

Kristen Vaccaro

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Education

- 2013–present **PhD in Computer Science**, *University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign*.
HCI & ML. Recent work identified a placebo effect of control settings (users are more satisfied when controls are present, whether they work or not). Interested in algorithm awareness, the user experience of machine learning systems, and ethics in computing.
- 2011–2013 **Graduate Work in Computational Social Science**, *George Mason University*, GPA 3.8/4.0.
Nondegree coursework and research in “big data,” social network analysis and multi-agent modeling. Primary project examined the evolution of political language over time.
- 2005–2009 **BA in Physics**, *Reed College*, GPA 3.64/4.0 (Phi Beta Kappa).
Senior thesis developed proof of concept application of speech recognition to sociolinguistics, identifying user’s geographic and socio-economic background based on their speech. Project included signal processing, machine learning, linguistic theory.

Experience

- University of Illinois **Research Assistant**, *NCSA & CSL*, 2015–2017.
Researcher investigating user awareness and understanding of algorithms in online systems.
- On-going project studying user agency when engaging with algorithmic systems – how can (and do) users interact with algorithmic controls as they make sense of them?
 - Designed and ran a study on whether there is a placebo effect of control settings. Built two experimental systems for the Twitter News Feed incorporating such a control panel.
 - Developed a series of research recommendations for studying algorithm awareness, highlighting both the importance of and challenges for work that might uncover bias.
- Adobe **Research Intern**, *Creative Technology Lab*, 2015.
Researcher modeling compatibility in the fashion domain. We investigated whether a third item could “make or break” an outfit, by comparing models of compatibility of pairs of the items to a model that incorporated all three at once.
- MITRE **Software Engineer**, 2009–2013.
Researcher at federally funding R&D center in two areas: data mining and signal processing.
- Contributed to data mining and algorithm evaluation work, primarily dealing with identity management, social network analysis and natural language processing. This work included author identification, evaluation of identity resolution performance in health care and national security domains, and performance assessment for different data mining algorithms on behavioral features of identity.
 - Provided technical contributions to the design, development and evaluation of radar systems. Predicted and analyzed complex system performance via simulation and modeling, drawing on signal processing techniques. Developed analytical toolset including user interfaces in Matlab. Performed similar work for other signals provided by government sponsors.

Fermilab **Intern.**

Modeled impact of bubble chamber defects on performance of dark matter detection.

Reed College **Research Assistant.**

Assisted with research tasks including running human subjects studies with minors.

Publications

- NSF 2017 ***Algorithmic Appeals***, *Workshop on Trustworthy Algorithmic Decision-Making*.
Workshop Kristen Vaccaro and Karrie Karahalios
- ICWSM 2017 ***"Be careful; things can be worse than they appear": Understanding Biased Algorithms and Users' Behavior around Them in Rating Platforms***.
Motahhare Eslami, Kristen Vaccaro, Karrie Karahalios, and Kevin Hamilton
- AAAI 2017 ***An Experimentation Engine for Data-Driven Fashion Systems***.
Symposium Ranjitha Kumar and Kristen Vaccaro
- UIST 2016 ***The Elements of Fashion Style***.
Kristen Vaccaro, Sunaya Shivakumar, Ziqiao Ding, Karrie Karahalios & Ranjitha Kumar
- CSCW 2016 ***Not by Money Alone: Social Support Opportunities in Medical Crowdfunding Campaigns***.
Jennifer G. Kim, Kristen Vaccaro, Karrie Karahalios & Hwajung Hong
- CHI 2016 ***First I "like" it, then I hide it: Folk Theories of Social Feeds***.
Motahhare Eslami, Karrie Karahalios, Christian Sandvig, Kristen Vaccaro, Aimee Rickman, Kevin Hamilton & Alex Kirlik
- CHI 2015 ***"I always assumed that I wasn't really that close to [her]": Reasoning About Invisible Algorithms in the News Feed***.
Best Paper Motahhare Eslami, Aimee Rickman, Kristen Vaccaro, Amir Hossein, Christian Sandvig, Kevin Hamilton & Karrie Karahalios
- CSCW 2015 ***Agree or Cancel? Research and Terms of Service Compliance***.
Workshop Kristen Vaccaro, Karrie Karahalios, Christian Sandvig, Kevin Hamilton & Cedric Langbort

Teaching Experience

- CS 498 The Art of Web Programming (2016)
Helped design assignments, quizzes and exam on front- and back end development
Guest lectures on the prototyping, internationalization and accessibility
- CS 210 Ethics in Technology (2013-2014)
Wrote weekly discussion prompts on current technology ethics issues
Led discussion for approximately 200 student section
Constructed short comprehension questions, quiz and exam questions
Graded weekly discussion responses and comprehension questions, providing feedback on writing and argument quality

- CS 205 Problem Solving With Data Structures (2015)
Helped with development of new course
Designed assignments on natural language processing, web scraping, and data structures
Guest lecture on ethical web scraping
- CS 102 Little Bits to Big Ideas (2014)
Designed & graded homeworks on compression, machine learning, etc.
Constructed labs on graph theory, hardware, web development, etc.
Ran twice-weekly lab sections

Mentoring

- Senior thesis Ding Ziqiao
Hanzi (Amber) Shen
Dana Nikolaeva Chambourova
- Ind. study Dylan Huang
Sunaya Shivakumar
Yuxi Gu
- Other Lisa Huang
Tanvi Agarwalla
Kevin Ly

Honors

- ARCS Foundation Scholar Award
Feng Chen Memorial Award
Women in Computer Science Grace Hopper Scholarship
Reed College Commendation for Excellence, selected by the faculty
Phi Beta Kappa

Community Service

Mentor for incoming graduate students, Graduate Ambassador, PURE mentor for undergraduates, WCS speaker, reviewer (CHI, UIST, CSCW, IUI, Creativity & Cognition)