

## Merriah Croston, MPH

mcroston@wustl.edu

*Curriculum Vitae*

### **I. PERSONAL INFORMATION**

#### **Education**

May 2025 (expected)	Ph.D.	Public Health Sciences, Washington University in St. Louis, St. Louis, MO <i>Dissertation:</i> “Black people cannot get coronavirus” and other myths: The prevalence and diffusion of COVID-19 misinformation narratives on Black Twitter <i>Committee:</i> Jenine Harris (chair), Douglas Luke, Ruopeng An, Matthew Keuter, Raven Maragh-Lloyd
2014	M.P.H.	Epidemiology, Emory University, Atlanta, GA
2006	B.S.	Biology, Georgetown University, Washington, DC

#### **Fellowships**

2017 – present	Chancellor’s Fellowship for Graduate Studies Washington University in Saint Louis, Graduate School of Arts and Sciences
2017 – present	Spencer T. & Ann W. Olin Fellowship for Women Washington University in Saint Louis, Graduate School of Arts and Sciences
2022, Summer	Tech Impact Network Dissertation Fellowship Center for Critical Internet Inquiry, University of California, Los Angeles, CA

#### **Recent Awards**

2023, October	Travel award Annual Association of Internet Researchers Conference
2023, June	Travel award International Network of Social Network Analysis, Annual Sunbelt Conference
2022, October	1 <sup>st</sup> place award, 3MT competition Washington University in St. Louis, Graduate School of Arts and Sciences
2022, June	Travel award International Network of Social Network Analysis, Annual Sunbelt Conference
2021, April	Graduate student award, The Association of Women Faculty Washington University in St. Louis

#### **Research Interests**

I study how and why health misinformation spreads on social media and how to combat it. I primarily use observational methods and quantitative approaches to study these areas but have interest in and exposure to experimental methods and qualitative approaches.

## II. RESEARCH AND SCHOLARLY ACTIVITY

### Recent Research Experience

Fall 2019 – present	<b>Lead, Public Health Social</b> Spearheading projects that use social media data to study health misinformation diffusion and intervention tactics
Fall 2023 – present	<b>Collaborator, Pathway to the Professoriate</b> Leading studies that use social media data to examine how anti-Black racism affects Black faculty success, identity construction, and well-being PIs: Renee Cunningham-Williams, PhD & LaShawnda Fields, PhD
Fall 2022 – present	<b>Collaborator, P4PrEP</b> Co-authoring papers that examine the influence of health discussant networks on interest in HIV preexposure prophylaxis in a national sample of Black cisgender women PI: Whitney Irie, PhD
Spring 2021	<b>Collaborator, Investigators Connecting Health and Social Media (iCHASM)</b> Studied vaping behaviors using social media data PI: Patricia Cavazos-Rehg, PhD
Fall 2019 – Spring 2020	<b>Graduate Research Assistant, Outcomes for African American Breast Cancer Patients and Caregivers</b> Facilitated focus group discussions; revised focus group materials; co-authored manuscripts PI: Tess Thompson, PhD
Fall 2019 – Spring 2020	<b>Graduate Research Assistant, #DiversifyTheSyllabi</b> Co-designed a study to examine the representation of women authors in college courses; collected, sampled, managed, and analyzed data; co-authored a manuscript PIs: Jenine Harris, PhD & Amy Eyler, PhD
Fall 2018 – Spring 2019	<b>Graduate Research Assistant, Prosocial Behavior</b> Co-designed an experimental study of the penalties for risk-taking among nonprofits versus for-profit firms; helped with data analysis; co-authored a manuscript; presented findings at conferences PI: Cynthia Cryder, PhD
Fall 2017 – Spring 2018	<b>Graduate Research Assistant, Health Communication Research Laboratory</b> Collaborated on studies of the relationship between basic needs and smoking behaviors; participated in grant-writing; co-authored manuscripts PI: Matthew Kreuter, PhD

### Refereed Conference Presentations

**Croston M.** (2023, December) “*Black people cannot get coronavirus*” and other myths: A social network analysis of COVID-19 misinformation diffusion on Black Twitter. Presented at the Promoting Research in Social Media and Health Symposium. San Francisco, California.

