

BRENNAN JONES

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I work on technologies that bring people together. My research in Human-Computer Interaction (HCI) and Computer-Supported Cooperative Work (CSCW) involves building the future of telepresence, remote collaboration, and social computing. I have designed, prototyped, and evaluated user experiences for these purposes, involving emerging technologies such as virtual, augmented, and mixed reality (VR/AR/MR), telepresence robots, tangible and haptic user interfaces, drones, and video communication. I have conducted user studies and empirical research in HCI using methods such as interviews, observations, lab experiments, field studies, ethnographic methods, qualitative, and quantitative analyses, to understand user behaviours and various technologies' impacts on factors such as group collaboration, awareness, and presence. I have published papers at top-tier venues such as ACM CHI, CSCW, and DIS. I am both a researcher and a builder, with experience in full-stack development, and comfortable embracing a variety of tools to create prototypes. I have a rich range of experience in front-end web development, back-end server coding, AR/VR development, mobile app development, and robotics programming. I like to blow minds and warm hearts.

EDUCATION

PhD in Computer Science 2017 - 2021 (expected)

Research area: Human-Computer Interaction (HCI), Computer-Supported Cooperative Work (CSCW)

University of Calgary, Calgary, AB, Canada, GPA: 4.00/4.00

Supervisory committee: Dr. Ehud Sharlin, Dr. Carman Neustaedter (Simon Fraser University), Dr. Anthony Tang (University of Toronto)

Thesis title: *Designing Distributed-Collaboration Technologies for Wilderness Search and Rescue*

Visiting PhD Scholar Apr. 2017 – Aug. 2018, Jan. 2019 - present

Simon Fraser University School of Interactive Arts & Technology, Surrey, BC, Canada

Advisor: Dr. Carman Neustaedter

M.Sc. in Computer Science 2014 - 2016

Research area: Human-Computer Interaction (HCI), Computer-Supported Cooperative Work (CSCW)

University of Calgary, Calgary, AB, Canada, GPA: 3.85/4.00

Thesis advisor: Dr. Anthony Tang

Thesis title: *Elevating Communication, Collaboration, and Shared Experiences between Peers in Mobile Video Communication using Drones*

B.Sc. in Computer Science (with First-Class Honours) 2011 - 2014

Concentration: Human-Computer Interaction (HCI)

University of Calgary, Calgary, AB, Canada, GPA: 3.75/4.00

Honours thesis title: *Improving Collaboration in Online Group Art Therapy*

Extracurricular activities: RezNet, UCalgaryCares

Computer Science (University Transfer)

2010 - 2011

Mount Royal University, Calgary, AB, Canada, GPA: 3.96/4.00

Extracurricular activities: Students in Free Enterprise (SIFE MRU)

WORK EXPERIENCE

Current:

Graduate (MSc/PhD) Researcher – Supervised by Dr. Anthony Tang & Dr. Ehud Sharlin Sep. 2014 - present
University of Calgary Department of Computer Science – Interactions Lab (iLab), Calgary, AB, Canada

Worked on several research projects related to telepresence, video communication, remote collaboration robotics (e.g., telepresence robots, drones), and emergency response. Designed, implemented, and evaluated research prototypes; conducted experiments using various research methodologies; collaborated with other students, post-docs, and professors; written and published papers and posters at top-tier venues; presented and demoed at workshops and conferences; and helped other colleagues with their presentations and written work.

Visiting PhD Scholar – Supervised by Dr. Carman Neustaedter Apr. 2017 - Aug. 2018, Jan. 2019 - present
Simon Fraser University School of Interactive Arts & Technology – Connections Lab (cLab), Surrey, BC, Canada
Working in collaboration with my PhD co-supervisor and other students in the lab on research related to telepresence, remote collaboration, and social computing.

Past:

Research Intern – Supervised by Dr. Sean Rintel Jul. 2019 - Sep. 2019
Microsoft Research Cambridge – Socially Intelligent Meetings Project, Cambridge, England, UK

Worked on a research project titled *VROOM (Virtual Robot Overlay for Online Meetings)*: a two-way cross-reality (XR) telepresence-robot augmentation utilizing an augmented-reality (AR) avatar overlay, immersive virtual reality (VR), and 360° video streaming. We built VROOM as a technology probe to understand how pairs of users adapt to different styles of remote collaboration and 'belonging to a space'.

