Raja Hasnain Anwar

ranwar@umass.edu | LinkedIn | Google Scholar | rhasnainanwar.me | Amherst, MA, USA.

Technical Skills

Programming: Python, C/C++, Java, JavaScript, PHP, SQL, MATLAB, R.

Technologies: Flask, Django, Selenium, Hibernate, Spring, Tornado, SQLAlchemy, jQuery, Node.js, React.js, MySQL, MongoDB, Git, Docker, AWS, Kubernetes, GCP, Kafka, Spark.

Tools: Android Studio, Visual Studio, Oracle, Travis CI, Docker, Matlab, Tableau, PowerBI.

DS / ML / AI: OpenCV, Scikit-learn, Pandas, Numpy, NLTK, Keras, Tensorflow, PyTorch.

Education

University of Massachusetts Amherst — Amherst, MA, USA
Ph.D. in Electrical and Computer Engineering — *Transfer in, Sep 2023 – Present*
Teaching: ENG 191: First Year Seminar (Cybersecurity & AI)

The University of Arizona — Tucson, AZ, USA
Ph.D. in Management Information Systems — *Jan 2021 – May 2023, Transfer out*
Teaching: Penetration Testing, Ethical Hacking, and Social Engineering; Fundamentals of Cloud Computing

National University of Sciences and Technology (NUST) — Islamabad, Pakistan
B.S. in Computer Science — *Sep 2016 – Jun 2020*
Capstone Project: Multimodal Face2Voice: A novel learning paradigm called deep shared latent space learning with a penalization that eliminates branching in multimodal training.

Publications

- Ishtiaq, A. A., and **Anwar, R. H.**, et. al., "Cloud Nine Connectivity: Security Analysis of In-Flight Wi-Fi Paywall Systems," *WiSec 2025*.
- **Anwar, R. H.**, et. al., "In Wallet We Trust: Bypassing the Digital Wallets Payment Security for Free Shopping," *USENIX Security 2024*.
- Islam, M. R., **Anwar, R. H.**, et. al., "Characterizing Encrypted Application Traffic through Cellular Radio Interface Protocol," *IEEE MASS 2024*.
- **Anwar, R. H.**, et. al., "Redefining the Driver's Attention Gauge in Semi-Autonomous Vehicles," *MSWiM 2023*.
- **Anwar, R. H.**, et. al., "Detecting Privacy Threats with Machine Learning: A Design Framework for Identifying Side-Channel Risks of Illegitimate User Profiling," *AMCIS 2023*.

Talks

- "Human-in-the-Loop for Secure Digital Wallets Transactions," *SOUPS 2024*.
- "Keeping Eyes on the Road: The Role of Situated IS Delegation in Influencing Drivers' Situational Awareness," *ICIS 2021*.

Experience

Microsoft — Redmond, WA, USA
Data Science Intern — *May 2025 – Aug 2025*
- Part of Office AI team, designing data infrastructure and automated data collection pipelines to fine-tune LLMs for various Copilot agents.

University of Massachusetts Amherst — Amherst, MA, USA
Graduate Research Assistant — *Sep 2023 – Present*
- Identified side-channels in the 5G control plane, achieving over 95% accuracy in user application and activity recognition over encrypted traffic (IEEE MASS'24).
- Developed a GPU side-channel attack for model classification with over 90% accuracy against major visual and LLM models in PyTorch (under review).
- Led an empirical study on in-flight WiFi paywall security and inferred network tomography and policies to launch tunneling and DoS attacks, across major ISPs and airlines (WiSec'25).

Kaiser Permanente Pleasanton, CA, USA

Data Science Intern *Jun 2023 – Aug 2023*

- Revamped a classification pipeline to accurately identify at-risk patient groups, resulting in 20% improvement.
- Employed spline-based feature transformation models to handle nonlinear features like patient age groups.
- Integrated SHAP value generation for in-depth analysis of the production model's behavior against sensitive features, i.e., gender, age, & race.
- Successfully integrated the developed AI models into a live system by the end of the internship.

The University of Arizona Tucson, AZ, USA

Graduate Research Associate *Jan 2021 – May 2023*

- Led systematic testing of financial systems and EMV protocol through tomographic analysis focusing on credit card transaction policy compliance (USENIX Security'24).
- Developed novel side-channel attacks on typing behavior, achieving 80% accuracy in user profiling and text classification (AMCIS'23).
- Designed a novel driver's attention-gauging and alert mechanism for semi-autonomous to improve takeover time in emergencies by 75x (MSWiM'23, *IEEE Transactions on Intelligent Vehicles (T-IV)).*

TUKL-NUST R&D Center Islamabad, Pakistan

Research Assistant *Apr 2017 – Jun 2020*

- Built an Android app to scan vehicle registration plates using an OCR and display the owner's details from a public database. This app is a part of the RoadwayIntel vehicle surveillance project in the city of Islamabad.
- Gathered 120 hours of video dataset for fish detection and tracking in the wild, used for population estimation.
- Automated image superimposition to generate 20 images per document extraction sample by augmenting foreground and background settings.
- Unified text mining and personally identifiable information (PII) detection pipelines to mask private information from public judicial archives with 70% accuracy.