**Croston M.** (2023, June) *The effects of health departments' ego networks on information diffusion during a public health crisis: Twitter as a case study*. Presented at the International Network of Social Network Analysis' 2023 Sunbelt Conference. Portland, Oregon.

**Croston M.** (2022, November) *Twitter's Birdwatch: A case study of crowd-sourced and community-based fact-checking*. Presented at the Community Informatics Research Network's annual conference. Prato, Italy.

**Croston M., Harris J.** (2022, July) *Misinformation Versus Fact-checks: Comparative Analysis of COVID-19 Vaccine-related Retweet Networks*. Presented at the International Network of Social Network Analysis' 2022 Sunbelt Conference. Cairns, Australia.

**Croston M., Harris J.** (2022, June) *What's in a jab?: The spread of COVID-19 vaccine misinformation versus fact-checks on Twitter*. Presented at useR!.

Thompson T., Coats J., **Croston M.**, Motley R., Colditz G., King K., James A. (2020, April) *"I didn't think about me": Perspectives on supportive resources for informal caregivers of Black breast cancer patients*. Presented at Society of Behavioral Medicine 42nd Annual Meeting & Scientific Meeting (virtual).

Thompson T., Coats J., **Croston M.**, Motley R., Colditz G., King K., James A. (2020, November) *"I didn't think about me": Perspectives on supportive resources for informal caregivers of Black breast cancer patients*. Presented at the Siteman Cancer Center Research Symposium (virtual).

Gershon R., Cryder, C., **Croston M.** (2019, October). *Risky Business: The Risk-Reward Trade-off is Different for Nonprofit and For-profit Firms*. Presented at the annual Association for Consumer Research Conference, Atlanta, Georgia.

**Croston M., Gershon R., Cryder, C.** (2019, February). *Risky Business: The Risk-Reward Trade-off is Different for Nonprofit and For-profit Firms*. Presented at the annual Society for Consumer Psychology Conference, Savannah, Georgia.

**Croston M., Kline J., Bish, C., Lilleston, P., Leeks, K., Massoudi, M.** (2016, October). *Evaluating the Associations between Structural and Contextual Characteristics and Productivity among a Network of CDC-funded Prevention Research Centers*. Presented at the annual American Evaluation Association Conference, Atlanta, Georgia.

Kline J., **Croston M.**, Bish, C., Lilleston, P., Leeks, K., Massoudi, M. (2016, September). *Evaluating the Associations between Structural and Contextual Characteristics and Productivity among a Network of CDC-funded Prevention Research Centers*. Presented at 2016 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Evaluation Day, Atlanta, Georgia.

Rabarison K., **Croston M.** (2016, June). *How to measure public health Twitter chat participant engagement*. Presented at the annual National Association of City and County Health Officials Annual Conference, Phoenix, Arizona.

**Croston M., Rabarison K., Bish C.** (2016, June). *Evaluating Participant Engagement during a Public Health Twitter Chat: Insights from #LiveFitNOLA*. Presented at the annual National Association of City and County Health Officials Annual Conference, Phoenix, Arizona.

**Croston M., Shaw C., Rabarison K., Bish C., Lebow-Skelley E., Henry D., Massoudi M.** (2015, November) *Sandbox Play: Potential impact of PRCs' core research projects & intended core research-related*

*partnerships with health departments within the framework of the CDC's Chronic Disease Domains.*  
Presented at 143<sup>rd</sup> Annual American Public Health Association Meeting, Chicago, Illinois.

**Croston M.**, Chandra G., Bish C. (2015, September). *Innovations in Data Collection: Evaluation of the Prevention Research Center Program.* Presented at the 2015 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Evaluation Day, Atlanta, Georgia.

**Croston M.**, Rabarison K., Bish C. (2015, September). *Public Health, Twitter Chats, and Evaluating Participant Engagement: A Case Study.* Presented at the 2015 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Evaluation Day, Atlanta, Georgia.

**Croston M.**, Rabarison K., Bish C. (2015, August). *Public Health, Twitter, and the Big Easy.* Presented at the 2015 National Conference on Health Communication, Marketing, and Media Conference, Atlanta, Georgia.

**Croston M.** (2014, November). *Weight perception and suicide-related outcomes among high school students who were administered the national Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance survey in 2011.* Presented at 142<sup>nd</sup> Annual American Public Health Association Meeting, New Orleans, Louisiana.