Research Intern – Supervised by Ignacio Avellino, Dr. Cédric Fleury, Dr. Michel Beaudouin-Lafon, Dr. Joseph Malloch, & Dr. Wendy Mackay Apr. 2016 - Sep. 2016
Inria Saclay – ExSitu Group, Orsay, France

Worked on a research project involving the design, development, and evaluation of remote collaboration tools for people working in distributed workrooms with numerous workstations, devices, and a large wall-sized display. Our explorations involved the use of motion-capture systems (e.g., VICON), moving on-screen videos, and telepresence robots acting as physical surrogates for remote users.

Teaching Assistant – CPSC 481: Human-Computer Interaction I Sep. 2015 – Dec. 2015
University of Calgary Department of Computer Science, Calgary, AB, Canada
Assisted students with their project work; provided feedback on students' work; taught material not taught in lectures; taught programming and development in Microsoft Visual Studio and Expression Blend; prepared tutorial slides; evaluated students' work (portfolios, presentations, and assignment deliverables).

Undergraduate Researcher – Supervised by Dr. Anthony Tang Nov. 2012 – Aug. 2014
University of Calgary Department of Computer Science – Interactions Lab (iLab), Calgary, AB, Canada
Worked on undergraduate research projects on remote group art therapy, physical and tangible gaming using Sphero robots, and camera work in mobile video communication.

Web Developer Intern Jul. 2012 - Nov. 2012
E-Patches and Crests, Sylvan Lake, AB, Canada
Assisted in developing and maintaining the company's website; helped implement an online checkout system for custom orders; and updated online newsletters and the website's main stylesheet. Wrote code using PHP, MySQL, HTML, and CSS.

RezNet Technician Sep. 2011 - Apr. 2012
University of Calgary Residence Services, Calgary, AB, Canada
Assisted students living in residence with connecting to the Internet and opening IT accounts; troubleshoot network issues; and updated software on students' computers.

PUBLICATIONS

Peer-Reviewed Conference Papers:

Jones, B., Zhang, Y., Wong, P.N.Y., and Rintel, S. (2021). Belonging There: VROOM-ing into the Uncanny Valley of XR Telepresence. To appear in *Proceedings of the ACM on Human-Computer Interaction (CSCW)*, ACM.

Jones, B., Maiero, J., Mogharrab, A., Aguilar, I.A., Adhikari, A., Riecke, B.E., Kruijff, E., Neustaedter, C., and Lindeman, R.W. (2020). FeetBack: Augmenting Robotic Telepresence with Haptic Feedback on the Feet. In *Proceedings of the 2020 ACM International Conference on Multimodal Interaction (ICMI 2020)*, ACM, 194-203. (Acceptance rate: 29% - 65/159)

Jones, B., Tang, A., and Neustaedter, C. (2020). Remote Communication in Wilderness Search and Rescue: Implications for the Design of Emergency Distributed-Collaboration Tools for Network-Sparse Environments. In *Proceedings of the ACM on Human-Computer Interaction, 4 (GROUP)*, ACM.

Yang, L., **Jones, B.**, Neustaedter, C., and Singhal, S. (2018). Shopping Over Distance through a Telepresence Robot. In *Proceedings of the ACM on Human-Computer Interaction, 2 (CSCW)*, ACM. (Acceptance rate: 25.5% - 184/722)

Heshmat, Y., **Jones, B.**, Xiong, X., Neustaedter, C., Tang, A., Riecke, B.E., and Yang, L. (2018). Geocaching with a Beam: Shared Outdoor Activities through a Telepresence Robot with 360 Degree Viewing. In *Proceedings of the 2018 ACM Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems (CHI 2018)*, ACM. (Acceptance rate: 25.7% - 666/2592)

