Yutong Zhao (Joshua)

Email:joshuazyt11@gmail.com **|** Phone Number: 217-308-8093 **|** Mailing Address: 307 East Daniels Street, 61820

Education

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign   **Dec 2021**
Bachelor of Arts in Economics & Philosophy   GPA:3.5/4.00

Experiences

Human Factor Computing Lab   **Dec.2019-Present**
Research Assistant   *Champaign, IL*

- Assisted research in data privacy and cybersecurity and worked on a project in Phishing email detection
- Contributed to research through conducting literature review and drafting the related section in the paper
- Reviewed over 30 papers in Phishing detection and cited 6 research papers in Blacklisting, Heuristic rules and Data Mining methods

Undergraduate Research Apprentice Program   **Jan.2019-June. 2019**
Research Assistant   *Champaign, IL*

- Worked on a project on societal governance issues in information age for the School of Information Science at UIUC
- Reviewed academic literatures and found over 60 sources from academic journals to support arguments in a paper
- Cooperated with students from diverse background from arts and engineering and presented at the Undergraduate Research Symposium and a research symposium at Illinois Informatics Institute
- Contributed to published text in *Glimpses in A Post-Capitalist Future*

Evan Guthrie Law Firm   **Oct. 2018 – Jan. 2018**
Intern   *Online*

- Conducted research and wrote articles for a legal website and submitted on weekly basis
- Independently explored various legal topics and contributed comments and thoughts on these issues

Activities

Daily Illni   **Sept. 2019- Present**
Columnist   *Champaign, IL*

- Researched and contributed articles to opinion section on *Daily Illini* every two weeks
- Wrote over 6000 words on broad range of social issues from Economic analysis on consumer products to policy evaluation on government data privacy regulations
- Gained research and analytic skills from reading and analyzing authoritative academic journals and media articles

Philosophy Club-Phi Sigma Tau Honor Society   **Sept 2017 – Present**
President   *Champaign, IL*

- Initiated 16 weekly academic discussions every semester on topics in Philosophy to help students develop skills in academic discussions, debating, public speaking, and critical thinking
- Organized 'Brown Bags', monthly lunch-talks with professors about their recent works which provides Philosophy students with opportunities to establish professional and academic connections
- Drafted and sent weekly advertising Newsletters and inform Philosophy students with events on campus

Speech Team at U of I   **Sept. 2017-Sept.2018**
Member   *Champaign, IL*

- Participated in a student-run organization that competes in regional as well as national tournaments
- Enhanced public-speaking and communication skills by competing in regional tournaments in Extemporaneous Speech and Impromptu Speech

Skills

Language skills:

- Chinese (Native), English (Professional & Academic)

Technical Skills:

- R(Machine Learning, Data Analysis), Python(Machine Learning, Data Analysis), Microsoft Excel, WordPress

307 East Daniels, Champaign, IL 61820

2/18/2020

800 17th Street N.W.
Suite 1100
Washington, DC 20006
United States of America

Dear Sirs at Holland & Knight LLP,

I'm writing this letter to apply for the Public Policy & Regulation Intern at Holland & Knight LLP. I came across this internship at the campus website Handshake. As a Pre-law student interested in public policy, I'm excited to see this amazing opportunity. I believe my experience below will help me succeed in this position.

I've been practicing my reasoning and analytical skills through conducting literature reviews for research projects in informatics and cybersecurity research. My tasks include search and review related academic works and contribute insights to research questions. The constant exposure to dense academic journals made me quick at retaining new information and prepared me with the critical thinking skills required for this position.

I've always had an interest in public policy and constantly trimming my writing skills by serving as a columnist at Daily Illini, the school newspaper at UIUC. I have been writing column articles every other week and most, if not all, of my articles, are related to social problems and public policies. I individually research and provide analysis on topics including analysis of consumer products and government regulations and offer my own analysis and arguments.

For communication and leadership skills, I've served as president of the Philosophy Club-Phi Sigma Tau Honor Society at UIUC. I contributed to the philosophy of students' community through organizing activities and building a bridge between fellow philosophy students and the department of philosophy. We host professional and academic events regularly to engage students in academic discussions and debates and also connect them with faculty members.

