

Application for User
Research Coordinator
at The Tor Project, Inc.

Kevin Gallagher's *PORFOLIO*



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Summary of Qualifications

I am well suited to the User Research Coordinator because of the following qualifications:

- **Experience:** I have conducted several user experience research projects on Tor and related tools, resulting in several publications.
- **Commitment:** I am highly committed to privacy as a human right, and have performed trainings and co-founded my own privacy non-profit. I also have shown commitment to Tor by being a member of the Tor Community Council.
- **Collaboration:** Having lived most of my life in multi-cultural cities and collaborated with people from all over the world, I work well within diverse teams. I speak both English and Portuguese, and am willing to learn more languages.



Skills I've learned from my projects

Qualitative Analysis

I have gained experience in performing qualitative analysis using both thematic analysis and grounded theory based approaches.

Interview Skills

I have performed semi-structured interviews for several studies, including designing the interview protocols and performing the interviews themselves.

Guidance and Coordination

My work guiding PhD and Masters students in performing research has taught me many coordination skills, including how to work in big teams.

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RESUME



Kevin Gallagher

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“Research Mission: Using interdisciplinary Cybersecurity and Privacy research to solve societal problems and advance human rights.”

Experience

Current **Assistant Professor** FCT UNL

- Research on User Experience, Privacy, and Anonymity
- Teaching Computer Science Courses

2021-2023 **Invited Assistant Prof.** IST UL

- Research on User Experience, Privacy, and Anonymity
- Teaching Computer Science Courses

2020-2021 **Postdoctoral Associate** NYU

- Research on Access Control and Activist Security
- Teaching Computer Science Courses

Education

2014 **BA in Computer Science**

- Major in CS
- Minor in Math

2016 **Msc in Computer Science**

- Information Security & Privacy
- HCI

2020 **PhD in Computer Science**

- Tor UX

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COVER LETTER

COVER LETTER

Kevin Gallagher
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Welcome to my portfolio!

My name is Kevin Gallagher and I'm a researcher and activist with a passion for making privacy usable for people from all walks of life. I currently work as an assistant professor at the NOVA School of Science and Technology in Lisbon, Portugal.

Here you will find a quick summary of my research work focusing on Tor and other aspects of privacy. These topics include user perceptions of Tor UX issues, UX of the data removal process, and more. The end of the portfolio includes links to my select publications that may be of interest.

Feel free to reach out if anything is unclear, or if there are any further questions.

Sincerely,

Kevin
Gallagher

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SELECT PROJECTS

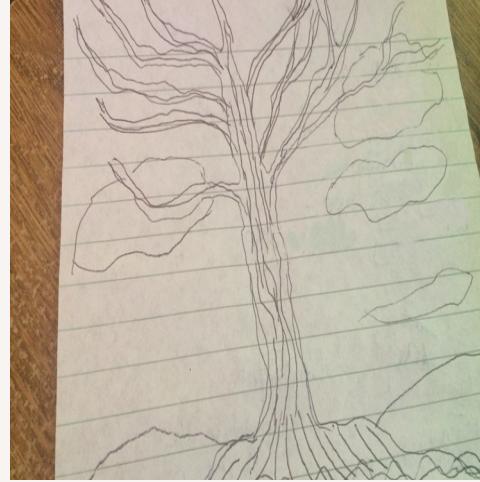
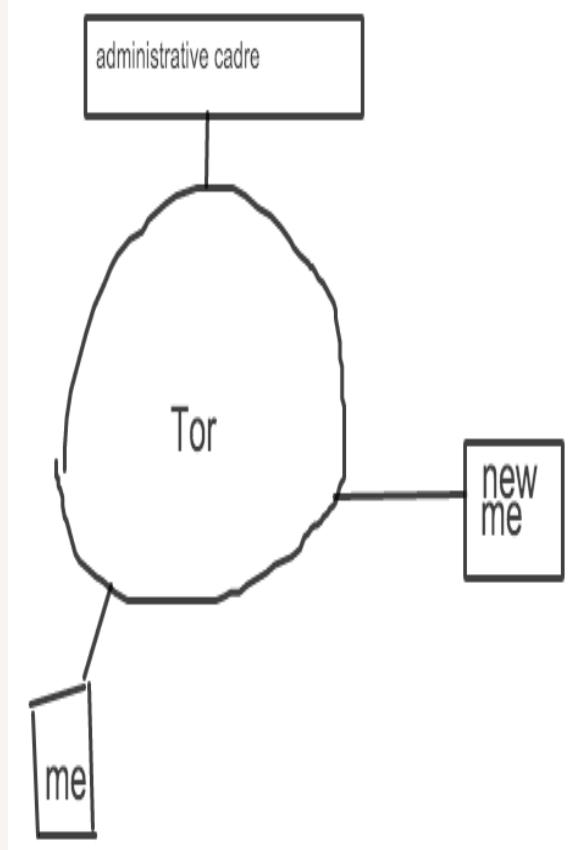
SELECTED PREVIOUS PROJECTS

Tor User Experience

I studied how users understood and used the Tor anonymity network, as well as what roadblocks exist for new users of the Tor Browser.

