

Sai Siddartha Maram

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Education

Ph.D., University of California, Santa Cruz, USA – Human Computer Interaction	August 2021 – May 2026
B.E. in Computer Engineering, Thapar University, Punjab, India	August 2016 – May 2020

Work Experience

UX Research Intern, Microsoft, USA	June 2025 – September 2025
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Recognized that valuable usability signals were being lost in unmoderated playtests due to the impossibility of manually reviewing hundreds of hours of footage; engineered an agentic UX workflow (OpenAI/Power Automate) that surfaces critical gameplay moments, allowing the team to scale qualitative analysis across entire playtest cohorts.Recognized that repetitive thematic coding was consuming 40% of research time; architected AURA Canvas (an LLM-based tool) to automate pattern recognition, freeing up 5 hours per study for higher-level synthesis.Validated core game mechanics for Halo, Call of Duty, and Perfect Dark by orchestrating a mixed-methods framework; piloted experimental LLM-moderated interviews to capture qualitative rationale at scale, triangulating these insights with MaxDiff survey data to robustly prioritize features.	
UX Research Intern, Microsoft, USA	June 2024 – September 2024
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Revealed through 13 usability studies that redundant feature sets across Xbox and Family Safety apps created "navigation loops" that confused parents; evidence drove the decision to consolidate 3 features.Uncovered that parental control "safety flags" were often buried in monthly reports; deployed an LLM-based sentiment pipeline to surface high-risk interactions instantly, shifting the safety strategy from reactive auditing to real-time triage.Found that parents struggle to enforce screen limits without positive reinforcement mechanisms; shifted the product roadmap from purely restrictive controls to reward-based habit building based on co-design sessions.	
UX Research Intern, Meta, USA	June 2022 – September 2022
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Identified a latent user desire for synchronous shared experiences (e.g., listening to music together) within asynchronous feeds; validated and launched social features like Spotify Connect which now serve millions of users.Uncovered that users view sports content not just as entertainment, but as a critical mechanism for discovering and connecting with friends; utilized this insight to drive the strategy for Facebook Sports Cards (e.g., NFL), a live feature now actively facilitating community connections.	
UX Researcher, GUII Lab, USA	June 2021 – June 2024
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Deployed LLM embeddings (Gemini/OpenAI) to conduct a large-scale semantic analysis of Reddit discourse, successfully mapping the distinct ways religious communities discuss videogames versus how gaming communities discuss religion (Published: CHI Play'24, Best Paper DIS'25).Established that current game design frameworks lack a vocabulary for cultural representation; created a design taxonomy derived from 10 stakeholder interviews to help developers avoid cultural stereotypes (Published: CSCW'23, CHI'22, FDG'23, ICEC'22).Identified 8 distinct reflection strategies that students use when interacting with AI tutors, informing a new department-wide curriculum on LLM-based learning (Published: ACM CHI '23).	
UX Researcher, Invento Robotics, India	June 2020 – May 2021
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Discovered that fleet managers' mental models of spatial mapping conflicted with LiDAR visualizations; translated these insights into a simplified 2D dashboard that reduced navigation errors.Addressed the high cognitive load of healthcare workers during the pandemic by designing voice-first, contactless interfaces, minimizing physical surface contact during patient triage.	

Skills

Research Methods: User Interviews, Game User Research, User Journeys, Card Sorting, Diary Studies, Thematic Analysis, Grounded Theory, Participatory Design, Co-Design, Usability Testing, Information Architecture, Surveys, Statistical Analysis

Tools & Technologies: Figma, NVivo, Dscout, Qualtrics, Atlas, Python (Advanced), SQL (Advanced), R, HTML, Databricks, Unity, CSS, JavaScript, ML/LLMs, MCPs