

Yixin Zou

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Research Interest

My research focuses on the intersection of privacy, security, and human-computer interaction, particularly (1) understanding users' security and privacy perception and behavior, and (2) providing actionable solutions and guidance to help users better manage their personal data, in contexts such as data breach notifications, phishing/malware warnings, and website opt-out choices.

Education

- 2017-2022** Ph.D. in Information, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI
Advisor: Dr. Florian Schaub
- 2015-2017** B.S. in Advertising, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Urbana, IL
Graduated with the Highest Honor (top 5% in the college)

Publications

Referred Journal & Magazine Publications

- 2019** **Beyond Mandatory: Making Data Breach Notifications Useful for Consumers**
Zou, Y., & Schaub, F. *IEEE Security & Privacy*, 17(2), 67-72. [\[link\]](#)

Referred Conference Papers

- 2019** **An Empirical Analysis of Data Deletion and Opt-Out Choices on 150 Websites**
Habib H., Zou, Y., Jannu A., Sridhar N., Swoopes C., Acquisti A., Cranor L. F., Sadeh N., & Schaub, F. To appear in *Proceedings of the Fifteen Symposium on Usable Privacy and Security (SOUPS '19)*, Santa Clara, CA, August 11-13.
- "We Can't Live Without them!" App Developers' Adoption of Ad Networks and Their Considerations of Consumer Risks**
Mhaidli A. H., Zou, Y., & Schaub, F. To appear in *Proceedings of the Fifteen Symposium on Usable Privacy and Security (SOUPS '19)*, Santa Clara, CA, August 11-13.
- You 'Might' Be Affected: An Empirical Analysis of Readability and Usability Issues in Data Breach Notifications**
Zou, Y., Danino, S., Sun, K., & Schaub, F. In *Proceedings of the 2019 CHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems*. ACM. [\[link\]](#)
- Put Your Warning Where Your Link Is: Improving and Evaluating Email Phishing Warnings**
Petelka, J., Zou, Y., & Schaub, F. In *Proceedings of the 2019 CHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems*. ACM. **Best Paper Award Honorable Mention.** [\[link\]](#)
- 2018** **"I've Got Nothing to Lose": Consumers' Risk Perceptions and Protective Actions after the Equifax Data Breach**
Zou, Y., Mhaidli, A. H., McCall, A., & Schaub, F. In *Proceedings of the Fourteenth Symposium on Usable Privacy and Security (SOUPS '18)*, Baltimore, MD, August 12-14. **Distinguished Paper Award.** [\[link\]](#)

- 2017** **Really Being There?: Telepresence in Virtual Reality Branded Content**
 Shen, J., Stenger, M., Lechowicz J., Chen C., Yang, R., Sivasankaran, A., Wang Y., Zhang, J., Zou, Y., Katz, H., & Nelson M. R. Paper presented at *the Annual Conference of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC)*, Chicago, IL, August 9-12.
- Users' Attitudes towards the "Going Dark" Debate**
 Addawood, A., Zou, Y., & Bashir, M. In Proceedings of *the 8th International Conference on Applied Human Factors and Ergonomics (AHFE '17)*, Los Angeles, CA, July 17-21. [\[link\]](#)
- The Impacts of Privacy Hypocrisy, Victim Characterization, Gender, and Context on Bystanders' Guilt Attribution in a Cyberbullying Suicide**
 Yao, M., Zou, Y., Linz, D., & Jaoude, P. Paper presented at *the 67th Annual Conference of International Communication Association (ICA)*, San Diego, CA, May 25-29.

Referred Conference Work-in-Progress and Workshop Papers

- 2018** **An Empirical Analysis of Online Consent and Opt-Out Experiences**
 Habib, H., Zou, Y., Jannu, A., Swoopes, C., Cranor, L. F., & Schaub, F. Paper presented at *the 11th Annual Privacy Law Scholars Conference (PLSC '18)*, Washington D.C., USA, May 30-31.
- Concern But No Action: Consumers' Reactions to the Equifax Data Breach**
Zou, Y. & Schaub, F. In *Proceedings of the ACM Conference on Human Factors in Computer Systems (CHI '18) Late Breaking Work*, Montreal, Canada, April 22-26. [\[link\]](#)
- An Empirical Analysis of Website Data Deletion and Opt-Out Choices**
 Habib, H., Zou, Y., Jannu, A., Swoopes, C., Acquisti, A., Cranor, L. F., Sadeh, N., & Schaub, F. Paper presented at *CHI '18 Workshop "The General Data Protection Regulation, an opportunity for the HCI Community?"*, Montreal, Canada, April 22. [\[link\]](#)

Referred Poster Presentations

- 2018** **"I've Got Nothing to Lose": Consumers' Risk Perceptions and Protective Actions after the Equifax Data Breach**
Zou, Y., Mhaidli, A. H., McCall, A., & Schaub, F. Poster presented at *the 6th Midwest Security Workshop (MSW6)*, Urbana, IL, April 14.

Honors and Awards

- 2019** **CHI Best Paper Honorable Mention**, ACM SIGCHI (awarded to top 5% submissions).
- 2018** **SOUPS Distinguished Paper Award**, USENIX Association (awarded to 1 out of 28 papers in technical sessions).
UMSI Pre-candidacy Paper Distinction Award, School of Information, University of Michigan (awarded to top 10% of students in this endeavor in any given year).

