

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 at Urbana-Champaign
Advisor: Karrie Karahalios

Education

- 2021- **PhD in Computer Science**, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
Advisor: Karrie Karahalios
- 2023-24 **Certificate in Information Accessibility and Design Policy**, University of Illinois at 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 at Urbana-Champaign
Under Max Fowler and Nico Ritschel
- 2025 CS 519: Scientific Visualization
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
Under Eric Shaffer
- 2024 CS 101: Introduction to Programming for Scientists and Engineers
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
Under Mattox Beckman
🏆 List of Teachers Ranked as Excellent by Students
- 2023 CS 416: Data Visualization
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
Under John Hart
- 2022 CS 101: Introduction to Programming for Scientists and Engineers
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
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 at Urbana-Champaign
Under Michael Nowak
- 2021 CS 101: Introduction to Programming for Scientists and Engineers
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
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 at Urbana-Champaign
- 2025 Interactive Computing Seminar
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
- 2023 Illinois CS Sail
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Industry

2020 Software Engineering Intern
Nvidia, BlueField SoC Team

Mentoring

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

2024- Anika Jain (Undergraduate at UIUC, Graduate at CMU HCI)
Co-authored CHI paper on the use of GenAI by disabled university students

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

Workshops

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

Academic Service

2026 CHI Reviewer

2025 CHI Reviewer

2025 ASSETS Reviewer

2024 CHI Reviewer