



## Savannah Collier

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### **Practicum Site:**

The Public Good Projects  
San Diego, CA

### **Practicum Site Supervisor:**

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## **Monitoring Media for Misinformation about Vaccines in the Age of COVID-19**

**Introduction:** The Public Good Projects (PGP) is a public health nonprofit composed of experts in public health, media, and marketing. The practicum experience, completed virtually, covered three topics: vaccine opposition, called Project VCTR; COVID-19 conversation, called RCAID; and mental health in the video game community. The first two topics includes monitoring media dashboards, creating and troubleshooting dashboards, writing national and state insights about trending conversations, and investigating misinformation and conspiracy theories. The last topic, mental health, involved in-depth interviewing and analyzing interview transcripts.

**Structure:** The practicum experience involved using a media monitoring tool, Signal, that gathers all publicly available social media and news pertaining to a specific topic (such as vaccines) in real-time and over time. Activities included monitoring dashboards and writing insights that synthesized the significance and sentiments of trending conversations.

**Outcomes:** For Project VCTR, the state dashboards were expanded from 17 to all 50, including creating the necessary filters and issues containing current vaccine-related legislation for that state. For RCAID, the COVID-19 dashboards were used to write daily insights highlighting trending conversation and news from the past 24 hours and explored themes of race and economic opportunity. For the topic of mental health, interviews with gamers and game researchers were conducted, transcribed, cleaned, and analyzed. Over the course of 10 weeks, approximately 50 RCAID insights and 20 VCTR insights were produced and ten in-depth interviews were cleaned and analyzed. Invaluable support was provided to PGP through tedious vaccine and COVID-19 conspiracy theory research, and a database of 500+ pro-vaccine legislators and their information.

**Conclusions:** Because the practicum was performed remotely and hours requested were halved, the practicum felt abbreviated. However, all Learning Objectives were met, the hour requirement was fulfilled, and both student and supervisor left confident in their chances of working together again.