

Laura Kurek

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

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Education

Ph.D., University of Michigan

School of Information

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)

Interviewed and featured on RLASP website after successful semester abroad

Fall 2014
Moscow, Russia

Work Experience

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.

Accenture Federal Services

Sept 2017-July 2022
Washington, DC

Data Science Associate Manager | Client: Department of State (DOS)

- 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 | Client: DOS

- 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 | Client: DOS, Health and Human Services (HHS)

- 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 HHS IT department.

Dec. 2018-Nov.2020

Technology Delivery Analyst | Client HHS, Department of Interior (DOI)

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

Sept. 2017-Nov.2018

Professional Communities at Accenture Federal Services

Jan. 2020-July 2022

Women in Data Science Community – Co-founder

- Founded the first mentorship program for women in Accenture Federal's AI practice. Organized 42 participants for the mentorship program and 10 events on workplace gender equity.
- Recruited five team members to expand the mentorship program and events planning in the 2022 fiscal year. The second year of the mentorship program involved over 60 participants.

Blockchain Community of Practice – Thought Leadership Co-Lead

Oct. 2018-Oct.2019

- Co-authored a white paper on blockchain identity solutions. Contributed to a white paper on blockchain applications for medical records.
- Designed and led educational blockchain workshops for both client and internal audiences.

Conferences

2023 European Union Joint Research Center Disinformation Workshop

September 2023

Invited Attendee

- Invited to attend a 2-day workshop led by EU disinformation experts, researchers and civil servants

Talks

Computational Social Science Working Group

December 2023

Presenter

- Presented pre-candidacy research to UMSI students and faculty for feedback and presentation practice

Teaching

Georgetown University, Computer Science Department

July 2015-May 2016

Teaching assistant

- Held weekly office hours for first-year computer science students learning the C++ programming language. Graded all homework assignments and projects.

Internships

Woodrow Wilson Center for International Scholars

May-Aug. 2015

Wilson Quarterly Writing Intern

- Researched and authored 7 articles on international issues. Only intern of 10 published in the Fall 2015 *Wilson Quarterly* publication.

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