

# Cody Hays

Walter Cronkite School of Journalism & Mass Communication, Arizona State University

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## Areas of Expertise

Nonprofit marketing strategist. Strong track record of success streamlining & optimizing nonprofits' marketing activities—areas of expertise span brand identity, website design, fundraising, campaign development, social media strategy, and more.

## Key Words

Attitudes; Conspiracy Theories; Engagement with Science Media; Epistemic Trust; Identity; Media Psychology; Public Understanding of Science; Science Curiosity; Science and Health Misinformation; Science of Science Communication; Views and Values

## Education

**Arizona State University** *August 2023 - May 2027*

Doctorate of Philosophy - Mass Communication & Journalism

Advisor: Dr. Hazel Kwon, PhD

**University of Florida** *December 2018*

Master of Arts in Mass Communication - Digital Strategy Concentration, 3.9 GPA

**Northern Arizona University** *May 2017*

Bachelor of Science in Career and Technical Education - Marketing Concentration, 4.0 GPA

**Murdoch University** (Perth, Australia)

Study Abroad

*January - June 2016*

**Florida State University**

Professional Certification in Trauma and Resilience

*Spring 2022*

## Professional Experience

**Arizona State University, Cronkite School** | Graduate Research Fellow | Aug '23 - present

*The MIDaS Lab is a team of researchers studying today's world of media, focusing on how people use and understand news and information, especially when it comes to big topics like politics and world events, in a world full of misinformation.*

### **Academic Research**

- Conduct comprehensive, data-intensive studies to analyze public behavior and sentiment in relation to contemporary media.
- Dissect complex datasets, yielding actionable insights for media strategies.

#### **Journal of Public Interest Communications** | Executive Editor | Sep '22 – present

*Flagship journal for the field of public interest communications. Publishes peer-reviewed research in the field from both academics and practitioners.*

### **Journal Management**

- Develop a practitioner editorial board to evaluate the journal's practitioner content.
- Source and edit content from practitioners across the globe.

#### **Humanities & Social Sciences Communications** | Editorial Board Member | August 2025 – present

#### **Marketing Mission** | CEO & Founder | Apr '20 – present

*Digital marketing firm that helps nonprofit organizations use marketing tools and resources to advance progressive social change. Partner with clients through custom marketing plans, marketing bootcamps, and digital resources to achieve impact.*

Secure repeat business through high client ROI, referral, and satisfaction rates.

### **Campaign Development & Launch**

- **Children of Armenia Fund:** Ideated and executed strategy to migrate in-person fundraising events to virtual events due to COVID-19. Client's first two virtual events raised **\$5.1M—10x** the amount raised in previous in-person events.
- **Legal Foundation of Washington:** Created a social media and email campaign to generate increased revenue through monthly gifts; resulted in attracting **20** new monthly donors and generating **\$1000** per month in recurring donations.
- **Miami Waterkeeper:** Raised **260%** more dollars from individual one-time gifts compared to the previous year due to a new campaign strategy.
- **Kirkland Performance Center:** Crafted a new event brand identity, naming conventions, email copy and graphics, and website landing page. Event was held virtually; generated **\$135K** in funds and an increase in attendees from previous years.

### **Client Testimonials**

"Marketing Mission went above and beyond to support Reading Partners in developing a video that captured the heart of our mission. Their marketing expertise is invaluable, and I'm so grateful that we had the opportunity to work with them!"

–Cassy McKee (Executive Director, Reading Partners Seattle)

"Like many nonprofits, our website was over 10 years old and we didn't have the ability to easily update it. Marketing Mission helped us develop an easy-to-edit site that showcases our impact through compelling photos, video, and storytelling. Now our site brings our mission to life and celebrates our students, teachers, and families."

–Jamie Koppel (Founder, BECA Schools)

#### **TEAMTRI | Senior Digital Strategist | Jul '18 – Apr '20**

*Digital marketing firm. Drove results for 30+ clients through campaign optimization, fundraising & content strategy, website design, and more. Flagship clients included the Alabama Department of Education, Future Business Leaders of America chapters in six states, Health Occupations Students of America in four states.*

##### **Campaign Development & Launch**

- Generated **\$24,000** for grassroots nonprofits on #GivingTuesday through new paid, social, and email marketing campaigns
- Created a community outreach strategy for the Alabama Governor's Office and Department of Education; enabled clients to collect community opinion on how to distribute Perkins V funding. Campaign resulted in a **\$21,696,979** grant.

