

COMMUNICATION, MEDIA, DESIGN & INFORMATION

The College of Communication, Media, Design and Information (CMDI) prepares students for careers as engaged and effective citizens endowed with deep understanding of the historical and contemporary context of human communication and expression. Mindful of the active role communication plays in shaping human relationships, CMDI trains graduates to study and practice constructive interaction among people, communities, industries and publics. The college equips students with the skills needed to produce, gather, archive, curate, analyze and evaluate the flood of information, messages, images, sounds and ideas that populate our complex and rapidly evolving global media landscape.

To these ends, CMDI resourcefully combines disciplines newly extended and empowered by digital media and the social and cultural transformations those media engender. These include established scholarly, creative and professional fields such as media studies, communication, the history and interpretation of film and television, journalism, advertising and video production in its cinematic, documentary and broadcast forms. But the college also houses both the fast-growing field of information science—a discipline that, through inquiry and innovation, tackles the problems and opportunities facing an increasingly networked society—and the emergent disciplines of intermedia art, design, music, writing and performance.

In giving these activities a collaborative home, CMDI facilitates innovative interactions among them. Its academic structure accordingly stimulates cross-disciplinary cooperation at all levels of curriculum, research and creative work. Further, CMDI promotes the transformational exchanges it nurtures within its own walls for campus-wide benefit. Its organization thus fosters outreach to—and student and faculty participation from—other schools, colleges, centers and facilities throughout CU Boulder and the wider Colorado community.

CMDI's collaborative character is even more visible at the graduate level and in terms of its faculty's scholarly and creative work. Examples include the doctoral program in information science (<https://catalog.colorado.edu/graduate/colleges-schools/communication-media-design-information/programs-study/information-science/information-science-doctor-philosophy-phd/>), the master's in interdisciplinary documentary media practices (<https://catalog.colorado.edu/graduate/colleges-schools/communication-media-design-information/programs-study/critical-media-practices/interdisciplinary-documentary-media-practices-master-fine-arts-mfa/>) and the doctoral program in media research and practice (<https://catalog.colorado.edu/graduate/colleges-schools/communication-media-design-information/programs-study/media-studies/media-research-practice-doctor-philosophy-phd/>), which offers three PhD tracks, each lodged in a different yet related department. CMDI's signature spirit of collaboration is further reflected in the various centers the college contains:

- the Center for Environmental Journalism (CEJ)
- the Center for Media, Religion and Culture (CMRC)
- the Center for the Study of Conflict, Collaboration and Creative Governance (3CG)

It is also reflected in the close relations the new college hopes to entertain with centers elsewhere on campus—for example, with the

Center for Humanities and the Arts (CHA); the B2 Center for Media, Arts and Performance (B2); and the Stan Brakhage Center.

Statement of Core Skills, Competencies and Scholarly and Creative Initiatives

Given its mission, CMDI attracts students, faculty and industry and creative professionals from across the closely related fields of media, communication and information. All of those either rostered in or affiliated with the new college accordingly share a set of skills, competencies and scholarly and creative interests that form a common core. This core is expressed at all levels of the college, from undergraduate curriculum and graduate training to the research and creative work of its faculty and both internal and external affiliates.

The Graduate Experience and Faculty Research and Creative Work

CMDI's collaborative character is even more visible at the graduate level and in terms of its faculty's scholarly and creative work. A prime example is the doctoral program in media research and practice (<https://catalog.colorado.edu/graduate/colleges-schools/communication-media-design-information/programs-study/media-studies/media-research-practice-doctor-philosophy-phd/>), which combines the emphases of the participating departments—advertising, public relations and design, journalism and media studies—and encourages students to develop research agendas that bridge disciplines and cross between academic research and professional practice. In addition to creating efficiencies by combining resources, the program underscores the shared technical and intellectual as well as logistical needs of the units involved, turning streamlined administration into scholarly and creative synergy.

Journalists learn from information scholars about the nature and uses of big data while sharing with them their skills in narrative and communication. Members of the communication faculty deepen colleagues' insights into the underlying forms and principles of organizational, interpersonal and public conversation that structure the worlds in which advertising and strategic communication operate while gaining access from colleagues in these areas to problems and case studies they might have overlooked. Meanwhile, faculty in media studies benefit from direct exposure to the technologies and creative processes explored by media production faculty, offering in return a deeper historical, social and theoretical insight into the way media shape, even as they are shaped by, the wider society they serve.

Centers like CMRC, CEJ and 3CG already harness CU's exceptional multidisciplinary resources in everything from cultural studies to environmental science and from journalism to media design in focused collaborative initiatives of all sorts. By bringing practitioners in all of these areas together with artists and researchers in information science, media production and intermedia art, writing and performance, CMDI provides the environment for many more such common enterprises in the future.