Hochschule RheinMain Wiesbaden, Germany

Research Assistant *Jun 2019 – Aug 2019*

- Generated a dataset with over 1,000,000 entity pair data points from raw English and German Wikipedia texts for entity relation extraction.
- Architected an LLM pre-training pipeline that leverages context similarity as an entity relation estimator to automate 100% of labeling.

VisionX Technologies Islamabad, Pakistan

Machine Learning Engineer *Jun 2018 – Jun 2019*

- Engineered an OCR and heuristical information extraction pipeline to digitalize hand-written tabular property records with 85% accuracy.
- Developed a web tool to visualize and correct extracted data improving pipeline efficiency by 50%.
- Reproduces multiple solutions from Kaggle's CDiscount Classification challenge and designed hierarchical deep learning models for large-scale visual recognition and classification.

Al Jazeera Remote

Machine Learning Engineer *Aug 2018 – Dec 2019*

- Implemented and trained a key frame extraction model to summarize videos and select top visuals making headlines generation 70% faster.
- Designed and trained an image captioning model for 70% faster on-demand news headlines generation from key frames.
- Integrated real-time audio transcription services for Arabic and English in a live stream with a 5-second delay.
- Developed a large-scale sentiment analysis system to monitor real-time trends from news and social media in English and Arabic.
- Automated multimedia search with an audio matching tool for automatically retrieving audio/video samples using a 10-second audio query.
- Developed a large-scale faces-in-the-wild recognition tool for identifying celebrities from live streams.

Press & Media Coverage

CNET: "Are Digital Wallets Safe? Here's How to Protect Your Financial Information in 2024", Sep 25, 2024.

Consumer Affairs: "Study: The Safety of ApplePay and GooglePay Called Into Question", Sep 16, 2024.

PaymentsDive: "Academics Question Digital Wallet Security", Sep 04, 2024.

Hacker Dose: "Digital Wallet Loophole Allows Criminals to Shop for Free with Locked Cards", Sep 04, 2024.

Business West: "New Study Reveals Loophole in Digital Wallet Security", Aug 30, 2024.

National Science Foundation (NSF): "A New Study Reveals Loopholes in Digital Wallet Security", Aug 23, 2024.

Association for Computing Machinery (ACM): "A Loophole in Digital Wallet Security", Aug 23, 2024.

Forbes: "This Week In Credit Card News", Aug 22, 2024.

TechRadar Pro: "Digital Wallets Allow for the Use of Stolen Credit Cards" (MSN, Yahoo! Tech), Aug 20, 2024.

The Register: "Digital Wallets Can Allow Purchases With Stolen Credit Cards", Aug 20, 2024.

PYMNTS: "5 Emerging Security Imperatives for Digital Wallets", Aug 21, 2024.

Kaspersky: "Digital Wallets Can Enable Cybercriminals to Make Purchases with Stolen Credit Cards", Aug 20, 2024.

NewsBytes: 'Security Flaw Allows Stolen Credit Card Use on Digital Wallets", Aug 20, 2024.

Help Net Security: "Stolen, Locked Payment Cards Can be Used with Digital Wallet Apps", Aug 19, 2024.

ScienceX: "Best of Last Week—..., Loophole in Digital Wallets,...", Aug 19, 2024.

UMass News: "New Study Reveals Loophole in Digital Wallet Security—Even If Rightful Cardholder Doesn't Use a Digital Wallet", Aug 14, 2024.

Honors & Awards

2024 – ACM IMC: Received NSF travel grant to attend ACM Internet Measurement Conference in Madrid, Spain.

2024 – IEEE MASS: Received NSF travel grant to present my work at IEEE MASS 2024 in Seoul, South Korea.

2024 – USENIX Security: Received registration grant to attend USENIX Security in Philadelphia, PA, USA.

2024 – Teaching Fellowship: Selected by College of Engineering at the University of Massachusetts Amherst.

2023 – NSDI: Received USENIX travel grant to attend NSDI'23 in Boston, MA, USA.

2023 – POWDER RENEW: NSF-funded workshop on POWDER wireless emulator at UofU.

2022 – Colosseum Young Gladiator: NSF-funded master class on Colosseum wireless emulator at NEU.

2021 – Nunamaker-Chen Scholarship: Selected by MIS department at The University of Arizona.

2020 – Summer@EPFL: Selected for prestigious summer internship programme (2% acceptance rate).

2020 – Huawei UG Star Researcher: Received for best undergraduate research project.

2019 – DAAD Research Fellow: Selected for German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) research fellowship.