Data Removal User Experience

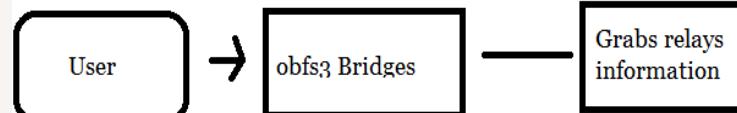
As part of a larger team I studied the difficulties users face in removing their information from people search websites, both when performing manual removal and when hiring third party services to remove information.



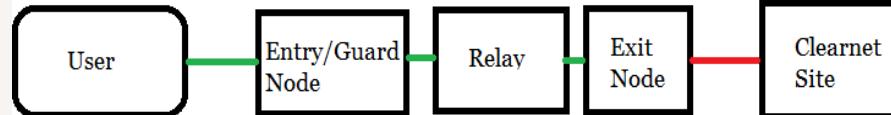
Tor UX

We studied how individuals understood and used Tor, and what roadblocks they had while using the Tor Browser.

Setting up first connection



Connecting to Clearnet



This includes the tor nodes and current information about the tor network.

Tor User Experience – User Perceptions

Research Questions

We wished to study how experts and non-experts understood and used the Tor Anonymity Network.

Data Analysis

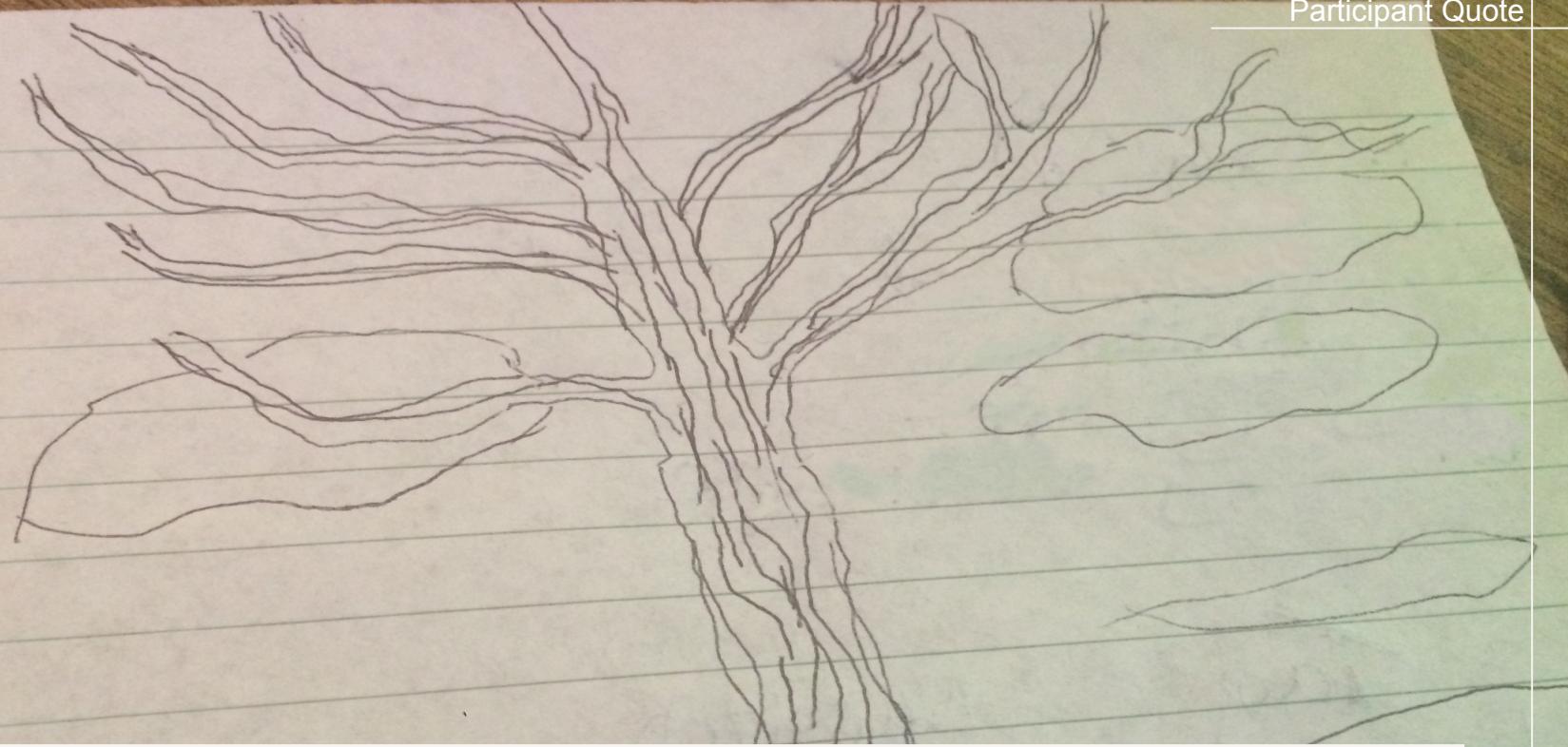
Given this is qualitative data and we did not wish to be prescriptive to avoid tainting our results, we used a variant of grounded theory to iteratively code our data and find emerging themes.