Neustaedter, C., **Jones, B.**, O'Hara, K., and Sellen, A. (2018). The Benefits and Challenges of Video Calling for Emergency Situations. In *Proceedings of the 2018 ACM Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems (CHI 2018)*, ACM. (Acceptance rate: 25.7% - 666/2592) - **Honourable Mention Award (top 5% of all submissions)**

Jones, B., Dillman, K., Tang, R., Tang, A., Sharlin, E., Oehlberg, L., Neustaedter, C., and Bateman, S. (2016). Elevating Communication, Collaboration, and Shared Experiences in Mobile Video through Drones. In *Proceedings of the 2016 ACM Conference on Designing Interactive Systems (DIS 2016)*, ACM, 1123-1135. (Acceptance rate: 26% - 107/418)

Jones, B., Witcraft, A., Bateman, S., Neustaedter, C., and Tang, A. (2015). Mechanics of Camera Work in Mobile Video Collaboration. In *Proceedings of the 2015 ACM Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems (CHI 2015)*, ACM, 957-966. (Acceptance rate: 23% - 486/2120)

Peer-Reviewed Extended Abstracts and Posters:

Jones, B., Zhang, Y., Wong, P.N.Y., and Rintel, S. (2020). VROOM: Virtual Robot Overlay for Online Meetings. In *Extended Abstracts of the 2020 ACM Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems (CHI 2020)*, ACM. (Acceptance rate: 41.8% - 323/772)

Jones, B., Tang, A., Neustaedter, C., Antle, A.N., and McLaren, E.S. (2018). Designing a Tangible Interface for Manager Awareness in Wilderness Search and Rescue. In *Companion of the 2018 ACM Conference on Computer Supported Cooperative Work and Social Computing (CSCW 2018)*, ACM, 161-164. (Acceptance rate: 28% - 1847/6682)

Jones, B., Dillman, K., Manesh, S.A., Sharlin, E., and Tang, A. (2014). Designing an Immersive and Entertaining Pervasive Gameplay Experience with Spheros as Game and Interface Elements. In *Proceedings of the 2014 ACM SIGCHI Annual Symposium on Computer-Human Interaction in Play (CHI PLAY 2014)*, ACM, 425-426. (Acceptance rate: 30% - 233/778)

Jones, B., Hankinson, S.P., Collie, K., and Tang, A. (2014). Supporting Non-Verbal Visual Communication in Online Group Art Therapy. In *Extended Abstracts of the 2014 ACM Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems (CHI 2014)*, ACM, 1759-1764. (Acceptance rate: 31% - 1000/3200)

Workshop Papers:

Jones, B., Zhang, Y., Wong, P.N.Y., Rintel, S., and Heshmat, Y. (2020). VR-Enabled Telepresence as a Bridge for People, Environments, and Experiences. In *Social VR: A New Medium for Remote Communication and Collaboration (Workshop at CHI 2020)*.

Zhang, Y. and **Jones, B.** (2020). Virtual Reality for Telecommuting. In *Social VR: A New Medium for Remote Communication and Collaboration (Workshop at CHI 2020)*.

Heshmat, Y., **Jones, B.**, and Neustaedter, C. (2020). 360° View for Sharing Geocaching Experience with a Telepresence Robot. In *Social VR: A New Medium for Remote Communication and Collaboration (Workshop at CHI 2020)*.

Jones, B., Tang, A., and Neustaedter, C. (2019). Drones for Remote Collaboration in Wilderness Search and Rescue. In *iHDI: International workshop on Human-Drone Interaction - Workshop at CHI 2019*.

Jones, B., Tang, A., and Neustaedter, C. (2018). Designing Outdoor Remote-Communication Tools for Serious Collaborative Activities. In *HCI Outdoors: A CHI 2018 Workshop on Understanding Human-Computer Interaction in the Outdoors*.

Jones, B., and Tang, A. (2015). Improving Collaboration and Shared Experiences in Out-and-About Mobile Video Conferencing. In *Everyday Telepresence: Emerging Practices and Future Research (CHI '15 Workshop)*.

Doctoral Consortium:

Jones, B. (2018). Designing for Distributed Collaboration in Wilderness Search and Rescue. In *Companion of the 2018 ACM Conference on Computer Supported Cooperative Work and Social Computing (CSCW 2018; Doctoral Colloquium)*, ACM, 77-80.