##### **Training Design**

- Lead training workshops for 1000+ marketing students and professionals in areas including leadership development, public speaking, and social media marketing.

#### **Northern Arizona University | Social Media Coordinator | Feb '16 – Mar '18**

*Public research university based in Flagstaff, AZ. Led cross-functional marketing team in building community, engagement, and growth. Throughout two-year tenure, university scaled to become the #1 university for social media engagement and accrued an online fanbase of 120,000.*

##### **Campaign Development & Launch**

- Managed and allocated **\$25,000** paid media budget to recruit future students; distributed funds across Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube. Efforts resulted in a **5.5%** increase in student enrollment.
- Ideated and launched organic & paid campaigns that led to a **22%** growth in social following across channels.

## **Content Strategy**

- Optimized video content strategy on Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube; resulted in an increased follower reach of **1M+**.
- Instituted new growth strategies to maximize post effectiveness; shifted existing strategies for post length, optimal posting time, post frequency, and more.
- Identified best-in-class university content strategies; leveraged learnings in creation of new content strategy.

## Teaching Experience

### **Walter Cronkite School of Journalism & Mass Communication, Arizona State University | Faculty Associate | Spring 2024 – Present**

#### **Courses:** MCO 434 - Search Engine Research and Strategy

*Taught an upper-level course focused on advanced search engine optimization (SEO) strategies and research methodologies tailored for digital audience students.*

- Guided students through complex data analytics and performance measurement techniques to optimize content for search engines, resulting in a notable improvement in students' understanding and application of SEO principles. 75% of respondents appreciated the engaging class structure, guest speakers, and real-life project integration
- Received high praise in student evaluations for subject matter expertise, clarity of instruction, and practical applicability of coursework. 100% of respondents praised the instructor's knowledgeability and the value of SEO content taught.

## Teaching Evaluations

“The professor was very knowledgeable. I learned a lot about SEO and understood the importance of the structure of a website as well as keywords.” — Student Spring 2024

“The learning materials were presented in a way that was easy to follow. I liked that Cody encouraged us to participate during the class period. Lastly, I liked the guest speakers we had and how they presented their real-life projects.” — Student Spring 2024

“Call-ins from professionals, a manageable workload, learned exactly what was noted in the syllabus.” — Student Spring 2024

### **University of Florida | Graduate Instructor | Jan 2019 – Aug 2021**

#### **Courses:** Social Media Advertising for Conversions – MMC 5739, Copywriting for Digital Messaging – MMC 5155

*Selected by university leadership to design and teach Social Media Advertising for Conversions course; hired due to strong track record of success in the marketing & branding space and recommendations from industry executives.*

*Achieved high praise from students in course evaluations, particularly in subject matter expertise and applicability of coursework to the workforce.*

- Instructed **150** students across **6** course sections and three semesters. Created and assigned coursework (ie., partnering with a business on social media strategy) to foster real-world, long-term learning. Served as a resource to students for interviews, networking contacts, and career guidance.
- Crafted curriculum for 16-week Quality Metrics-approved course; course framework is now leveraged by other university instructors.

### **Teaching Evaluations**

“Professor Hays is excellent at creating a sense of community while encouraging students to push themselves. I attribute my learning in this class to his teaching style and kindness. He is very supportive and available when needed.” —Student, Spring 2021

“Professor Hays has been one of my favorite instructors of my degree program! He is knowledgeable, enthusiastic, and clear. I felt like the class engagement in discussions was the highest of any class I've taken – the discussion prompts were so involved and relevant that I often looked forward to seeing my peers' feedback.” —Student, Spring 2020

“Prof. Hays is so clearly enthusiastic and knows the exact skills we will need in the field. His experience as a professional is very helpful and insightful.” —Student, Fall 2020

### **Flodesk, Inc. | Flodesk Online Education Instructor | May 2021 – present**

Digital & e-mail marketing service provider. Selected by corporate leadership team to design and launch two courses for an online learning platform.