Method Chosen

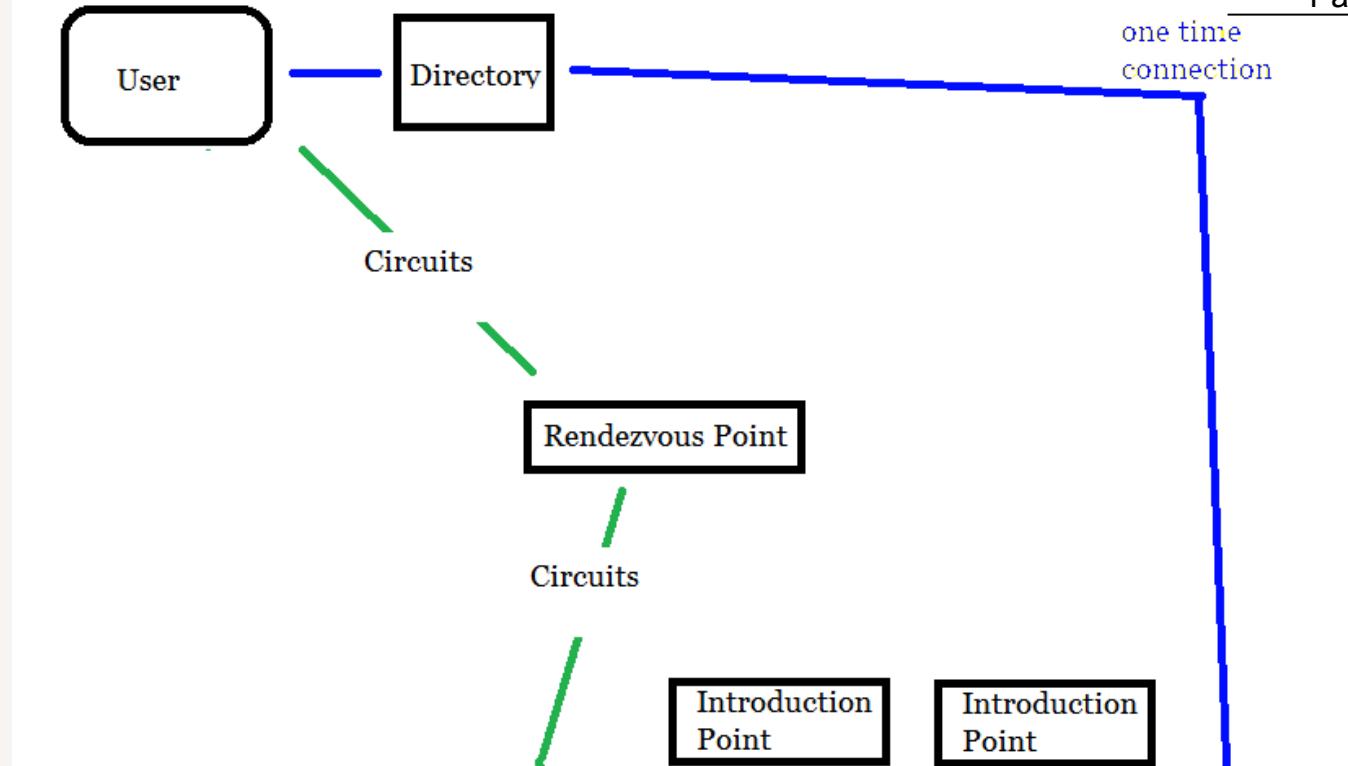
Given the level of detail we needed in our responses, we chose to use semi-structured interviews with each of our participants. To try to get a representative sample, we recruited via various online channels.

