that at the time, I didn't get it. I'd attended lots of conferences by that time, of course, mostly with academics and sometimes with professional journalists, but never with both of them in the same room. ISOJ was that, and it was a global event. There were people from all over the world at this conference. I was happy to be there, and I had a great experience, but I didn't quite understand Rosental's vision, what he was trying to get at. But I kept coming back, and as the issues journalism faces kept piling up, it began to make sense to me. Rosental was bringing together journalists and academics because journalism needs the best thinking it can get. The smartest minds talking with one another and learning from one another. And though it doesn't face exactly the same issues, journalism, everywhere, faces the same sorts of issues. So in true Rosental fashion, he asked, "Why limit ourselves to one country? Why not bring people from all over the globe talking about these issues?"

Today, ISOJ is one of the most unique and uniquely excellent journalism conferences around the world. I can't thank Rosental, and Summer, and the rest of the Knight Center staff enough for all that they've done to put this conference together, and we couldn't be prouder to host this conference in Moody College. Yet again, this year, Rosental and his staff have brought together a sterling group of speakers and panelists to engage many of

the most pressing issues facing journalism, and I don't want to keep you from them any longer. So on behalf of the School of Journalism and Media and Moody College, welcome to the 2025 ISOJ Conference.

I'm going to introduce our first panel today. It is moderated by Jim Brady, Vice President of Journalism for the Knight Foundation, and is called "Creating Funds to Finance Journalism in the U.S. and Around the World." Jim and panelists, do you guys want to come up?