

Zahra Ashktorab

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Research Interests Human Computer Interaction, Human-AI Collaboration, Human-Centered AI, Conversational AI, Responsible AI, Mixed Methods Research, Social Computing

Employment	IBM Thomas J. Watson Research Center, Yorktown Heights, NY <i>Research Staff Member</i> Leading research on LLM-as-a-judge, conversational agents, and human-AI teaming, with award-winning work on fairness, decision-making, repair strategies, mental models, and fine-tuning conversational AI to address hallucinations and data quality.	September 2017-Present
	Microsoft Research, Cambridge United Kingdom <i>Research Intern</i> Conducted qualitative research on tangible programming interfaces for visually impaired children, leading focus groups to extract design themes and developing a visual simulator for debugging	June 2015-August 2015
	IBM Thomas J. Watson Research Center, Almaden, CA <i>Research Intern</i> Researched NLP methods for discourse discovery and cyberbullying detection on Ask.fm, developing classifiers from collected data	May 2014-August 2014
	Data Science for Social Good Fellowship, Chicago, IL <i>Research Fellow</i> Extracted disaster-relevant information from tweets for Red Cross and UN Disaster Relief, engineering features and building classifiers for tweet classification	June 2013-August 2013
Education	Ph.D. in Information Science: Focus in HCI and Social Computing University of Maryland, College Park	2017
	M.S. in Human-Computer Interaction University of Maryland, College Park	2013
	B.S. in Computer Science, B.A. in Middle East Studies University of Maryland, College Park	2011
Publications	Peer Reviewed Conference Papers EvalAssist: Insights on Task-Specific Evaluations and AI-assisted Judgement Strategy Preferences Zahra Ashktorab , Michael Desmond, Qian Pan, J Johnson, Martin Santillan Cooper, Elizabeth Daly, Rahul Nair, Tejaswini Pedapati, Hyo Jin Do, Werner Geyer <i>ACM Symposium on User Interface Software and Technology (UIST 2025)</i> Emerging Reliance Behaviors in Human-AI Content Grounded Data Generation: The Role of Cognitive Forcing Functions and Hallucinations Zahra Ashktorab , Michael Desmond, Qian Pan, James Johnson, Michelle Brachman, Casey Dugan, Marina Danilevsky, and Werner Geyer <i>ACM Conference on Human-Computer Interaction for Work (CHIWORK 2025)</i> A Case Study Investigating the Role of Generative AI in Quality Evaluations of Epics in Agile Software Development Werner Geyer, Jessica He, Daita Sarkar, Michelle Brachman, Chris Hammond, Jennifer Heins, Zahra Ashktorab , Carlos Rosenberg, and Charlie Hill <i>ACM Conference on Human-Computer Interaction for Work (CHIWORK 2025)</i> MetricMate: An Interactive Tool for Generating Evaluation Criteria for LLM-as-a-Judge Workflow Simret Araya Gebreegziabher, Charles Chiang, Zichu Wang, Zahra Ashktorab , Michelle Brachman, Werner Geyer, Toby Jia-Jun Li, and Diego Gómez-Zará <i>ACM Conference on Human-Computer Interaction for Work (CHIWORK 2025)</i> Interaction Configurations and Prompt Guidance in Conversational AI for Question Answering in Human-AI Teams Jaeyoon Song, Zahra Ashktorab , Qian Pan, Casey Dugan, Werner Geyer, Tom Malone <i>ACM Conference on Computer Supported Cooperative Work (CSCW 2025)</i>	

Togedule: Scheduling Meetings with Large Language Models and Adaptive Representations of Group Availability
Jaeyoon Song, **Zahra Ashktorab**, Tom Malone
ACM Conference on Computer Supported Cooperative Work (CSCW 2025)

Theory of Mind Benchmarks are Broken for Large Language Models
Matthew Riemer, **Zahra Ashktorab**, Djallel Bouneneffouf, Payel Das, Miao Liu, Justin D. Weisz, Murray Campbell
International Conference on Machine Learning (ICML 2025)

