Security and privacy research has led to major successes in improving the baseline level of digital security for the general population. Nevertheless, privacy and security tools and strategies are not equally effective for everyone—many high-risk communities face security, privacy, and safety risks that are not well addressed by current solutions. My work uses an interdisciplinary approach to investigate the digital safety needs and challenges for high-risk users, quantify the impact of government regulation and corporate policy on safety, and inform the design of technical and procedural interventions that support safety for all.

In this talk, I will discuss two studies in detail that showcase the opportunities of taking an interdisciplinary approach to supporting digital safety for high-risk communities such as sex workers, undocumented immigrants, and survivors of intimate partner violence. First, I will discuss findings from an in-depth qualitative interview study on the security needs and practices of sex workers in Europe, highlighting their safety needs as well as technical and policy challenges that impede their safety. Then, I will describe a large-scale global measurement study on geoblocking, which reveals corporate and legal policies that are contributing to the fragmentation of Internet access worldwide. I will further provide an overview of my future research agenda, which will leverage both qualitative and quantitative methods to inform policy and technical design.