Alex Atcheson

Email: `samuela7@illinois.edu`

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   CHI Reviewer

2025   CHI Reviewer

2025   ASSETS Reviewer

2024   CHI Reviewer