Helping the Helper: Supporting Peer Counselors via AI-Empowered Practice and Feedback
Shang-Ling Hsu, Raj Sanjay Shah, Pratik Senthil, **Zahra Ashktorab**, Casey Dugan, Werner Geyer, Diyi Yang
ACM Conference on Computer Supported Cooperative Work (CSCW 2023)

SME-in-the-loop: Interaction Preferences when Supervising Bots in Human-AI Communities
Zahra Ashktorab, Michael Desmond, James M Johnson, Qian Pan, Casey Dugan, Michelle Brachman, Carolina Spina
ACM Conference on Designing Interactive Systems Conference (DIS 2023)

Decision Making Strategies and Team Efficacy in Human-AI Teams
Imani Munyaka, **Zahra Ashktorab**, Casey Dugan, J Johnson, Qian Pan
ACM Conference on Computer Supported Cooperative Work (CSCW 2023)

Fairness Evaluation in Text Classification: Machine Learning Practitioner Perspectives of Individual and Group Fairness
Zahra Ashktorab, Benjamin Hoover, Mayank Agarwal, Casey Dugan, Werner Geyer, Hao Bang Yang, Mikhail Yurochkin
ACM Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems (CHI 2023)

Reliance and Automation for Human-AI Collaborative Data Labeling Conflict Resolution Proceedings of the ACM on Human-Computer Interaction
Michelle Brachman, **Zahra Ashktorab**, Michael Desmond, Evelyn Duesterwald, Casey Dugan, Narendra Nath Joshi, Qian Pan, Aabhas Sharma
ACM Conference on Computer Supported Cooperative Work (CSCW 2022)

Group Chat Ecology in Enterprise Instant Messaging: How Employees Collaborate Through Multi-User Chat Channels on Slack
Dakuo Wang, Haoyu Wang, Mo Yu, **Zahra Ashktorab**, Ming Tan
ACM Conference on Computer Supported Cooperative Work (CSCW 2022)

Effects of Communication Directionality and AI Agent Differences in Human-AI Interaction
Zahra Ashktorab, Casey Dugan, James Johnson, Qian Pan, Wei Zhang, Sadhana Kumaravel, Murray Campbell
2021/5/6
ACM Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems (CHI 2021)

Designing ground truth and the social life of labels
Michael Muller, Christine T Wolf, Josh Andres, Michael Desmond, Narendra Nath Joshi, **Zahra Ashktorab**, Aabhas Sharma, Kristina Brimijoin, Qian Pan, Evelyn Duesterwald, Casey Dugan
ACM Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems (CHI 2021)

The Design and Development of a Game to Study Backdoor Poisoning Attacks: The Backdoor Game
Zahra Ashktorab, Casey Dugan, James Johnson, Aabhas Sharma, Dustin Ramsey Torres, Ingrid Lange, Benjamin Hoover, Heiko Ludwig, Bryant Chen, Nathalie Baracaldo
ACM Conference on Intelligent User Interfaces (IUI 2021)

Mental Models of AI Agents in a Cooperative Game Setting
Katy Ilonka Gero, **Zahra Ashktorab**, Casey Dugan, Qian Pan, James Johnson, Werner Geyer, Maria Ruiz, Sarah Miller, David R Millen, Murray Campbell, Sadhana Kumaravel, Wei Zhang
ACM Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems (CHI 2021)

Human-AI collaboration in a Cooperative Game Setting: Measuring Social Perception and Outcomes
Zahra Ashktorab, Q Vera Liao, Casey Dugan, James Johnson, Qian Pan, Wei Zhang, Sadhana Kumaravel, Murray Campbell
ACM Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems (CHI 2020)

