

Research Statement

My research takes an intersectional approach in exploring information needs, users, and creators in information seeking communities. My research brings together a critical history of information technologies, the social implications of the Internet and information policy in the United States, and the co-constructions of information technologies with intersectional identities, such as race, class, and gender. I am specifically concerned with the design and use of information and communication technologies by underrepresented groups in the United States and the information seeking practices of marginal communities, including Latina information laborers in telecommunication to Latina/o librarians' socio-techno practices. I examine issues of equity and access in the organization of knowledge with information technologies.

Current Research

My dissertation research "Latina Information Workers in Telecommunications: Intersectional Experiences in the Bell System," is concerned with the invisible information labor that Latinas have participated in and contributed to since the 1970s. Through qualitative interviews and archival research, this research concludes that Latina narratives of information technology practices are critical in analyzing the political economies of digital capitalism and information communication technologies. I will have a chapter published in the forthcoming book *The Intersectional Internet: Race, Sex, Class and Culture Online*, edited by new media scholars André Brock, Safiya Noble, and Brendesha Tynes. This book is in preparation for Peter Lang Digital Editions series and will be a major contribution to the study of race, gender, and sexuality on the Internet by emerging and established critical Internet, media and information scholars. The chapter, titled "Latina Information Labor in Telecommunications" discusses how the EEOC v. AT&T case considered and neglected Latina information workers, and the resulting impact on Latinas in telecommunication and in technological fields more broadly. Using archival documents, this research argues that the historical moment, the 1973 EEOC-AT&T case and consent decree, sets a precedent for the underrepresentation of Latinas in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) fields today. Latina testimonials and detailed records kept by the Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund (MALDEF) and the California Rural Legal Assistance (CRLA) demonstrate that Latinas were denied promotions and jobs that were sophisticated in information technologies, and generally discriminated against based on their Spanish surnames.

My article "Latina Narratives of Information Technologies: Towards a Critical Latina Technology Studies" was published in the open access peer reviewed journal *Media-N*. This article utilizes qualitative interviews with Latina information workers to initiate a critical history of Latinas and information technologies, investigating how Latinas analyze and use information technologies in their professional and private lives, and the particular insights that Latina information workers have on the history of telecommunications. Latina information workers' oral histories demonstrate that Latinas apply a critical lens to their information labor in telecommunications. Latinas are both resistant to and compliant with the technological determinism and power structures of

information technology sectors in the United States. *Media-N* is a journal that promotes academic inquiry into new media research. Publishing in a mix of emerging open access journals and well-established journals is part of my intellectual contribution, where a commitment by digital media scholars is growing in support of these types of peer-reviewed scholarly publication channels.

In the areas of Latina/o technological and information practices, I have a forthcoming article in *Latino Studies* titled “Latina/o Librarian Technological Engagements: REFORMA in the Digital Age.” This article discusses the history of information technology activism by Latina/o librarians in the professional organization REFORMA. In this article, I argue that Latina/o librarian involvement in advocacy and activism for Latina/o rights in librarianship and information access were critical to Latina/os emergence in the Digital Age. By creating websites, using digital tools to organize for Latina/o rights, and dialoging with new technologies in the library, Latina/o librarians resisted the ‘librarian as neutral’ narrative and actively utilized and challenged new media for Latina/o rights in and out of the library. *Latino Studies* is an international peer reviewed journal that publishes articles from leading scholars in the field of Latina/o Studies.

Research Goals

Over the next several years, I intend to build a research portfolio that expands my work on digital information services for marginalized communities, with particular attention to different generations of migrants in the U.S. This work will look at the information and technology needs of recent Latina migrants and their children. I approach this work with the intent to learn *how* migrants seek information in lieu of information services, in order to understand how information technologies and platforms may improve their services and access to those more vulnerable populations. I take a critical information studies approach, which questions the racial and gendered systems of information organization access, in parallel with those digital information-seeking behaviors of recent migrants. Current information seeking behaviors are important in the development of access to information technologies for underrepresented groups. This research will use participant observation, qualitative interviews, and surveys in order to get a well-rounded understanding of migrant information needs. My research provides an important contribution to critical information behavior seeking and practices.

In addition to my research on migrants’ information seeking behaviors, I plan to collaborate with Dr. Safiya Noble, Assistant Professor at the Department of Information Studies at the University of California Los Angeles, on a multiple-campus initiative focused on deep-seated discriminations against women of color in the information sciences. Currently, there is a dearth of recruitment and retention of women of color into the information sciences and related information technology fields. This project will take a mixed methods approach of data mining and qualitative interviews to looking at macro- and micro- forms of discrimination that contribute to the low employment numbers of Latina and black women in information technology professions. This relatively new line

of investigation will be published in a series of articles as well as formatted for a book on diversity in the information sciences.

Within the field of Library and Information Science (LIS), my work seeks to write in the narrative of Latina/os as creators and active challengers to information technologies and the political economy that is organized around information technologies. My intervention in the field of LIS explores how Latina/os resist, critique, create, and explore information and technology sectors in the United States.