

Alex Atcheson

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Research Interests

I am broadly interested in human-computer interaction, with focuses on accessibility, human-AI interaction, and education. My research seeks to understand and reduce accessibility barriers in higher education. In my work, I have used qualitative methods to generate insights from lived experience about the impact of generative AI on the accessibility of living and learning opportunities in higher education. I leverage quantitative methods, like Bayesian inference, to develop deeper, causal understandings of the sociotechnical implications of AI technologies for accessibility.

Current Position

2021- **PhD Candidate**, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign
Advisor: Karrie Karahalios

Education

- 2021- **PhD in Computer Science**, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign
Advisor: Karrie Karahalios
- 2023-24 **Certificate in Information Accessibility and Design Policy**, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign
- 2017-21 **BS in Computer Engineering/Computer Science**, University of Southern California
Research Mentor: Heather Culbertson

Publications

- 2025 “I’d Never Actually Realized How Big An Impact It Had Until Now”: Perspectives of University Students with Disabilities on Generative Artificial Intelligence
Computer-Human Interaction (CHI)
Alex Atcheson, Omar Khan, Brian Siemann, Anika Jain, Karrie Karahalios
- 2024 Not What it Used to Be: Characterizing Content and User-base Changes in Newly Created Online Communities
Computer-Human Interaction (CHI)
Alex Atcheson*, Vinay Koshy*, Karrie Karahalios
🏆 Best Paper Honorable Mention Award

Honors, Awards, and Grants

- 2024 CHI Best Paper Honorable Mention (Top 5% of submissions)
- 2023 NSF Graduate Research Fellowship Honorable Mention
- 2022 Nominee for Outstanding Teaching Assistant Award
- 2021 Viterbi Award for Outstanding Research
- 2019 Provost Undergraduate Research Fellowship

Teaching

- 2025 CS 101: Introduction to Programming for Scientists and Engineers
University of Illinois
Under Max Fowler and Nico Ritschel
- 2025 CS 519: Scientific Visualization
University of Illinois
Under Eric Shaffer
- 2024 CS 101: Introduction to Programming for Scientists and Engineers
University of Illinois
Under Mattox Beckman
🏆 List of Teachers Ranked as Excellent by Students
- 2023 CS 416: Data Visualization
University of Illinois
Under John Hart
- 2022 CS 101: Introduction to Programming for Scientists and Engineers
University of Illinois
Under Mattox Beckman and Ruby Tahboub
🏆 List of Teachers Ranked as Excellent by Students
- 2022 CS 128: Introduction to Computer Science II
University of Illinois
Under Michael Nowak
- 2021 CS 101: Introduction to Programming for Scientists and Engineers
University of Illinois
Under Neil Davis
🏆 List of Teachers Ranked as Excellent by Students

Invited Talks and Guest Lectures

- 2025 Assistive and Inclusive Technology for Digital Accessibility Workshop
University of Illinois
- 2025 Interactive Computing Seminar
University of Illinois
- 2023 Illinois CS Sail
University of Illinois

Industry

2020 Software Engineering Intern
Nvidia, BlueField SoC Team

Mentoring

2024-25 Zi Wang (Undergraduate at University of Illinois)
Developed software application for simulating part of the academic accommodations process

2024- Anika Jain (Undergraduate at University of Illinois, Masters at Carnegie Mellon University
Human-Computer Interaction Institute)
Co-authored CHI paper on the use of GenAI by disabled university students

2023- Helena Ilic (Undergraduate at University of Illinois)
Analyzed socio-demographic differences between Google search results

Workshops

2023 Organizer for Disability Justice at Illinois Workshop
University of Illinois, Center for Just Infrastructures

Academic Service

2026 ICA Reviewer

2026 CHI Reviewer

2025 CHI Reviewer

2025 ASSETS Reviewer

2024 CHI Reviewer