Entanglion: A Board Game for Teaching the Principles of Quantum Computing

Zahra Ashktorab, Justin Weisz, Maryam Ashoori
ACM Conference on Computer-Human Interaction in Play (CHI PLAY 2018)

Resilient chatbots: Repair strategy preferences for conversational breakdowns
Ashktorab, Zahra; Jain, Mohit; Liao, Q Vera; Weisz, Justin D;
ACM Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems (CHI 2019)

Thinking too classically: research topics in human-quantum computer interaction
Ashktorab, Zahra; Weisz, Justin D; Ashoori, Maryam;
ACM Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems (CHI 2019)

Beyond the Belmont Principles: Ethical Challenges, Practices, and Beliefs in the Online Data Research Community.
Jessica Vitak, Katie Shilton, and **Zahra Ashktorab**.
ACM Conference on Computer Supported Cooperative Work (CSCW 2016)

Identifying women's experiences with and strategies for mitigating negative effects of online harassment
Jessica Vitak, Kalyani Chadha, Linda Steiner, **Zahra Ashktorab**
ACM Conference on Computer Supported Cooperative Work (CSCW 2017)

Designing cyberbullying mitigation and prevention solutions through participatory design with teenagers
Zahra Ashktorab, Jessica Vitak
ACM Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems (CHI 2016)

Group-in-a-Box Meta-Layouts for Topological Clusters and Attribute-Based Groups: Space-Efficient Visualizations of Network Communities and Their Ties
Snigdha Chaturvedi, Cody Dunne, **Zahra Ashktorab**, R Zachariah, Ben Shneiderman
Computer Graphics Forum 2014

Tweedr: Mining Twitter to Inform Disaster Response
Zahra Ashktorab, Christopher Brown, Manojit Nandi, Aron Culotta
Conference on Information Systems for Crisis Response and Management (ISCRAM 2014)

Journals

Torino: A Tangible Programming Language Inclusive of Children with Visual Disabilities Human-Computer Interaction
Morrison, Cecily; Villar, Nicolas; Thieme, Anja; **Ashktorab, Zahra**; Taysom, Eloise; Salandin, Oscar; Cletheroe, Daniel; Saul, Greg; Blackwell, Alan F; Edge, Darren
Human Computer Interaction 2018

Ethics regulation in social computing research: Examining the role of institutional review boards
Jessica Vitak, Nicholas Proferes, Katie Shilton, **Zahra Ashktorab**
Journal of Empirical Research on Human Research Ethics 2017

Living the Good Life? Mortality and Hospital Utilization Patterns in the Old Order Amish
Braxton D Mitchell, Woei-Jyh Lee, Magdalena I Tolea, Kelsey Shields, **Zahra Ashktorab**, Laurence S Magder, Kathleen A Ryan, Toni I Pollin, Patrick F McArdle, Alan R Shuldiner
PLoS One 2012

Book Chapters

The “Continuum of Harm” Taxonomy of Cyberbullying Mitigation and Prevention
In Golbeck, J (2018) Online Harassment. In Human-Computer Interaction Series

Workshop Papers

Bridging the Gap: Unifying HCI & ML Perspectives on Mutual Theory of Mind
Zahra Ashktorab, Djallel Bouneffouf, Krissy Brimijoin, Rachel Bellamy, Murray Campbell, Arielle Goldberg, Gabriel Enrique Gonzalez, Stephanie Houde, Miao Liu, Dario Andres Silva Moran, Matthew Riemer, Justin Weisz
IJCAI 2025 Workshop on Generative AI and Theory of Mind in Communicating Agents

Designing Scalable and Transparent Interfaces for Multi-Criteria Evaluation of LLM Outputs
Lakshya Sharma, Amin El Asery, **Zahra Ashktorab**, Qian Pan, Justin Weisz
CHI 2025 Workshop on Human-centered Evaluation and Auditing of Language Models

