

# Pink Toenails and Princess Boys: Contemporary Discourses of Boys' Gender-Fluidity in U.S. Television News

- **Participants:**

Emilie Zaslow, PhD

Associate Professor

Department of Communication Studies



- What are the frames through which soft news reifies the gender binary construct?
- Analysis of four national soft news stories (2010-2012) about boys' gender-fluid expression.
- Identifying limits to U.S. news media's support for small acts of gender non-conformity sheds light on journalists' and publics' negotiations of gender and sexuality at a time in which the ontological state of these constructs is being disrupted and rearticulated.

- Small acts of gender non-conformity received explicit support by newscasters and guest experts.
- Newscaster banter reframed the approbation of gender-fluidity to a more traditional characterization of gender as an immutable binary construct.
- Used four discursive frames:
  - the avowal of gender- fluid expression as acceptable only when child's play
  - the presentation of boys' mothers as supporting the violation of social norms
  - the positioning of parental acceptance as an act of reluctant resignation
  - the assertion of male news reporters' traditional masculinity and heterosexuality.

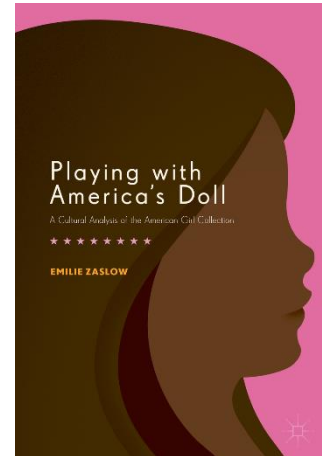
# Playing with America's Doll: A Cultural Analysis of the American Girl Collection

- **Participants:**

Emilie Zaslow, PhD

Associate Professor

Department of Communication Studies



- This critical account of the American Girl brand explores what its books and dolls communicate to girls about femininity, racial identity, ethnicity, and what it means to be an American. Examining the dolls with both a critical eye and a fan's curiosity, Zaslow raises questions about the values espoused by this iconic American brand.

- “Written in a style that makes its incisive arguments accessible to any audience, the book beautifully elucidates American Girl's conflicting logics regarding race, ethnicity, gender, agency, social activism, and consumption.” —Sarah Projansky, Associate Dean Faculty & Academic Affairs, College of Fine Arts, Professor, Film and Media Studies & Gender Studies, University of Utah, USA

- Participants
- Mary Ann Murphy, PhD
- S. J. Min, PhD
- Communication Studies, NYC



## Purpose

This study examined how verbal message production is impacted by the power bases embedded in a regulative communicative situation and the method of communication impacted the character and quality of the message produced by the speaker in the situation. We approached our work from the perspective of Message Design Logic, a theory of communication that argues that verbal messages are generated by one of three theories of what messages can accomplish: expressive, conventional, and rhetorical.

## Specific Research Aims

- 120 subjects were presented with a communicative situation that involved regulating the errant behavior of another.
- The dependent variable in the situation was message design logic.
- The independent variables were the power base of the message producer and the mode of communication.
- The relationship between the target and the speaker was manipulated to be either symmetrical or asymmetrical: half of the students were assigned a role of legitimate authority in the situation and half of the subjects were assigned the role of equal standing.
- The mode of communication was either face-to-face or through texting.

Participants:  
Adam Klein, PhD  
Communication Studies  
Published 2017, Palgrave Macmillan



Fig. 3.1 Model of Information Laundering in Cyberspace

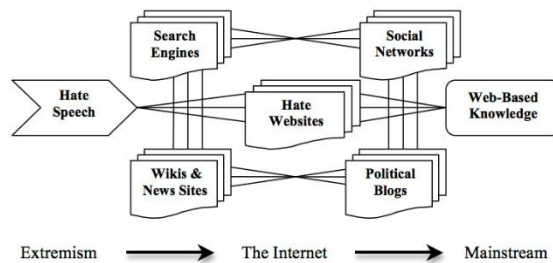
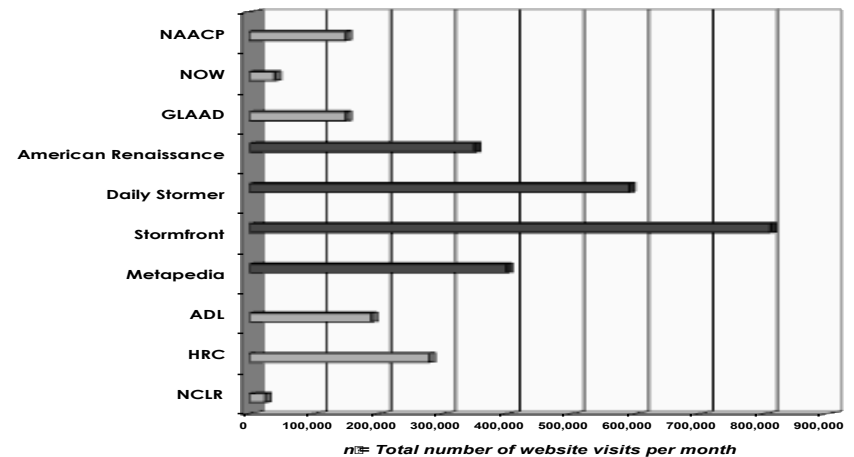


Fig. 5.1 Snapshot of Web-Traffic Activity  
Three Month Average in 2016



## Goals:

Exploring how hate groups, terrorist networks, and political extremists utilize the web to grow their movements, coalesce w/ others, and launder hateful narratives into mainstream spaces.

*How do racist conspiracies infiltrate today's political blogs and social networks to corrupt our cultural discourse?*

## Research Foci

**Idea #1-** Many hate groups have remade their profiles online, trading yesterday's swastikas and white power themes for today's political blogs and news forums. The trappings may have changed but the bigotry remains.

**Idea #2-** The interconnected web allows racist ideas to travel at a breathtaking pace, from hate websites to popular political blogs and social networks like Twitter. From there they may graduate onto the political stage. "Birtherism" and many other culture war conspiracies were born this way.