

Laura Kurek

Ph.D. Candidate | School of Information | University of Michigan

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[laurakurek.github.io](https://github.com/laurakurek)

My research examines how state actors, particularly Russia, attempt to manipulate online information environments. I employ both quantitative and qualitative methods, and have worked with data from social media platforms (X/Twitter, Rumble, Telegram) as well as peer-production knowledge sites (Wikipedia). Prior to my Ph.D., I was a data science specialist researching disinformation and inauthentic online activity.

Education

Ph.D., University of Michigan

School of Information
GPA: 4.0, Research areas: Social Computing, Computational Social Science
Advisors: Dr. Ceren Budak and Dr. Eric Gilbert

Expected May 2027
Ann Arbor, MI

B.S., Georgetown University

Walsh School of Foreign Service
Major: Science, Technology & International Affairs
GPA: 3.86, Magna Cum Laude. Concentration: Security
Certificate: Russian, Eurasian, and Eastern European Studies

May 2016
Washington, DC

Semester Abroad, Moscow International University

American Councils Advanced Russian Language and Area Studies Program (RLASP)

Fall 2014
Moscow, Russia

Publications

- 2025** Laura Kurek, Ceren Budak, and Eric Gilbert. 2025. Wikipedia in Wartime: Experiences of Wikipedians Maintaining Articles About the Russia-Ukraine War. Proc. ACM Hum.-Comput. Interact. 9, 2, Article CSCW209 (April 2025), 27 pages. <https://doi.org/10.1145/3711107>
- 2025** Laura Kurek, Kevin Zheng, Eric Gilbert, and Ceren Budak. 2025. Outsourcing an Information Operation: A Complete Dataset of Tenet Media's Podcasts on Rumble. arXiv preprint [arXiv:2503.19802](https://arxiv.org/abs/2503.19802)
- 2025** Joshua Ashkinaze, Ruijia Guan, Laura Kurek, Eytan Adar, Ceren Budak, Eric Gilbert. 2025. Seeing Like an AI: How LLMs Apply (and Misapply) Wikipedia Neutrality Norms. arXiv preprint [arXiv:2407.04183](https://arxiv.org/abs/2407.04183)

Other writings:

- 2024** Laura Kurek, Tim Harper, Aliya Bhatia, & Nathalie Marechal. 2024. Rules of the Road: Political Advertising on Social Media in the 2024 U.S. Election. Center for Democracy & Technology.
<https://cdt.org/insights/report-rules-of-the-road-political-advertising-on-social-media-in-the-2024-u-s-election/>

Industry Experience

Center for Democracy and Technology

May 2024-Aug. 2024
Washington, DC

Technology Policy Intern | Elections & Democracy

- Co-led the production of a 40-page report on social media platforms' political advertising policies
- Conducted interviews with 7 social media companies and 5 generative AI companies
- Presented report findings to civil society groups, legislators, and industry representatives

Accenture Federal Services

Sept. 2017-July 2022
Washington, DC

Data Science Associate Manager

- Managed research production, interfacing between client and internal data science teams. Defined research objectives and developed analytical methods to assess online disinformation.
- Collaborated on joint reports with allied governments. Presented findings to technical and non-technical client audiences. Published over 30 reports.

Dec. 2021-July 2022

Data Science Specialist

- Co-led a 9-person research team: negotiated report priorities, trained 3 new members, resolved data access issues. Published over 50 reports.
- Developed network- and account-level methods to identify and describe information campaigns.
- Led a 4-part series into a state-aligned network, assessing campaign scope and tactics.

Dec. 2020-Nov.2021

Technology Delivery Senior Analyst

- Authored social media and network analysis reports. Identified three COVID-19 disinformation campaigns. Developed a hashtag network script, advanced network visualizations, and a Django web app for topic modeling.
- Led a change management software implementation for 10 teams within a federal IT department.

Dec. 2018-Nov.2020

Technology Delivery Analyst

- Facilitated two simultaneous agency-wide software implementations using Agile development
- Managed relationships with over 40 stakeholders to standardize over 200 software requirements.
- Led 7 software training sessions for over 150 users and supported 300-person user testing.

Sept. 2017-Nov.2018

The Fulbright U.S. Student Program

June 2016-June 2017
Perm, Russia

Fulbright English Teaching Assistant

- Led eight English-language classes weekly of 8-15 students at Perm National Research Polytechnic University, Linguistics Department.
- Taught intermediate Russian language classes to first-year international students.
- Organized a bi-monthly English conversation club. Provide faculty support translating academic papers and administrative documents from Russian to English.

Conference Presentations and Invited Talks

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| 2025 | <i>Misinformation and Disinformation Online</i>
SI 315 Interpersonal & Psychological Implications of Social Media. April 1. |
| 2025 | <i>Tenet Media: Foreign state funded content creation</i>
UM Political Communication Working Group. November 22. |
| 2024 | <i>Wikipedia in Wartime: Experiences of Wikipedians Maintaining Articles about the Russia-Ukraine War.</i>
Wiki Workshop 2024. June 20. |
| 2023 | <i>(Not) here to build an encyclopedia: How do Wikipedians maintain articles related to the Russo-Ukrainian war?</i>
UM Computational Social Science Working Group. December 8. |

Awards

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| 2025 | University of Michigan Rackham Graduate Student Research Grant, Pre-candidacy (\$1,500) |
| 2024 | University of Michigan Rackham Doctoral Intern Fellowship, Summer 2024 (\$12,990)
University of Michigan Rackham Conference Travel Grant (\$900) |
| 2023 | University of Michigan School of Information Travel Grant (\$500) |

Professional Development and Service

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| 2025 | Organizer, <i>CSCW workshop - Beyond Information: Online Culture and Information Disorder</i>
Reviewer, <i>ICWSM</i> ; <i>Wiki Workshop</i> |
| 2024 | Presenter, <i>Wiki Workshop</i>
Participant, <i>ICWSM workshop - Digital State Sponsored Disinformation and Propaganda Information</i> ; <i>CRA/CCC workshop - Future of Research on Social Technologies</i>
Reviewer, <i>CSCW</i> |
| 2023 | Participant, <i>ACL</i> ; <i>CSCW</i>
Reviewer, <i>ICWSM</i> |

Skills

Human Languages: Advanced Russian language proficiency [reference: CEFR C1 Level, Alta Level 10 Advanced Plus]

Computer Languages: Proficient in Python, including the libraries Pandas, Tensorflow, PyTorch, and Transformers

Data Science Skills: Jupyter notebook, network analysis, topic modeling, and social media analysis