Born and raised in the high-tech city of Shenzhen, my interest in human-machine interaction began at a young age, when I was always drawn to the screen of a service robot in the mall and wanted to converse with them. As I progressed through college, I learned more about how to apply technology to improve users’ experience as well as call actions for minorities.

My interest in information started when I took the course Critical Data Visualization. Besides developing skills like using python to collect data and using d3.js to generate dynamic data visualization, I also focus on the human side because they are the data source. In the final project, I created a data visualization using d3.js to inform people about the Asian American Hate Crime that occurred in New York. I gathered information from the two major news outlets: The New York Times and Asian-focused Media The World Journal, as well as the New York Police Department, which is in charge of criminal investigations. I collected data from 6 aspects: name of the Data Sources, which exact hate crime they reported, time, the title of the report, and the link to the report articles for readers to access. I visualized 65 reports from January to April and used three different colors to represent the three sources. In the visualization, I classified each specific crime to let readers see clearly that the World Journal reports more crimes than the New York Times and NYPD because of their different positions and the different people they represented. I also conclude a visualization concerning the victims' gender that females are more likely to be targeted. I intend to increase public awareness that the actual number of hate crimes against Asians may be significantly higher than that reported by police and the mainstream media (New York Times). From this project, I learned that data is not always objective and credible since people may collect information with bias.

In addition to data visualization, I think the information can also be a powerful analytic tool to let people understand the seriousness of an issue and draw attention to the gender inequality problem in China. Using Python, I grabbed data from Zhihu, one of the most popular subject discussion sites. To my amazement, from 2015 to nowadays, the heat on this issue has not abated. There are 10,263 total discussions towards what contributes to gender differences, as well as outlining the inequalities females have faced at work and in their daily lives. This question had 434,636 vote-ups, which is an extremely large number. Surprisingly, many participants remarked that the female group also contributes to gender bias. I used to think that gender inequality was a recent concern, but the data tells me the problem has been around since 2015 and has not been addressed. I used to think that gender inequality was caused by men, but the data tells me that women can also significantly contribute to gender inequality. The information helps me to understand the problem so I can come up with a more comprehensive solution. Trying to raise awareness, since many females feel gender bias through gaze, I utilized Pose Net and JavaScript to construct an interface that leverages the image of people's eyes to focus on the players' bodies, allowing them to experience how awful it is to be glanced at by others.

In addition to using the information to solve social problems, I also focus on applying technology to shorten the distance between people. Nowadays, digital technologies make people so far away from each other. People are isolated because they only look at their phones. To make people value the interaction with others, in the project, I aim to create an exploratory experience where multiple users follow a sound to find each other as they explore in the dark. I used socket.io to update players’ real-time position, StereoPannerNode(Web API) for generating clear sound differences guiding users in the dark, and only when they encounter others, they can skip the dark and jump to the end page through the use of express.js.

To practice the knowledge I gained and form a more well-rounded understanding of the real world, I became a UX intern at iFlyPlus Private Aircraft Company. I surveyed 200+ targeted clients and collected their preference data (departure time, target city, passenger capacity, and other special requirements). I visualized the data by using d3.js and found there’s a huge potential in promoting the experience of taking pets with clients when they travel since they mentioned pets are part of their family. Base on this finding, I designed a set of posters and pet air tickets, advertising pet rides in our company. This helped the company to achieve a sharp increase in followers on the platform Xiaohongshu. Many of them eventually became our customers.

I was attracted by MPS-IS because it’s Professors can cooperate with the companies and clients to provide real-life experience to me. From the previous internship in CITIC Securities as well as the iFlyPlus Private Aircraft Company, I believe it’s necessarily to cultivate the ability to apply skills to solve real-life practical issues. Furthermore, as a student who aspire to be a UX or web development intern in Google, MPS-IS can provide me with great opportunities to achieve my goal. For the course path, I hope to focus on Interactive Technologies. On one hand, I hope to take courses like Ethics in New Media and Special Topics - Human-AI Interaction Design Research, cultivating my design and critical thinking skills for project thesis development. On the other hand, I hope to take courses like The Structure of Information Networks and Software Engineering, helping me to build novel interactive tools benefiting people’s lives.