Michael Yin | Curriculum Vitae

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I design and assess technology to hold people's *feelings and reflections*

Education

University of British Columbia, Vancouver, BC — Sep 2022 - Present
Ph.D. in Computer Science
Advisor: Robert Xiao
Expected Graduation: Aug 2026

University of British Columbia, Vancouver, BC — Sep 2020 - Sep 2022
M.Sc. in Computer Science
Advisor: Robert Xiao
Thesis: *How Subtle Design in Video Games Impacts Player Experience: Qualitative Studies of Two Design Features*

University of Toronto, Toronto, ON — Sep 2015 - May 2020
B.A.Sc. in Engineering Science

Academic Appointments

University of British Columbia, Vancouver, BC
Graduate Research Assistant - X-Lab — Sep 2020 - Present
- Research assistant for various human-computer interaction projects under the supervision of Professor Robert Xiao as part of an M.Sc. and Ph.D.

University of Toronto, Toronto, ON — May 2019 - May 2020
Research Assistant
- Research thesis under the guidance of Professor Timothy Chan.
- Topic: Analyzing Curling Performance Using a Dynamic Programming Approach.

Research Assistant - Dynamic Graphics Project — May 2017 - Aug 2017
- NSERC-sponsored summer research funded by Professor Kyros Kutalakos.
- Project Description: Calculating 3D Object Depth Using Structured Light Imaging.

Research Assistant - Intelligent Sensory Microsystems Laboratory — May 2016 - Aug 2016
- Summer research project under the supervision of Professor Roman Genov.
- Project Description: Developing a Novel Biomedical Wearable for Performance Analysis through Unsupervised Machine Learning.

Peer-Reviewed Publications

[* denotes equal contribution]

TravelTales: Reflecting on Meaningful Travel through Digital Scrapbooking and Journalling 📝 — Oct 2025
Michael Yin, Robert Xiao
Journal Paper accepted at IMWUT 2025

VIBES: Evaluating Real-Time Spatial Interaction Events on the Video Player for Livestreaming Applications 📝 — Jun 2025
Michael Yin, Robert Xiao
Conference Paper accepted at IMX 2025 [Acceptance Rate: 40.0%]

Entertainers Between Real and Virtual - Investigating Viewer Interaction Engagement, and Relationships with Avatarized Virtual Livestreamers 📝 — Jun 2025
Michael Yin, Chenxinran Shen, Robert Xiao
Conference Paper accepted at IMX 2025 [Acceptance Rate: 40.0%]

TravelGalleria: Supporting Remembrance and Reflection of Travel Experiences through Digital Storytelling in Virtual Reality 📝 — Apr 2025
Michael Yin, Robert Xiao
Conference Paper accepted at CHI 2025 [Acceptance Rate: 24.9%]
🏆*Honourable Mention* Award [top 5% of submissions]

How We See Changes How We Feel: Investigating the Effect of Visual Point-of-View on Decision-Making in VR Environments 📝 — Nov 2024
Michael Yin, Robert Xiao
Journal Paper accepted at CSCW 2024

VirtualNexus: Enhancing 360° Video AR/VR Collaboration with Environment Cutout and Virtual Replicas 📝 — Oct 2024
Xincheng Huang*, Michael Yin*, Kaseya Xia, Robert Xiao
Conference Paper accepted at UIST 2024 [Acceptance Rate: 24.0%]

Press A or Wave: User Expectations for NPC Interactions and Nonverbal Behaviour in Virtual Reality 📝 — Oct 2024
Michael Yin, Robert Xiao
Journal Paper accepted at CHI PLAY 2024 [Acceptance Rate: 23.5%]

Lies, Deceit, and Hallucinations: Player Perception and Expectations Regarding Trust and Deception in Games 📝 — Apr 2024
Michael Yin, Emi Wang, Felix Ng, Robert Xiao
Conference Paper accepted at CHI 2024 [Acceptance Rate: 26.4%]

Drifting Off in Paradise: Why People Sleep in Virtual Reality 📝 Apr 2023
Michael Yin, Robert Xiao
Conference Paper accepted at CHI 2023 [Acceptance Rate: 28.4%]

How Should I Respond to "Good Morning?": Understanding Choice in Narrative-Rich Games 📝 Jun 2022
Michael Yin, Robert Xiao
Conference Paper accepted at DIS 2022 [Acceptance Rate: 23.0%]
🏆*Honourable Mention* Award [top 4.3% of submissions]

The Reward for Luck: Understanding the Effect of Random Reward Mechanisms in Video Games on Player Experience 📝 May 2022
Michael Yin, Robert Xiao
Conference Paper accepted at CHI 2022 [Acceptance Rate: 24.7%]