### Peer-Reviewed Journal Articles

(under review) **Croston M.**, Wang O. *From AIDS to COVID-19: A scoping review of health misinformation in Black communities in the United States.*

(under review) **Croston M.**, Harris J. *What's in a jab?: The spread of COVID-19 vaccine misinformation versus fact-checks on Twitter.*

Irie W., **Croston M.**, Mahone, A. *The Impact of Providers as Health Discussants on Black Women's Interest in PrEP for HIV Prevention.* Journal of the International Association of Providers of AIDS Care. 2024; 23: 1-7.

Thompson T., Coats J., **Croston M.**, Motley R., Sanders Thompson V., James A., Johnson L. *"We need a little strength as well": Examining the social context of informal caregivers for Black women with breast cancer.* SSM - Qualitative Research in Health. 2024; 342: 116528.

Thompson T., Coats, J., **Croston M.**, Motley R., Colditz, G., King, A., James, A. *An exploration of the needs and experiences of informal caregivers for Black breast cancer patients.* SSM - Qualitative Research in Health. 2022; 2: 1-7.

Garg R., **Croston M.**, Thompson T., McQueen A., Kreuter M. *Correlates of smoking discarded cigarettes in a sample of low-income adults.* Addictive Behaviors. 2022; 128: 107237.

Harris J., **Croston M.**, Hutti E., Eyler, A. *Diversify the syllabi: Underrepresentation of female authors in college course reading.* PLoS ONE. 2020; 15(10): e0239012.

Thompson T., McQueen A., **Croston M.**, Luke A., Caito N., Quinn K., Funaro J., Kreuter M. *Social Needs and Health-Related Outcomes Among Medicaid Beneficiaries.* Health Education and Behavior. 2019: 1-9.

Rabarison K., **Croston M.**, Englar N., Bish C., Flynn, S., Johnson C. *Measuring audience engagement for public health Twitter chats: Insights from #LiveFitNOLA*. Journal of Medical Internet Research. 2017; 3: e34.

Hudson D. Kaphingst K., **Croston M.**, Blanchard M., Goodman M. *Estimates of Mental Health Problems in a Vulnerable Population within a Primary Care Setting*. Journal of Health Care for the Poor and Underserved. 2016; 27: 308–326.

Fell G., Munson A., **Croston M.**, Rosenwald A. *Identification of Yeast Genes Involved in  $K^+$  Homeostasis: Loss of Membrane Traffic Genes Affects  $K^+$  Uptake*. G3. 2011; 1(1): 43-56.

### **III. TEACHING & TUTORING**

2019 – 2023	<b>Statistics Tutor, StatLab</b> Washington University in St. Louis, The Brown School
2021, Spring	<b>Lab Instructor, Applied Linear Regression</b> Washington University in St. Louis, The Brown School Instructor: Shenyang Guo, PhD
2020, Fall	<b>Section Instructor, Public Health Seminar I</b> Washington University in St. Louis, The Brown School
2020, Spring	<b>Lab Instructor, Applied Linear Regression</b> Washington University in St. Louis, The Brown School Instructor: Shenyang Guo, PhD
2019, Fall	<b>Teaching Assistant, Epidemiology</b> Washington University in St. Louis, The Brown School Instructor: Angela Hobson, PhD
2019, Spring	<b>Section Instructor, Public Health Seminar II</b> Washington University in St. Louis, The Brown School
2019, Spring	<b>Lab Instructor, Applied Linear Regression</b> Washington University in St. Louis, The Brown School Instructor: Shenyang Guo, PhD
2018, Fall	<b>Teaching Assistant, Environmental Health</b> Washington University in St. Louis, The Brown School Instructor: Christine Ekenga, PhD
2018, Summer	<b>Teaching Assistant, Health Behavior and Health Education</b> Washington University in St. Louis, The Brown School Instructor: Darrell Hudson, PhD

### **IV. PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE**

2014 – 2017	<b>Health Scientist</b> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention <i>National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion</i> <i>Division of Population Health</i> <i>Applied Research and Translation Branch</i>
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*Prevention Research Centers Program*

