To: Sinan Aral

From: Jackson Hutton

Subject: Request for Interview on Machine Learning and Misinformation

Dear Dr. Sinan Aral,

Good afternoon. My name is Jackson Hutton, and I am a student at the Khoury College of Computer Sciences at Northeastern University. I am currently involved in a research project which focuses on how machine learning can be used to detect and combat fake news. Given your extensive work in this area, particularly your foundational study on the spread of misinformation online and your leadership at the MIT Initiative on the Digital Economy, I would be honored to interview you for my project.

Through my research, I want to explore best practices and future directions in using data-driven strategies to address misinformation. As a leading expert who has advised both academic and industry stakeholders, you are uniquely positioned to offer insight into the complexities of detecting and curbing digital falsehoods. I believe that speaking with you will enrich my work, helping me understand the practical challenges and emerging solutions in this rapidly evolving field.

If you are open to participating, I would greatly appreciate scheduling a 60- to 90-minute interview at your convenience. I would like to perform this interview online on Zoom. Your perspective would be invaluable to my research, and I am committed to respecting your schedule and keeping the conversation focused and productive.

Thank you for considering my request. Should you be available for an interview, please let me know a few dates and times that suit your calendar. I look forward to the possibility of discussing your expertise and insights.

Happy spring break,

Jackson Hutton
Northeastern ‘27
hutton.j@northeastern.edu

To: Sinan Aral

From: Jackson Hutton

Subject: Next Steps for Scheduled Interview on Misinformation and Machine Learning

Dear Dr. Aral,

Thank you very much for agreeing to speak with me for my research project on machine learning and fake news detection. I appreciate your time and willingness to share your expertise. We will be meeting on **March 10th at 1:30PM,** for approximately 1.5 hours on this Zoom link, as discussed, if that still works for you: https://zoom.com/jackson_meeting. Below are some questions I plan on asking.

1. What inspired your initial interest in researching misinformation on social media and how it spreads?
2. From your perspective, what are the most promising machine learning strategies currently being used to identify fake news?
3. How do you see emerging technologies (like deepfakes or AI-generated text) influencing the field?
4. What are some of the major technical and ethical hurdles that researchers encounter when developing automated misinformation detection tools?
5. Where do you see the field of misinformation detection heading over the next five years?
6. How might regulation or platform policies impact the success of these tools?
7. How do you envision machine learning-based detection strategies being implemented at scale by major social media platforms or news outlets?
8. What advice would you give students or early-career researchers interested in contributing to solutions for misinformation?

Thank you again for your time.

Sincerely,
Jackson Hutton

To: Sinan Aral

From: Jackson Hutton

Subject: Request to Reschedule Interview Due to Unforeseen Circumstances

Dear Dr. Sinan Aral,

I hope you've been doing well. First, thank you again for agreeing to speak with me regarding my research on machine learning and misinformation. Your willingness to share your insights has been invaluable.

Unfortunately, an unforeseen personal matter has arisen, and I am no longer able to meet at our previously agreed-upon time. Would it be possible to reschedule our interview for another date between **March 7th and March 13th**?

I understand the extra trouble this might cause, and I am committed to making the rescheduling process as smooth as possible. I look forward to speaking with you soon.

Sincerely,
Jackson Hutton

To: Sinan Aral

From: Jackson Hutton

Subject: Re: Interview; Thank You for Your Valuable Insights

Dear Dr. Aral,

I hope you're doing well. I wanted to reach out and express my sincere appreciation for the time and expertise you shared during our recent interview on machine learning and misinformation. Your insights into the current trends, challenges, and ethical considerations in detecting fake news provided a wealth of knowledge that I am already integrating into my research.

Speaking with you was truly eye-opening and will undoubtedly enhance the depth and relevance of my final project. I especially appreciated your candor regarding the complexities of implementing machine learning solutions at scale, as well as your suggestions for aspiring researchers in this field. Your guidance has helped shape not only my perspective, but also the practical direction of my work.

Thank you once again for your generosity, both with your time and expertise. If you have any further thoughts or resources you'd like to share, I would be thrilled to hear them. Please also feel free to reach out if there is anything I can do to support or promote your ongoing initiatives or projects.

Best of luck in your future endeavors,
Jackson Hutton

Jackson Hutton

ENGW3302

3/12/2025

Correspondence Analysis Essay

I selected Dr. Sinan Aral because his prominent contributions to misinformation research and machine learning, demonstrated by his extensive citations and leadership at MIT's Initiative on the Digital Economy, are supported by a large body of evidence. In their 2018 study, Aral and colleagues observed that "falsehood diffused significantly farther, faster, deeper, and more broadly than the truth in all categories of information" (Vosoughi, Roy, & Aral, 2018, p. 1146), highlighting the urgency of developing effective detection strategies.

Additionally, I recognized the importance of establishing credibility in my initial outreach. By referring to Dr. Aral's specific accomplishments and leadership roles at MIT, I acknowledged both his expertise and the larger context of his work. This acknowledgment not only reinforced the relevance of my request but also demonstrated a respect for his time, laying the groundwork for a productive, collaborative conversation.

I also took care to demonstrate how my research interests intersect with Dr. Aral's, using relevant language and highlighting shared academic concerns. This strategy helped frame the interview request not as a one-sided favor, but as an opportunity for both parties to exchange ideas on a rapidly evolving topic.

In creating my communications to Dr. Aral, I made three specific rhetorical choices: I used audience awareness by maintaining a respectful, formal tone that acknowledges Dr. Aral's

standing and schedule, a choice reinforced by professional writing research that emphasizes adapting language to audience needs. I also ensured clear purpose by explicitly outlining each email's aim (persuading participation, providing logistics, handling scheduling changes, and offering gratitude). Finally, I practiced genre adaptation by tailoring each message to its respective context, an approach grounded in workplace communication principles outlined by Mizrahi's *Writing for the Workplace*.

Taken together, these considerations highlight not only the value of Dr. Aral's expertise for my research on detecting and combating fake news, but also the importance of strategically crafting communications to engage high-profile experts. By aligning audience awareness, clear purpose, and genre adaptation with established guidelines, I aimed to foster a professional dialogue that effectively leverages Dr. Aral's insights while adhering to best practices in workplace communication.

References

Mizrahi, J. (2015). *Writing for the workplace: Business communication for professionals*. Business Expert Press.

Vosoughi, S., Roy, D., & Aral, S. (2018). The spread of true and false news online. *Science, 359*(6380), 1146–1151. https://doi.org/10.1126/science.aap9559