Book Chapters:

Jones, B., Tang, A., Neustaedter, C., Antle, A.N., and McLaren, E.S. (2020). Designing Technology for Shared Communication and Awareness in Wilderness Search and Rescue. In McCrickard, S., Jones, M., and Stelter, T. (Eds.), *HCI Outdoors: Theory, Design, Methods and Applications*, Springer.

Neustaedter, C., Heshmat, Y., **Jones, B.,** Forghani, A., and Xiong, X. (2020). Shared Family Experiences over Distance in the Outdoors. In McCrickard, S., Jones, M., and Stelter, T. (Eds.), *HCI Outdoors: Theory, Design, Methods and Applications*, Springer.

Hankinson, S.P., **Jones, B.,** and Collie, K. (2017). Adapting Art Therapy for Online Groups. In Brooke, S.L. (Ed.), *Combining the Creative Therapies with Technology: Using Social Media and Online Counseling to Treat Clients*, Charles C. Thomas Publisher Ltd.

Technical Reports:

Neustaedter, C., **Jones, B.,** O'Hara, K., and Sellen, A. (2017). An Analysis of Next Generation 9-1-1: Video Calling for Emergency Situations. *Connections Lab Technical Report 2017-0605-01*, Simon Fraser University.

Theses:

Jones, B (2016). Elevating Communication, Collaboration, and Shared Experiences between Peers in Mobile Video Communication using Drones. *MSc Thesis*, University of Calgary.

Jones, B (2014). Improving Collaboration in Online Group Art Therapy. *BSc Hons Thesis*, University of Calgary.

TALKS AND PRESENTATIONS

FeetBack: Augmenting Robotic Telepresence with Haptic Feedback on the Feet <i>ICMI 2020 Paper Presentation</i> , Online/Virtual Conference	Oct. 2020
VR-Enabled Telepresence as a Bridge for People, Environments, and Experiences <i>CHI 2020 Workshop Presentation</i> , Online/Virtual Workshop Workshop: Social VR: A New Medium for Remote Communication and Collaboration	Apr. 2020
Remote Communication in Wilderness Search and Rescue <i>GROUP 2020 Paper Presentation</i> , Sanibel, FL, USA	Jan. 2020
Designing for Remote Communication, Collaboration, and Telepresence in the Outdoors <i>Invited Talk: Participatory Information Technology (PIT) Research Centre</i> , Aarhus Universitet, Aarhus, Denmark	Oct. 2019

Designing for Remote Communication, Collaboration, and Telepresence in the Outdoors <i>Invited Talk: ExSitu Group, Inria Saclay & Université Paris-Saclay, Orsay, France</i>	Oct. 2019
Drones for Remote Collaboration in Wilderness Search and Rescue <i>CHI 2019 Workshop Presentation, Glasgow, Scotland, UK</i> Workshop: iHDI: International workshop on Human-Drone Interaction	May 2019
Designing a Tangible Interface for Manager Awareness in Wilderness Search and Rescue <i>CSCW 2018 Poster, Jersey City, NJ, USA</i>	Nov. 2018
Designing for Distributed Collaboration in Wilderness Search and Rescue <i>CSCW 2018 Doctoral Colloquium and Poster, Jersey City, NJ, USA</i>	Nov. 2018
Designing Outdoor Remote-Communication Tools for Serious Collaborative Activities <i>CHI 2018 Workshop Presentation, Montréal, QC, Canada</i> Workshop: HCI Outdoors: A CHI 2018 Workshop on Understanding Human-Computer Interaction in the Outdoors	Apr. 2018
Elev. Communication, Collaboration, and Shared Experiences in Mobile Video through Drones <i>DIS 2016 Paper Presentation, Brisbane, QLD, Australia</i>	Jun. 2016
Mechanics of Camera Work in Mobile Video Collaboration <i>CHI 2015 Paper Presentation, Seoul, South Korea</i>	Apr. 2015
Improving Collaboration and Shared Experiences in Out-and-About Mobile Video Conferencing <i>CHI 2015 Workshop Presentation, Seoul, South Korea</i> Workshop: Everyday Telepresence: Emerging Practices and Future Research Directions	Apr. 2015
Designing an Immersive and Entertaining Pervasive Gameplay Experience with Spheros <i>CHI PLAY 2014 Madness Presentation, Poster, and Demo, Toronto, ON, Canada</i>	Oct. 2014
Designing an Immersive and Entertaining Pervasive Gameplay Experience with Spheros <i>SurfNet 2014 Poster and Demo, Calgary, AB, Canada</i>	Oct. 2014
Collaboration in Mobile Video Conferencing <i>SurfNet 2014 Madness Presentation, Calgary, AB, Canada</i>	Oct. 2014
Supporting Non-Verbal Visual Communication in Online Group Art Therapy <i>CHI 2014 Poster, Toronto, ON, Canada</i>	Apr. 2014
Non-Verbal Visual Communication in Online Art Therapy <i>University of Calgary SU Undergraduate Research Symposium Poster, Calgary, AB, Canada</i>	Nov. 2013