Projects In-Submission

Dissolving a Digital Relationship: A Critical Examination of Digital Severance Behaviours in Close Relationships
Michael Yin, Angela Chiang, Robert Xiao
Manuscript under review

"I Don't Have Faith in The Developers to Use My Feedback": Understanding Player Values and Expectancy for Reporting Systems in Video Games
Michael Yin, Chenxinran Shen, Robert Xiao
Manuscript under review

The UnReality Camera: Instant Snapshots with Generative AI
Michael Yin, Angela Chiang, Robert Xiao
Manuscript under review

Reflective Motion and a Physical Canvas: Exploring Embodied Journaling in Virtual Reality
Michael Yin, Nadine Wagener, Robert Xiao
Manuscript under review

Navigating Oversharing: Designing Systems for Boundary Awareness and Self-Reflection During Digital Communication
Michael Yin*, Chenxinran Shen*, Angela Chiang, Robert Xiao
Manuscript under review

The Words That Can't Be Shared: Exploring the Design of Unsent Messages
Michael Yin, Robert Xiao
Manuscript under review

Other Research Work

Understanding and Supporting Interactions with Virtual Agents Apr 2025
Doctoral Consortium at CHI 2025

How Subtle Design in Video Games Impacts Player Experience: Qualitative Studies of Two Design Features Aug 2022
M. Sc. Thesis

Points Gained in Curling: Modelling Curling as a Markov Reward Process Jun 2021
Michael Yin**,** Timothy Chan
Abstract accepted and presented at CORS 2021

Calculating 3D Object Depth Using Structured Light Imaging Aug 2017
Presentation at Undergraduate Summer Research Conference

Teaching Appointments

Teaching Assistant Sep 2020 - Dec 2021
University of British Columbia, Vancouver, BC
- CPSC304 - Introduction to Relational Databases (3 terms)
- CPSC344 - Introduction to Human-Computer Interaction (1 term)

Mentorship

Across UofT and UBC, I have mentored five students (all undergrads). Three of them have worked with me on research projects, all of which have resulted in co-authored papers. I have previously been a **REX** (**R**esearch **EX**perience Program) mentor, as part of UBC's undergraduate research program. I have also mentored at various hackathons at UBC, including twice at **cmd-f** (Western Canada's largest hackathon that supports underrepresented genders in tech).

Academic Service

Organizing Committee Ongoing
- Virtualization Chair for CHI PLAY'25

Associate Chair Ongoing
- Associate Chair for CHI'25 WiP, CHI PLAY'24 WiP, CSCW'25 Full Papers

Student Volunteer Ongoing
- Student Volunteer at DIS'22, CHI'23, CHI'24

Paper Reviewer Ongoing

- Conducted 40 peer reviews across ACM SIGCHI conferences and leading journals.
- Received 8 Special Recognitions for reviewing.

Graduate Recruiting Group Leader Dec 2022 - Apr 2024

- Wrote initial reviews for all HCI applicants for two recruiting seasons.

Industry Experience

Software Engineering Intern - Shopify (International R&D Team) May 2019 - Aug 2019
Toronto, ON

- Wrote backend code to process and model data using user input for Shopify's shipping calculator.
- Created an integration pipeline to allow Shopify partners to incorporate their applications.
- Developed UI widgets to improve merchant experience and collect data on merchant behaviour.

Software Engineering Intern - Stanza (Data Team) May 2018 - Apr 2019
San Francisco, CA

- Implemented a backend API platform to centralize ad revenue payments and show revenue statistics.
- Developed automated jobs to query for and display engagement data.
- Created an event collection and transformation pipeline using AWS tools and Airflow.

Awards, Grants, and Scholarships

Awards

NSERC CGS D May 2023 - Apr 2026

- $40,000/year, for 3 years.

UBC Computer Science 4YF Sep 2022 - Aug 2026

- $18,200/year plus tuition, for the first 4 years of PhD studies.

University of Toronto Dean's List (8 times) Sep 2015 - May 2020

Grants

NSERC Computer Science Undergraduate Student Research Award ($6000) May 2017

- Proposal: Calculating 3D Object Depth Using Structured Light Imaging

Scholarships

The Crocker Foundation Bursary ($2600) Dec 2016
Mario and Dorothy Pesando Scholarship ($2567) Oct 2016
University of Toronto Scholar ($6000) Sep 2015

Relevant Skills

Programming Languages: Python, Javascript, C#, C, HTML, CSS, SQL

Other Skills: Qualitative and Ethnographic Research, Prototyping and Design, Game Development