I can also perform data analytic tasks if needed. My econometrics courses have prepared me with proficiency in data analysis and machine learning packages in Python and R . I've individually completed a project on predicting Ether price, digital currency on Ethereum blockchain platform, with machine learning algorithms.

I am very excited about the potential opportunity of interning in the Holland & Knight LLP and have enclosed my resume for review. I would greatly appreciate the opportunity for an interview. Please contact me at (217) 308- 8093, or email me at yutongz3@illinois.edu. Thank you for your time and considerations.

Sincerely,

Yutong Zhao

Over the past few years, we've found ourselves in unnervingly Orwellian scenarios where our democracy seems to be in jeopardy. Think of Cambridge Analytica, a British political consulting firm that used Facebook's Application Programming Interface to harvest millions of people's personal data and used them to influence the 2016 U.S. presidential election and Brexit referendum. The firm's involvement led to unexpected election outcomes in both events and cast doubt on their legitimacy.

Although it is unlikely that we find ourselves in Orwell's vision of 1984, the extent to which information can influence our daily lives and the democratic process has become worrisome. In the Information Age, our exposure on the internet directly affects the security of our personal privacy. But interestingly, most of our information isn't controlled by the government but by private corporations. This raises both private and public concerns: What effort should we make against the for-profit exploitation of our personal data?

Before we can answer that question, we have to know what kinds of data should be explicitly protected — after all, not all data are created equal. It should come as no surprise that some personal information is more sensitive than others. For example, people's gender identity is probably less sensitive than their home address.

The kind of data that is generating security concerns is known as PII, or Personal Identification Information. In short, it is any data that can potentially identify specific individuals. PII can enable identity theft and can cause great harm to the individual if breached. In terms of usage, three types of information are discussed the most due to their security importance and personal value: online privacy, financial privacy and medical privacy.

Online privacy includes all personal information generated by online interactions. These are the kinds of data shared on social media or online questionnaires. The Cambridge Analytica scandal involved the collection of this kind of information through surveys.
Financial privacy, like credit card information, is especially sensitive because of the threat of financial fraud.
Medical information, including medical records and, increasingly, DNA data, has long been regulated to prevent misuse by health care practitioners, insurance companies and researchers.

But how is PII being used and regulated? Although data binning, putting user data into 'bins' of characteristics, can make it hard to trace information back to individual users, this doesn't prevent companies from using PII to target advertisements and propaganda, as was the case for Facebook and Cambridge Analytica. Instead, the regulation of data focuses on keeping a company's privacy policy from being unfair or from changing without informing users in good faith. Specifically, regulations mandate privacy requirements in the notification, collection and sharing of information.

However, companies are hardly compliant on their own. According to a 2016 analysis of 17,991 free apps, 71% of apps that lack a privacy policy are legally required to have one. The study further finds that apps across the board exhibit 1.83 inconsistencies with privacy requirements on average. It is important to note that not all breaches are due to malicious intent. They may simply result from app developers' uncertainty about the vague policy requirements.

This gives rise to the next question: How effective are our existing privacy regulations? Unfortunately, there is no generally applicable data privacy statue on the federal level in the U.S. Only Delaware and California have comprehensive privacy legislation: the California Online Privacy Protection Act (CalOPPA) and Delaware's Online Privacy and Protection Act (DOPPA).

However, there are laws that protect specific types of privacy breaches on the federal level. For example, the Health Information Privacy and Portability Act (HIIPA) protects patients' personal health information from being traced to individual people, and the Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act (GLBA) requires financial institutions to safeguard their customers' financial data. But it seems that these acts only keep privacy rights from transgression — they don't explicitly define users' data privacy rights in general. The European Union's General Data Protection Regulation, on the other hand, gives users such rights including explicit opt-in consent, the right to request their data and the right to delete their data. It is far more comprehensive than American regulations in the sense that it gives both positive rights to the user and provides protection on users' privacy.

It seems that the enhanced power of information algorithms and statistical learning techniques require us to take new challenges head-on. We need to find a happy medium where we can maximize our personal benefits from this technology while being able to maintain the integrity of our democracy.