Establishing the Cooperative Game Wavelength as a Testbed to Explore Mutual Theory of Mind
Katelyn Morrison, **Zahra Ashktorab**, Gabriel Enrique Gonzalez, Djallel Bouneffouf, Justin Weisz
AAAI 2025 Workshop on Theory of Mind for AI

Scopes of Alignment

Kush R. Varshney, **Zahra Ashktorab**, Djallel Bouneffouf, Matthew Riemer, Justin D. Weisz
AAAI 2025 Workshop on AI Governance

Human-Centered Design Recommendations for LLM-as-a-judge

Qian Pan, **Zahra Ashktorab**, Michael Desmond, Martín Santillán Cooper, James Johnson, Rahul Nair, Elizabeth Daly, and Werner Geyer
ACL 2024 Workshop on Human-Centered Large Language Modeling

Black-Box Uncertainty Quantification Method for LLM-as-a-Judge

Nico Wagner, Michael Desmond, Rahul Nair, **Zahra Ashktorab**, Elizabeth M Daly, Qian Pan, Martín Santillán Cooper, James M Johnson, Werner Geyer
Neurips 2024 Workshop on Statistical Frontiers in LLMs and Foundation Models

Cultivating Human Expertise Through AI-Assisted Data Science

Josh Andres, Christine T Wolf, Michael J Muller, Justin D Weisz, Narendra Nath Joshi, Aabhas Sharma, Krissy Brimijoin, Michael Desmond, **Zahra Ashktorab**, Qian Pan
KDD 2020 Workshop

Demos

LLM-as-a-Judge Simplified.

Michael Desmond, **Zahra Ashktorab**, Werner Geyer, Elizabeth Daly, Martín Santillán Cooper, Qian Pan, Rahul Nair, et al.

Proceedings of the AAAI Conference on Artificial Intelligence (AAAI 2025)

EvaluLLM: LLM assisted evaluation of generative outputs

Michael Desmond, **Zahra Ashktorab**, Qian Pan, Casey Dugan, and James M. Johnson. 2024. In Companion *Proceedings of the 29th International Conference on Intelligent User Interfaces (IUI 2024)*

AI Assisted Data Labeling

Michael Desmond, Evelyn Duesterwald, Krissy Brimijoin, Michael Muller, A Sharma, Narendra Nath Joshi, Qian Pan, Casey Dugan, **Zahra Ashktorab**

Conference on Neural Information Processing Systems (Neurips 2020)

Fast and Automatic Visual Label Conflict Resolution

Narendra Nath Joshi, Aabhas Sharma, Michael Muller, Qian Pan, **Zahra Ashktorab**, Casey Dugan
Conference on Neural Information Processing Systems, 2020

Posters

A study of cyberbullying detection and mitigation on Instagram

Ashktorab, Zahra;

ACM Conference on Computer Supported Cooperative Work (CSCW 2016)

Bear-with-me: an embodied prototype to explore tangible two-way exchanges of emotional language

Allan Fong, **Zahra Ashktorab**, Jon Froehlich

ACM Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems (CHI 2013)

Patents

Assertiveness module for developing mental model (2023)

Qian Pan, J. Johnson, **Zahra Ashktorab**, Dakuo Wang

Knowledge Graph Driven Content Generation (2023)

Qian Pan, J. Johnson, **Zahra Ashktorab**, Casey Dugan

Moderating Artificial Intelligence (AI) Agent Interlocution in Group Dialog Environments (2024)

Michael Desmond, **Zahra Ashktorab**, Michelle Brachman, J. Johnson, Casey Dugan, Q Pan

Computer-based Interactive Prompt Variation Generator (2025)

Qian Pan, Gina Do, J. Johnson, Michael Desmond, **Zahra Ashktorab**, Casey Dugan

Service

Organizing Committee

CHI Workshop on Creative Speculation on the Negative Impacts of HCI Research (CHI 2019)

CHI Workshop on Trust and Reliance in Evolving Human-AI Workflows (CHI 2024)