Results

We found that both experts and non-experts make mistakes when using the Tor Browser that could lead to deanonymization, and that non-experts focus on metaphors for their understanding of Tor while experts focus on the technical aspects of Tor.



"Tor ties in with the Tree of Knowledge... [b]ecause there's no filters really on Tor."



"It was just a different way of distributing information systems, so... if we could do it a bit differently that would be a bit better."

Hidden Service

Tor User Experience – Stop Points

Research Questions

We wished to study how users, particularly new users, experience routine Web browsing when using the Tor Browser.

Data Analysis

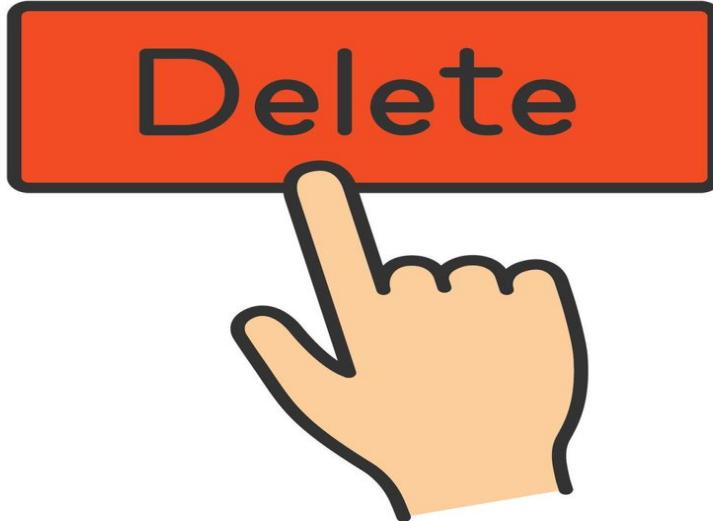
We first used qualitative analysis to classify different problem types, then counted the frequency of each problem type. The data analysis was predominantly qualitative.

Methods Chosen

To collect both qualitative and quantitative data we used a survey that was electronically triggered each time the user switched browsers. We enriched our data with semi-structured interviews.

Results

We find several categories of issues that may hinder the adoption of Tor Browser among new users, including broken functionality, geolocation issues, crashes, and more.



Data Removal UX

In this project we study the difficulty of data requests and removal from People Search Websites, or websites that sell and/or freely provide the public information of individuals.



Data Removal – User Experiences

Research Questions

We wished to study the steps required during information self-removal from People Search Websites and the experiences of using paid removal services.

Data Analysis

We analyzed the data using thematic analysis to see emergent themes from the experiences of users who tried self-removal and who hired paid removal services.