OTHER CONTRIBUTIONS

Prototypes for Online Art Therapy Tools <i>Digital International Creative Arts Therapies Symposium (DICATS), Online/Virtual Conference</i> <i>Presentation of work in collaboration with Sara Prins Hankinson, Kate Collie, and Anthony Tang.</i> <i>Presented by Sara Prins Hankinson. https://youtu.be/S9QMUHkLRWU</i>	Feb. 2019
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COMMUNITY AND VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

Associate Chair (AC) – multiple occasions 2018 - present

ACM CHI Conference, Late-Breaking-Work (LBW) Track

Assign and manage reviewers for the LBW track for the ACM CHI conference.

Conference and Journal Reviewer – multiple occasions 2014 - present

Conferences: CSCW 2021, CHI 2021, CSCW 2020, RO-MAN 2020, DIS 2020, CHI 2020, GROUP 2020, UIST 2019, DIS 2019, CHI 2019, MobileHCI 2018, CSCW 2018, DIS 2018, CHI 2018, TEI 2018, ISS 2017, RO-MAN 2017, CHI 2017, CHI 2015

Journals: Intl' Journal of Human-Computer Studies (IJHCS), Journal on Multimodal User Interfaces (JMUI)

Reviewed papers submitted to top international conferences and journals in the fields of Human-Computer Interaction (HCI), Computer-Supported Cooperative Work (CSCW), and Human-Robot Interaction (HRI).

Program Committee (PC) Meeting Student Volunteer Assistant – multiple occasions 2019 - 2020

ACM DIS Conference

Assist Session Chairs and the Technical Chairs during the PC meeting for the ACM DIS conference.

Student Volunteer – multiple occasions 2014 - 2020

Conferences: GROUP 2020, CHI 2019, CHI 2018, DIS 2016, CHI 2015, CHI PLAY 2014

Assisted with tasks that kept the conferences running. Duties included (but were not limited to): telepresence assistance; workshop assistance; session monitoring; and assistance with demo and poster receptions.

Telepresence Assistant May 2019

ACM CHI Conference 2019

Assisted the telepresence chairs in providing opportunities to allow some attendees to attend and participate in conference and workshop activities remotely.

Graduate College Scholar Sep. 2018 - Dec. 2018

University of Calgary Graduate College

The College is a cohort of graduate students at the University of Calgary who strive to connect the university and city communities and promote discourse on important and challenging topics. As a member, I served on a subcommittee, helped organize events on and off campus, and volunteered in the community.

Residence Move-In Volunteer Sep. 2012 and Aug. 2015

University of Calgary Residence Services, Calgary, AB, Canada

Helped residence students move their belongings into their suites on Move-In Day.

Volunteer – multiple occasions Oct. 2011 – Aug. 2014

University of Calgary Centre for Community-Engaged Learning, Calgary, AB, Canada

Sample duties: helped build an elementary-school playground; helped sort clothing at the Mustard Seed; helped recruit for UCalgaryCares programs; helped sort flood-relief donations at the Siksika First Nation.