- Developed two free online courses (How to Use Workflows to Automate Your Freebie Download and The Exact Steps to Create a Lead-Generating Freebie Download).
- Courses have served as a high-performing sales funnel; high rate of course attendees who become Flodesk customers.

### **Funding Awarded**

2025-2026

**Edward J. Sylvester Memorial Scholarship in Science Writing**  
Arizona State University  
Amount Awarded: \$1,800

April 2025	<b>Graduate Research Support Program</b> Arizona State University Amount Awarded: \$950
February 2025	<b>Jumpstart Research Grant</b> Arizona State University Amount Awarded: \$750
2024-2025	<b>Fighting Mesmerizing Misinformation</b> Women & Philanthropy - ASU Foundation PIs: A. Landrum, K. Roschke, & K. H. Kwon Amount Awarded: \$50,000
May 2024	<b>Mark and Phyllis Hughes Scholarship</b> Amount Awarded: \$1,000
August 2024	<b>PhD Program Funding</b> Arizona State University Fully funded through research assistantships, grants, and competitive fellowships Amount Awarded: \$120,000
July 2023	<b>Pisces Foundation Grant</b> Co-wrote an application for a grant for Miami Waterkeeper to support their initiatives in safeguarding water resources and promoting sustainability. Amount Awarded: \$600,000
April 2023	<b>Knight Foundation</b> Secured a grant for Miami Waterkeeper to enhance their efforts in environmental advocacy and water protection. Amount Awarded: \$5,000,000
August 2022	<b>Elevate Prize Grant</b> Facilitated the acquisition of a grant for Dr. R. Silverstein, bolstering her position as a leader in the climate space. Amount Awarded: \$300,000
June 2019	<b>Perkins V Funding Grant</b> Developed and executed a community outreach strategy that secured \$21,696,979 in funding for the Alabama State Department of Education to support career and technical education initiatives.

## Fellowships, Honors, & Awards

- Top Paper Award for “Tailoring Climate Communication: Responses to Generational and Accountability Narratives in United States Politics”, *Cronkite Research Symposium*
- [#1 University for Social Media Engagement](#), *Rival IQ*
- [Campaign of the Year](#) (Nomination), *Givebutter*
- First Generation Student Ambassador, *Northern Arizona University*

- Dorrance Scholar, *Dorrance Scholarship Programs*
- Lumberjack Scholar, *Northern Arizona University*
- Outstanding Sophomore of the Year, *Northern Arizona University*

## Professional Development

### **Venture Devils Program**

*Arizona State University and Maricopa Community Colleges* (August 2024 - Present)

Selected to participate in the Venture Devils program, an initiative supporting entrepreneurs with mentorship, resources, and funding opportunities to develop and launch innovative ventures.

## Research

### Conference Presentations

- **Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication:** Presented on "Queer Tales & Trails: Finding Joy in Nature through Access and Belonging" (August 2025)
- **Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication:** Presented on "Comparison of Messaging Strategies between Climate Activists and Deniers on Instagram" (August 2025)
- **Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication:** Presented on "Analyzing News Media Coverage of the Tennessee Drag Ban: A Longitudinal Content Analysis" (August 2025)
- **Institute for Social Science Research Spring Research Poster Symposium:** Presented on "Tailoring Climate Communication: Responses to Generational and Accountability Narratives in United States Politics" (April 2024)
- **Public Interest Communication Summer Institute – Graduate Poster Symposium:** Presented on "Tailoring Climate Communication: Responses to Generational and Accountability Narratives in United States Politics" (June 2025)
- **Public Interest Communication Summer Institute – Graduate Research Presentations:** Presented on "Analyzing Media Framing of Violence and Backlash Against Drag Story Time Events" (June 2025)
- **Broadcast Educators Association:** Presented on "Puppets, Vaccines, and Public Health: Harnessing Theater to Combat Misinformation in Albania" (April 2025)
- **Walter Cronkite Symposium:** Presented two papers on "Tailoring Climate Communication: Responses to Generational and Accountability Narratives in United States Politics" and "Violence and Backlash Against Drag Story Hour Events" (February 2025)
- **International Conference on Social Sciences and Humanities in the 21st Century (ICSH21):** Presented on "AI Can(t) Stop the Climate Crisis" (August 2024).
- **Public Interest Communications Summer Institute:** Presented on a panel titled "Bridging Practitioner Work with Academic Research" (June 2024)