Methods Chosen

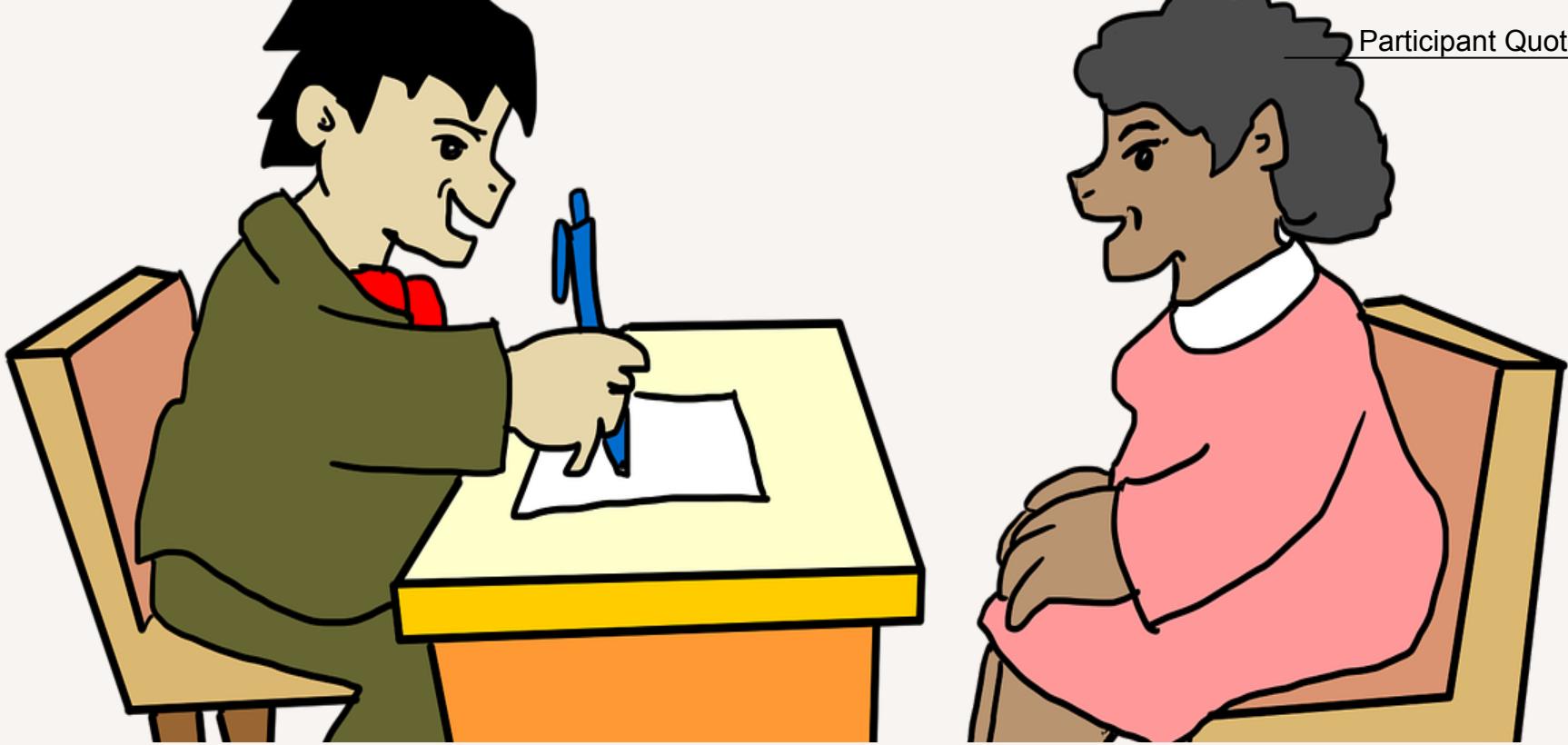
Since we desired deeper understandings of the experiences users had when attempting to remove their information from the web, we decided to do semi-structured interviews.

Results

We find that the manual removal process is time-consuming and involves navigating a series of obstacles and dark patterns, and that removal services are not thorough, fully transparent, or even responsive.



“Some [People Search Websites] took multiple attempts to get it [the information] removed.”



"I still feel very uncomfortable about... [giving away PII], especially given that they're not responsive to any of my emails."

Skills Gained

Advising and Coordination

In several of my publications I played a more guidance-focused role and helped students make the correct research choices.

Qualitative Analysis

I have performed qualitative data analysis with using both thematic analysis and grounded theory based approaches.

Semi-Structured Interviews

I have performed semi-structured interviews for several of my projects, with examples of my interview guides available in my publications.

Technical Writing

I have summarized my work in several high-quality research documents, including several papers that have been published in top-tier conferences.

Survey Design

I have designed surveys and helped students design surveys for several of my research projects.

Research Collaboration

I frequently collaborate with individuals on various projects, which provides the experience I need to work with regional experts from multiple areas.

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SELECT PUBLICATIONS

Selected Research Project Links

| Project title | Skills | Date | Ref | Category |
|---|--|---------------|--------------------|----------|
| New me: Understanding expert and non-expert perceptions and usage of the Tor anonymity network | Interviews Qualitative Data Analysis | 2017 at SOUPS | PDF at SOUPS | UX |
| Peeling the onion's user experience layer: Examining naturalistic use of the Tor Browser | Survey Design Interviews Qualitative Data Analysis | 2018 at CCS | PDF Available Here | UX |
| "it feels like whack-a-mole": User experiences of data removal from people search websites | Video production | 2022 at PETS | PDF at PETS | UX |

Selected Research Project Links

| Project title | Skills | Date | Ref | Category |
|--|--|----------------|---------------|--------------------------|
| Studying the Online Deepfake Community | Qualitative Analysis Student Advising and Coordination | 2023 at JOTS | PDF at JOTS | Measurement |
| Enhancing the Unlinkability of Circuit-Based Anonymous Communications with k-Funnels | Algorithm Design Security Evaluation Statistical Attacks | 2023 at CoNEXT | PDF at CoNEXT | Traffic Analysis Defense |

THANK YOU

Do you have any questions?

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