Morva Saaty

UX Researcher

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Summary

- Research Interests: Human-Computer Interaction, Information Visualization, Augmented Reality
- Passionate in bringing users' perspectives into the design and development process
- Experienced in User Research in the contexts of Rural Communities, Social Computing, Gaming/Recreation, and Children/Families
- Experienced in using different Research Methodologies, Machine Learning techniques, Data Visualization, Eye tracking system

Education

Virginia Tech (Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University) — *Blacksburg, VA, US*
PH.D. IN COMPUTER SCIENCE AND APPLICATIONS — *Aug. 2020 - present*

University of Tehran — *Tehran, Iran*
M.SC. IN INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY ENGINEERING — *Sep. 2016 - Dec. 2018*

University of Tehran — *Tehran, Iran*
B.SC. IN INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY ENGINEERING — *Sep. 2011 - Jun. 2016*

Experience

Virginia Tech — *Blacksburg, VA, US*
GRADUATE RESEARCH AND TEACHING ASSISTANT — *Jun. 2019 - Present*

- **The Integration of Mindfulness and Wellness into Rural Exergames**
  - Understanding users' needs and investigating game features to design a mobile exergame to encourage users to be more active while engaging them in nature and relieving their stress.
  - Conducted diary studies and focus groups of +40 participants.
  - Led a research team of two undergraduate students for their HCI capstone project to add storytelling, mindfulness features, and AR technology.
  - **Methods:** Diary Studies, Focus Groups, Personas, Mixed-method research, Wireframing, Design Thinking
- **SmarTrail and Thru-Hikers**
  - Uncovering the socio-technological world of hikers to develop a cyber-based information system.
  - Collected and Analyzed data from social media platforms (e.g., Instagram and Reddit).
  - Cross-functionally worked with researchers in different areas (urban planning, computer science, recreation ecology).
  - Designed customized interview questions for different types of stakeholders.
  - Led a group of 5 undergraduate students for the Capstone Project to collect, analyze, and visualize data from Instagram.
  - **Methods:** Social Media Analysis (Sentiment Analysis, Topic Modelling Analysis), Interviews, Thematic Analysis, Data Visualization
- **Shared Experiences through Remote Play**
  - Exploring social experiences afforded by app/game/technology-mediated and understanding design considerations for remote recreation solutions and establishing closeness.
  - Collaborated in a team focused on User-Centered design process (user research, visioning, and concepts)
  - Designed, conducted, and analyzed diary studies and focus group sessions of +90 participants
  - **Methods:** Surveys, Diary Studies, Focus Groups, Qualitative/Quantitative Analysis
- **Minimizing Disorientation in Informal Learning Environments**
  - Designed and developed a mobile app for young learners to minimize disorientation, which help them reorient towards the learning task, in an informal learning environment (science festival).
  - Led and facilitated user studies across 70+ participants testing the mobile app and observing users' behaviors in the science festival.
  - **Methods:** Participant Observation, Experiment Design, Qualitative Analysis, App Development
- **Teaching Assistant -** TA of *"Introduction to HCI"* course for 4 semesters, *"Information Visualization"* course for one semester, and *"Urban Computing"* course for one semester.

University of Tehran — *Tehran, Iran*
GRADUATE RESEARCH AND TEACHING ASSISTANT — *July. 2017 - Jan. 2019*

- **Master Thesis - Audio-Visual Attention Model in Cloud Gaming**
  - Studying the effect of audio features on players' Visual Attention Maps contributing toward a Conceptual Audio-Visual Game Attention Model for efficient bitrate allocation in cloud gaming (Using Eye Tracking system).
  - Designed and conducted experimental user studies for 20 participants.
  - **Methods:** Experiment Design, Semi-Structured Interviews, Qualitative/Quantitative Analysis
- **Teaching Assistant -** TA of *"Introduction to HCI"* course for 4 semesters and *"Artificial Intelligence"* course for 2 semesters.

Skills

Programming Languages	Python, C/C++, Java, SQL, R, HTML/CSS/JS
Research Methods & Design	Surveys, Interviews, Diary Studies, Focus Groups, Observation, Personas, Prototyping, Experimental Design
Evaluation Methods	Heuristic Evaluation, Statistical Hypothesis Testing, Usability Testing, Social media Analysis
Tools	Figma, LucidChart, Sketch, Miro, Balsamiq, Qualtrics
Libraries and Frameworks	D3.js, Pandas, PyTorch, Django, Ruby on Rails

Selected Publications

CHI Play	**Pokémon GO with Social Distancing: Social Media Analysis of Players' Experiences with Location-based Games** , Full Paper	*2022*
ETRA	**Game Audio Impacts on Players' Visual Attention, Model Performance for Cloud Gaming**, Short Paper	*2022*
COMPASS	**Studying Sustainable Practices of Appalachian Trail Community based on Reddit Topic Modelling Analysis**, Poster Paper	*2022*
CHI	**Integrating Social Media into the Design Process**, InContext Workshop	*2022*
IDC	**Designing Mobile Applications to Minimize Disorientation in Informal Learning Environments**, Best short paper honorable mention award	*2021*
CSCW	**Parenting, Studying And Working At Home In A Foreign Country: How International Student Mothers In The US Use Screen Media For And With Their Young Children**, Full Paper	*2021*
CHItaly	**Exergames and Nature**, NatureHCI Workshop	*2021*
CHI Play	**A Study on Pokémon GO: Exploring the Potential of Location-based Mobile Exergames in Connecting Players with Nature**, Work-In-Progress Paper	*2021*
CHI	**Clash of times: Respectful technology space for integrating community stories in intangible exhibits**, Full Paper	*2020*

Leadership Experiences and Awards

- Cooperated as a mentor to design and guide two capstone projects of seven HCI undergraduate students (Fall 2021, Spring 2022).
- ACM Reviewer Since 2021
- identified as being in the top 10% of graduate students for the College of Engineering at Virginia Tech, Academic year 2021-2022.
- Selected to participate in CRA-WP 2022 (Grad Cohort workshop for women).
- Received Scholarship to participate in Grace Hopper Celebration 2021 and 2022, Tapia 2020, and COMPASS 2022.
- Ranked 22th in National Information Technology Engineering M.Sc. Entrance exam, Summer 2016.

Conference Presentations and Invited Talks

- Presented my position paper titled "Integrating Social Media into the Design Process" at InContext:"Futuring User Experience Design Tools" workshop at CHI'22.
- Presented my research poster titled "Studying Sustainable Practices of Appalachian Trail Communities: Social Media Analysis" at CRA-WP 2022 (Grad Cohort Workshop for Women).
- Presented my research talk titled "Exergames and Nature" in the Social Informatics Meeting at the Center for Human Computer Interaction, Virginia Tech. – Fall 2021.
- Presented my work-in-progress paper titled "A Study on Pok´emon GO: Exploring the Potential of Location-based Mobile Exergames in Connecting Players with Nature" at the Annual Symposium on Computer-Human Interaction in Play (CHI Play 2021).
- Presented my workshop paper titled "Exergames and Nature" at NatureHCI workshop at CHItaly 2021.