

# Sara Weston

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## UX RESEARCHER | MIXED METHODS | BEHAVIORAL SCIENCE & DATA VISUALIZATION

UX researcher and behavioral scientist with 10+ years of experience applying mixed-methods research to uncover user needs and drive product decisions. Skilled in qualitative and quantitative methods, including interviews, surveys, diary studies, usability testing, segmentation, and A/B testing. Expert in turning complex data into clear, actionable insights through storytelling, dashboards, and data visualization. Proven leader in mentoring researchers, managing stakeholders, and delivering research that informs strategy and improves user experience.

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### SKILLS

**Research Methods:** Interviews, diary studies, usability testing, survey design, segmentation, A/B testing, ethnography, longitudinal studies

**Data Analysis & Visualization:** R, SQL, Python (basic), PowerBI, Tableau, ggplot2, interactive dashboards

**Collaboration & Communication:** Stakeholder management, data storytelling, workshops, cross-functional alignment

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### PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

#### **Data Scientist (Consultant), Rapid Assessment of Pandemic Impact on Development (RAPID-EC)**

*Remote | 2020–2021*

- Designed and deployed 50+ waves of nationally representative surveys, integrating behavioral and attitudinal data to uncover unmet user needs.
- Conducted qualitative analysis of 6,500+ open-ended responses using NLP and topic modeling to identify emerging pain points.
- Collaborated with policymakers, non-profits, and technical teams to translate complex data into product-style dashboards and user stories that guided service design.
- Delivered actionable insights via dashboards and briefs adopted by policymakers; findings directly informed U.S. Senate Finance Committee support for the Child Tax Credit.

#### **Associate Professor of Psychology, University of Oregon**

*Eugene, OR | 2019–Present*

- Led mixed-methods research projects with direct application to user experience, combining surveys, interviews, and experiments.
- Built interactive visualization tools to communicate insights to non-technical stakeholders, influencing program design and adoption.
- Mentored 5 graduate and 8 undergraduate researchers, fostering applied research skills and professional growth.
- Directed graduate program strategy for 70+ PhD students, aligning curriculum, milestones, and training outcomes with institutional goals and compliance standards.
- Partnered with faculty, administrators, and students to evaluate program effectiveness, build consensus on improvements, and ensure clear, transparent communication across stakeholders.

#### **Postdoctoral Fellow, Medical Social Sciences, Northwestern University**

*Evanston, IL | 2017–2019*

- Coordinated analysis of 15 longitudinal datasets (49,000+ individuals) to uncover behavior patterns in health contexts.
- Developed reproducible analysis pipelines that improved delivery of insights by 400%.
- Collaborated with cross-disciplinary teams to translate statistical findings into actionable insights for healthcare researchers.

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## KEY PROJECTS

**COVID-19 Family Impact Research:** Designed survey instruments and NLP workflows; outputs reached 50,000 households and informed federal support programs.

**Topic Modeling Tutorial:** Produced widely adopted guide for analyzing qualitative responses; enhanced rigor and reproducibility for applied research teams.

**Diabetes Online Community Study:** Used NLP and social network analysis on 700,000+ posts to identify community needs; insights informed healthcare communication strategies.

**Coordinated Analysis of Longitudinal Data:** Integrated 15 datasets (49,000+ participants) to uncover patterns in health behavior, building scalable pipelines that improved research output by 400% and established best practices for multi-team collaboration.

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## SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

- **Weston, S.J.**, Shryock, I., Light, R., & Fisher, P.A. (2023). Identifying the number and labels of topics in structural topic modeling analyses: A tutorial. *Advanced Methods and Practices in Psychological Science*.
- Bedford-Petersen, C. & **Weston, S.J.** (2021). Mapping individual differences online: A case study of the Type 1 diabetes community. *Journal of Medical Internet Research: Diabetes*.
- **Weston, S.J.**, Condon, D.M., & Fisher, P.A. (2021). Psychosocial factors associated with preventive pediatric care during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Social Science and Medicine*.

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## AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

- Tykeson Teaching Award (2025) – recognized for clarity in teaching complex methods.
- Rising Star Award, Association for Psychological Science (2021).
- Rising Star Award, Association for Research in Personality (2017).
- Secured \$3.6M+ in competitive research funding, leading cross-disciplinary teams and managing multi-year projects to successful completion.
- Editorial Leadership: Statistics, Transparency & Reproducibility (STAR) Editor for Psychological Science; editorial board member for Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, Developmental Psychology, and European Journal of Personality.

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## EDUCATION

### Ph.D., Personality Psychology

Washington University in St. Louis      2017  
St. Louis, MO

### B.A., English & Psychology

Northwestern University      2012  
Evanston, IL