Volunteer Aug. 2013

Alberta Flood Aid Benefit Concert, Calgary, AB, Canada

Helped clean up the field; set up the VIP area; and directed parking.

Flood-Relief Volunteer Jun. 2013
The City of Calgary, Calgary, AB, Canada
 Helped clean up homes in two neighbourhoods on two separate days after the June 2013 flooding in Calgary.

Relay for Life Volunteer – multiple occasions Jun. 2008 – Apr. 2013
Canadian Cancer Society, Strathmore, AB, Canada and Calgary, AB, Canada
 Helped set up and run five Relay for Life events in Strathmore and at the University of Calgary.

UCalgaryCares Costa Rica Volunteer May 2012
University of Calgary Centre for Community-Engaged Learning, Isla Chira, Costa Rica.
 Travelled with a group of other students to Costa Rica for two weeks to complete numerous volunteer projects for an elementary school and a lodge in a rural island community. The projects involved painting classrooms, sidewalks, fence posts, and bedrooms; repainting a basketball court; and building a bus stop.

Web Developer Sep. 2010 - Apr. 2011
Students in Free Enterprise at Mount Royal University (SIFE MRU), Calgary, AB, Canada
 Set up and maintained the organization's team wiki; assisted with the development of the organization's website.

HONOURS AND AWARDS

NSERC Postgraduate Doctoral Scholarship (PGS-D) (\$21,000/year)	2018 - 2021
Alberta Innovates Graduate Student Scholarship (\$31,500/year)*	2018 - 2020
U of C Eyes High Doctoral Recruitment Scholarship (\$25,000/year)*	2017 - 2020
Alberta Graduate-Student Scholarship (\$3000)	2016
U of C Computer Science Department Research Award (\$1500)	2015
Alberta Innovates-Technology Futures Graduate Student Scholarship (\$26,500/year)	2014 - 2016
NSERC Undergraduate Student Research Award (USRA) (\$6000 for 4 months)	2014
Queen Elizabeth II Graduate Scholarship (\$10,800)†	2014
U of C SU Undergraduate Research Symposium - GSA Award Honourable Mention (\$500)	2013
NSERC Undergraduate Student Research Award (USRA) (\$5700 for 4 months)	2013
Jason Lang Scholarship (\$1000)	2012 and 2013
Louise McKinney Scholarship (\$2500)	2011

PRESS COVERAGE

Microsoft Research (blog) "VROOM: Giving body to telepresence" May 2020
<https://aka.ms/AA8bj56>

Microsoft Vancouver (blog) "Connection is everything" Feb. 2020
<https://mcec.microsoft.ca/blog/connection-is-everything/>

* Reduced to top-up.

† Awarded but not disbursed.

CBC Spark (radio) "It's a bird, it's a plane, it's...a drone video conferencing system!"
<http://www.cbc.ca/1.3270846>

Oct. 2015

CBC News (article) "Drone study looks to revolutionize video-conferencing"
<http://www.cbc.ca/1.3209183>

Aug. 2015

SELECTED SKILLS AND QUALIFICATIONS

Human-Computer Interaction:

User Experience (UX) Research, UX Design, Prototyping, Lab Experiments, Field Studies, Observation Studies, Interview Studies, Ethnographic Methods, Qualitative Methods, Quantitative Methods, Mixed Methods

Computing Science:

Computer Graphics, Algorithms, Computer Vision

Programming languages, tools, platforms, and environments:

Unity, JavaScript, Node.js, C#, .NET, Visual Studio, Expression Blend, Objective-C, Swift, iOS, PHP, MySQL, HTML, HTML5, CSS, Java, C, C++, Python, Assembly

Technologies:

Cross Reality (XR/AR/VR/MR) Development (HoloLens, Windows Mixed Reality VR, Oculus Quest), WebRTC Development, Robotics Programming, Hardware Prototyping, 3D Printing, Physical Prototyping, Arduino, VICON Motion Capture, Microsoft Kinect

Software Engineering:

UML, Object-Oriented Design, Git

Other:

Teaching, Supervision, Technical Communication, Video Editing, Photo Editing, Oral Communication