Fellowships and Grants

- 2019** **Symantec Research Labs Graduate Fellowship**, Symantec Research Labs (\$20,000).
SIGCHI Student Travel Grant, ACM SIGCHI (\$1,800).
UMSI PhD Travel Grant, School of Information, University of Michigan (\$1,000).
- 2018** **SOUPS 2018 Student Grant**, USENIX Association (\$695).
Rackham Conference Travel Grant, Rackham Graduate School, University of Michigan (\$1,050).
UMSI PhD Travel Grant, School of Information, University of Michigan (\$1,000).
- 2017** **Annual Fund Scholarship**, College of Media, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (\$2,000).

Invited Talks

- 2019** **Lengthy, Vague, and Inactionable: Issues with Data Breach Notifications and Implications for Public Policy**
Invited speaker. PrivacyCon, the Federal Trade Commission. Jun. 2019.
- 2018** **Designing Effective and Actionable Data Breach Notices: Implications for Firefox Monitor**
Invited speaker. The Firefox Monitor team, Mozilla. Nov. 2018.
- Information Regulation: How information Regulates and Is Regulated & Privacy**
Guest lecturer. SI 110: Introduction to Information. School of Information, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI, USA. Oct. 2018.

Media Coverage

- 2019** **The data breach notification study featured in news articles | May 2019**
Our study on readability and usability issues of data breach notifications, published at CHI '19, has been featured by futura.org.
- 2018** **The Equifax data breach study featured in news articles and radio interview | August 2018**
Our study on consumer reactions to the Equifax data breach, published at SOUPS '18, has been featured by the New York Times and the Detroit Free Press, reprinted by over 80 regional and local media outlets. Also interviewed by WWJ Detroit Radio on this topic.

Research Experience

- 05/2019-Present** **Symantec Research Labs**, Culver City, CA.
Symantec Research Labs Intern. Mentors: Kevin Roundy, Acar Tamersoy.
- 01/2019-04/2019** **Mozilla Corporation**, Mountain View, CA.
Research Assistant - Web Security Engineer. Mentor: Jennifer Davidson.
- Worked as the user experience staff for the launch of Firefox Monitor new site. Conducted usability testings on wireframe prototypes to help refine in-product communications and design.
 - Conducted online experiments on different design variants of data breach notifications on user comprehension and reaction.
- 09/2017-Present** **University of Michigan**, Ann Arbor, MI.
Graduate Student Research Assistant. Mentor: Florian Schaub.
- Conduct mixed method research on user interactions with security and privacy notices and choices in various contexts. Topics include: understanding consumer reactions to data breaches, improving phishing warnings in email clients, developing effective mechanisms for marketing/targeted ads opt-outs and data deletion.
- 09/2016-05/2017** **Illinois Informatics Institute**, Champaign, IL.
Research Fellow. Mentor: Masooda Bashir.
- Investigated social and psychological factors that come into play in users' debate on controversial topics on Twitter, such as encryption backdoor and vaccine.
 - Duties included annotating tweets, building regression models of survey data, and creating visualization dashboards.
- 04/2016-05/2017** **College of Media**, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Champaign, IL.
Research Fellow. Mentors: Mike Yao, Michelle Nelson.

- Assisted with online experiments on bystanders' attitude toward cyberbullying cases with different kinds of privacy violation and sources of breached data. Duties included drafting experimental design, constructing and running surveys on MTurk.
- Examined consumer attitude and reactions to content branded in virtual reality technology. Assisted with filming a 360-degree video as the testing material and collecting interview data.

09/2015-05/2017 **Center for Innovation in Teaching and Learning**, UIUC, Champaign, IL.
Data Analytics Intern. Mentor: Maryalice Wu.

- Coded and analyzed open-ended survey data of UIUC's Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) in ATLAS.ti and SPSS.
- Provided assistance to clients with survey question writing, sampling methodology, pilot testing, statistical analyses, and report writing.

Teaching Experience

Fall 2019 **Graduate Student Instructor**, SI 501: Contextual Inquiry, University of Michigan. Primary instructor: Kentaro Toyama.

Fall 2018 **Graduate Student Instructor**, SI 110: Introduction to Information, University of Michigan (47 students). Primary instructor: Chris Teplovs.

University Service

2018-2019 **Undergraduate Research Opportunity Program (UROP) | Mentor**

Lead two undergraduate students to work on research projects: hold weekly meetings; help mentees build relevant skills such as survey research, interviewing, and data analysis; assist mentees in making the transition from classroom learning to real-world research applications.

UMSI Peer Mentorship Program | Mentor

Work as the mentor of incoming PhD students: attend monthly meetings; answer questions about the program and life as a doctoral student in general; provide support to each other's research work and well-being.

Skills

Programming Languages

Statistical Analysis

Survey Design

Qualitative Coding

Languages

Python, JavaScript, HTML, CSS

R, SPSS, Microsoft Excel, Tableau, Google Analytics

Qualtrics, SurveyGizmo

ATLAS.ti, NVivo

Mandarin (native), English (full proficiency)