- **Walter Cronkite Symposium:** Presented on “Algorithmic Power” (March 2024)
- **Walter Cronkite Symposium:** Presented on “Comparison of Messaging Strategies between Climate Activists and Deniers on Instagram” (March 2024)

## Publications

- **Bloomsbury:** Hays, C. (2025). *The essential role of practitioners in public communications*. In B. R. Brunner & K. Chernin (Eds.), *Public Interest Communications: Foundation, Influence, and Importance*. Bloomsbury Academic. (January 2026)
- **Bloomsbury:** Hays, C. (2025). *The responsibilities of public interest communication practitioners*. In B. R. Brunner & K. Chernin (Eds.), *Public Interest Communications: Foundation, Influence, and Importance*. Bloomsbury Academic. (January 2026)
- **Bloomsbury:** Chernin, K., Hays, C., & Brunner, B. R. (2025). *Conclusion: Sustaining ourselves through sustainable work*. In B. R. Brunner & K. Chernin (Eds.), *Public Interest Communications: Foundation, Influence, and Importance*. Bloomsbury Academic. (January 2026)
- **Journal of Public Interest Communications:** “Stories of Struggle, Stories of Strength” – Editors’ Essay (June 2025)
- **Journal of Public Interest Communications:** “Cultivating Black Joy as a Revolutionary Approach to Health and Happiness” – Practitioner Q&A (June 2025)
- **Journal of Public Interest Communications:** “Celebrating Black Joy: Positive Narratives in Community Healing and Organizing” – Practitioner Q&A (June 2025)
- **Journal of Public Interest Communications:** “Illuminating Black History: Strategic Communication as a Tool for Historical Redress and Visibility” – Practitioner Q&A (June 2025)
- **QED: A Journal in GLBTQ Worldmaking:** “America’s Detransition: The Far-Right’s Coordinated Attack on Climate Policy and Trans Rights” (June 2025)
- **Journal of Public Interest Communications:** “Beyond Bars: Crafting Freedom Stories with the Seattle Clemency Project” (December 2024)
- **Journal of Public Interest Communications:** “Enhancing Community Through Innovation in Technology and Storytelling” (May 2024)
- **Journal of Public Interest Communications:** “Empowering Narratives in Public Interest Communications” (December 2023)
- **Journal of Public Interest Communications:** “New Era of JPIC” (June 2023)

## Press

- **Author, LGBTQ Nation:** “[Republicans are pushing culture war attacks on LGBTQ+ people because they have no clue how to govern](#)” (February 15, 2025)
- **Author, Washington Blade:** “[America’s detransition: The far-right’s coordinated attack on climate policy and trans rights](#)” (April 7, 2025)
- **Author, LGBTQ Nation:** “[Trans rights & climate action are deeply connected. Understanding this can help us fight for both.](#)” (April 13, 2025)
- **Featured Interviewee, Cronkite News:** “[Arizona State adjusts DEI language as legislators target curriculum](#)” (March 20, 2025)

- **Author, Arizona Republic:** "[Some in Phoenix live without water while industry guzzles it](#) | [Opinion](#)" (April 22, 2025)

## Core Skills

- Campaign Development & Launch Content Strategy
- Copywriting
- Coursework Design & Teaching Cross-Channel Marketing
- Event Planning & Execution Fundraising
- Nonprofit Marketing & Communication Organic & Paid Media
- Process Improvement
- Product Marketing
- Social Media Marketing
- Storytelling
- Team Leadership & Mentorship Training Design
- User Experience

## Membership

- Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC) | December 2024 - Current
- International Communication Association (ICA) | December 2024 - Current
- National Communication Association (NCA) | December 2024 - Current