2010 - 2014      **Health Research Analyst**  
Northrop Grumman Corporation (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)  
*National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion*  
*Division of Population Health*  
*Applied Research and Translation Branch*  
*Prevention Research Centers Program*

**Health Research Analyst**  
Northrop Grumman Corporation (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)  
*National Center for HIV/AIDS, Viral Hepatitis, STD, and TB Prevention*  
*Division of HIV/AIDS Prevention*  
*Program Evaluation Branch*

2007 - 2010      **Epidemiologist**  
Georgia Department of Community Health  
*Division of Public Health*  
*Epidemiology Branch*  
*Georgia Violent Death Reporting System*

**V. SERVICE & MEMBERSHIPS**

**Invited Talks & Guest Lectures**

**Croston M.** (2023, March) *Health Misinformation & Social Media: Spotting It + Intervention Approaches*. Guest lectured the course *Social Justice and Social Policy* at University of Arkansas. (virtual)

**Croston, M.** & Evers, E. (2019, December). *Professional Development in Public Health*. Guest lectured a cross-cutting themes course at Washington University's Brown School, St. Louis, Missouri.

**Croston M.,** Gershon R., Cryder, C. (2019, March). *Risky Business: The Risk-Reward Trade-off is Different for Nonprofit and For-profit Firms*. Presented at the Spencer T. and Ann W. Olin Fellowship for Women Spring Research Symposium, St. Louis, Missouri.

**Croston M.** (2017, April). *Program Evaluation, Twitter & Public Health*. Guest lectured the course *Public Health and Society* at Washington University's Brown School, St. Louis, Missouri.

**Croston M.,** Shaw C., Rabarison K., Bish C., Lebow-Skelley E., Henry D., Massoudi M. (2016, January) *An Exploratory Study of CDC's Prevention Research Centers, NCCDPHP's Four Domains, and Partnerships with Local, State, and Tribal Health Departments*. Presented at a CDC/NCCDPHP/DPH Applied Research & Translation Branch Meeting, Atlanta, Georgia.

**Croston M.,** Rabarison K. (2016, June). *Public Health, Twitter Chats, and Evaluating Participant Engagement: A Case Study*. Presented at a CDC/NCCDPHP Division of Population Health Scientific Workgroup meeting, Atlanta, Georgia.

Rabarison K., **Croston M.** (2016, May). *How to measure public health Twitter chat participant engagement*. Presented at a CDC/NCCDPHP Training Workgroup meeting, Atlanta, Georgia.

**Croston M.** (2015, November). *Program Evaluation, Twitter & Public Health*. Guest lectured the course *Public Health and Society* at Washington University's Brown School, St. Louis, Missouri.

**Croston M.** (2014, March). *Social Marketing and The Community: An Abbreviated Inventory of Current Research & Practical Methods*. Guest lectured the course *Public Health and Society* at Washington University's Brown School, St. Louis, Missouri.

**Croston M.** (2011) *Social Media and Public Health: Development of a Unique Tool to Aggregate and Uniquely Showcase Twitter Data*. Presented at the unNiche Digital Health Conference, New York City, New York.

### **Journal & Conference Paper Reviewer**

Journal of Public Health Management & Practice (2021, 2023)

American Public Health Association Conference (2022, 2023)

### **Current Professional Membership**

2023 – present            Association of Internet Researchers

2022 – present            International Network for Social Network Analysis

2007 – present            American Public Health Association

## **VI. METHODS & SOFTWARE**

### **Quantitative & Qualitative Methods**

Linear and Generalized Linear Modeling; Social Network Analysis; Content Analysis; Multilevel and Longitudinal Modeling; Structural Equation Modeling

### **Select Software**

R, Stata, SAS, NVivo

## **VII. REFERENCES**

Jenine Harris, PhD (dissertation chair)  
Professor  
Brown School, Washington University in St. Louis  
harrisj@wustl.edu

Douglas Luke, PhD

Irving Louis Horowitz Professor in Social Policy  
Brown School, Washington University in St. Louis  
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Shenyang Guo, PhD  
Frank J. Bruno Distinguished Professor of Social Work Research  
Brown School, Washington University in St. Louis  
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Renee Cunningham-Williams, PhD  
Watts Endowed Professor  
School of Social Work, Arizona State University  
renee.cunningham-williams@asu.edu