

Rama Adithya Varanasi

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<https://merama.github.io/> 

Research Statement

My research lies in Human Computer Interaction (HCI), computer science, and development sociology, where I study how day to day technologies are used for self-empowerment by working communities in marginal settings. In particular, I am interested in examining how collaboration between human and machine agents impact agency and motivation of digital workers. I plan to use my findings to design ethical and intelligent socio-technological systems that focus on improving occupational wellbeing of working communities.

Research Areas

Human computer interaction • HCI4Development • human-machine collaboration • digital labor • future of work • wellbeing • learning science • emerging markets

Education

- 2017-cur. **Ph.D.**, Human Computer Interaction, *Cornell University*
Advisers: Dr. Nicola Dell & Dr. Aditya Vashishta
- 2015-17 **M.S.**, Information Science, *Pennsylvania State University*
Adviser: Dr. John Carroll
CGPA: 3.89
- 2009-13 **B.Tech.**, Information Technology, *SRM University*
CGPA: 3.96

Publications

PEER REVIEWED

- 2021 **Varanasi, R. A.**, Vashishta, A., Kizilcec, R. F. & Dell, N. Technostress and Burnout: How Smartphone Use Impacts Teachers' Professional Wellbeing in Low-Income Contexts. *Proceedings of the ACM on Human-Computer Interaction: CSCW, 2021. [Under review]*
- 2021 **Varanasi, R. A.**, Vashishta, A., & Dell, N. Tag a Teacher: A Qualitative Analysis of WhatsApp-Based Teacher Networks in Low-Income Indian Schools. *Proceedings of the 2021 CHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems*

- 2020 **Varanasi R. A.**, Vashistha, A., Parikh, T., & Dell, N. Challenges and Issues Integrating Smartphones into Teacher Support Programs in India. *In Proceedings of the 2020 International Conference on Information and Communication Technologies and Development*.
- 2019 **Varanasi, R. A.**, Kizilcec, R. F., & Dell, N. (2019). How Teachers in India Reconfigure their Work Practices around a Teacher-Oriented Technology Intervention. *Proceedings of the ACM on Human-Computer Interaction: Vol. 3, Issue CSCW, Article 220*. 2019.
- 2018 **Varanasi, R. A.**, Dicicco, E., & Gambino, A. (2018). Facebook Reactions: Impact of Introducing New Features of SNS on Social Capital. *In International Conference on Human-Computer Interaction (pp. 444-451)*. Springer, Cham
- 2017 **Varanasi, R. A.**, Hanrahan, B. V., Wahid, S., & Carroll, J. M. (2017). TweetSight: Enhancing Financial Analysts' Social Media Use. *In Proceedings of the 8th International Conference on Social Media & Society (p. 22)*. ACM.

WORKSHOPS

- 2019 **Varanasi, R. A.**, & Dell, N. Understanding Technology Reconfiguration Practices by Teachers at the Margins of Intersectionality. *In Proceedings of the 2019 CHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems*.
- 2018 **Varanasi, R. A.**, Parikh, T., & Nicola Dell. Solidarity in Education: Organizations' Use of Technology to Support Low-income Schools. *In Proceedings of the 2017 ACM Conference on Computer Supported Cooperative Work and Social Computing (CSCW '17)*. ACM.
- 2018 Lim, S., **Varanasi, R. A.**, & Parikh, T. (2018, February). GLIDE (Git-Learning IDE; Integrated Development Environment): In-class Collaboration in Web Engineering Curriculum for Youths. *In Proceedings of the 49th ACM Technical Symposium on Computer Science Education (pp. 1112-1112)*. ACM.
- 2017 **Varanasi, R. A.**, Yan S., & Borge M. (2017, January). Making Design Practices Visible to Young Learners. *Learning sciences conference 2018. Information Science & Technology, Pennsylvania State University*.

Talks

- 2020 Challenges and Issues Integrating Smartphones into Teacher Support Programs in India. *ICTD'20*.
- 2019 How Teachers in India Reconfigure their Work Practices around Educational Technology Interventions. *CSCW'19*.
- 2018 Teaching cognitive apprenticeship design thinking through learning by failure. *Learning sciences conference 2018. Information Science & Technology, Pennsylvania State University*.
- 2016 Understanding the challenges with traditional design evaluation methodologies in after-school learning environments. *3rd International Rutger's iconference, '16*.

Grants, honors & awards

2020	Dissertation grant by <i>QuIRI Institute</i>
2018	Engaged Doctoral grant by <i>Cornell University</i>
2017	International research travel grant by <i>Einuadi Center for International Studies</i> .
2016	Student research grant by <i>Bloomberg Inc.</i>
2015	ACE award for outstanding performance and innovation by <i>Standard & Poor's</i>
2014	Changemaker of the year award for improving the education access to elementary schools by <i>Standard & Poor's</i>

Service

2020	PC, Late breaking work track, <i>CHI'21</i> .
2020	Co-president, <i>Information science department, Cornell University</i> .
2019	Co-chair, <i>IndiaHCT'19</i> .
2019	Co-organizer, <i>HCI across borders, CHI'19</i> .

Professional Experience

May'13- July'15	UX Designer, <i>Standard & Poor's, India</i> . Improved the customer experience of 12 financial modules in the Platform - a flagship financial analytic tool. Avg. user sessions increased by 3.4 mins.
Dec'12- Mar'13	UX Intern, <i>McGrawHill Financials, India</i> . Improved workflows for Key Development and Business Intelligence segments. Improved turn around time of product data by 28%.

Teaching Experience

Jan'18- May'18	Project manager and coach for graduate level research projects <i>Cornell University</i>
Jan'16- Jul'16	Instructor at summer web designing and development workshop <i>Penn State University</i>
Jan'13- May'15	Teacher at Math & Science for low-income govt. school <i>Teach for India</i>

Skills

METHODOLOGIES

Ethnographic methods • user research • wireframes • rapid prototyping • personas • user stories • scenario based design • usability testing • A/B testing.

PROGRAMMING

HTML, CSS & JS • Bootstrap • D3.js • JQuery • Ruby on Rails • Python • R

TOOLS

Adobe Photoshop • Adobe Illustrator • Adobe InDesign • Inkscape • Axure RP • Adobe XD • Miramatrix eye tracker • SPSS.