Smirity Kaushik

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Research interests

My research lies at the intersection of human-centered security and privacy, AI safety and trust, and tech policy. I use a mixed-methods approach rooted in human-computer interaction and information sciences to examine people's perceptions and behaviors toward emerging technologies and to propose design and policy recommendations.

Education

2025	**Ph.D. in Information Sciences**, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign
2019	**M.S. in Information Management**, Syracuse University, School of Information Studies
2017	**Bachelor of Laws – B.A. LL.B.**, *(U.S. J.D. equivalent)*, University of Delhi, Faculty of Law
2014	**B.A.(H) History**, University of Delhi, Lady Shri Ram College

Employments

2025 - *present*	**Postdoctoral Research Associate** The George Washington University - Dept of Computer Science | Washington DC, United States
2023 - 2024	**Visiting Research Scholar** Max Planck Institute for Security and Privacy | Bochum, Germany
2021 - 2023	**Graduate Student Research Assistant** University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, School of Information Sciences | Champaign, IL, United States
2019 - 2021	**Data Protection and Privacy Consultant** Ernst & Young | San Francisco, CA, United States
2017 - 2019	**Graduate Student Research Assistant** Syracuse University, School of Information Studies | Syracuse, NY, United States

Publications

Conferences are the top-tier academic publishing venues in computer science and information science (CS/IS). Thus, the majority of my research is published in CS/IS conference proceedings.
* co-first authorship.

Journal (Heavily Peer-reviewed)

[J1] **"Every Website Is a Puzzle!": Facilitating Access to Common Website Features for People with Visual Impairments**
Natã M Barbosa, Jordan Hayes, Smirity Kaushik, Yang Wang
ACM Transactions on Accessible Computing (TACCESS) (15), 1-35. 2022.
https://dl.acm.org/doi/pdf/10.1145/3519032

[J2] **Privacy Perceptions and Behaviors Towards Targeted Advertising on Social Media: A Cross-Country Study**

Smirity Kaushik, Tanusree Sharma, Yaman Yu, Amna F. Ali, Bart P. Knijnenburg, Yang Wang, Yixin Zou

Proceedings on Privacy Enhancing Technologies (PoPETs). 2025. https://petsymposium.org/popets/2025/popets-2025-0057.pdf

Conference Proceedings (Heavily Peer-reviewed)

[C8] **Governing Manipulative and Synthetic Content on Social Media Platforms**

Smirity Kaushik, Madelyn R. Sanfilippo

Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences (HICSS). 2026.

[C7] **Design and evaluation of inclusive email security indicators for people with visual impairments**

Yaman Yu, Saidivya Ashok, Smirity Kaushik, Yang Wang, Gang Wang

IEEE Symposium on Security and Privacy (SP). 2023.

https://ieeexplore.ieee.org/abstract/document/10179407?casa$_t$oken =

[C6] **User perceptions and experiences of targeted ads on social media platforms: Learning from Bangladesh and India**

Tanusree Sharma*, Smirity Kaushik*, Yaman Yu*, Syed Ishtiaque Ahmed, Yang Wang

ACM Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems (CHI). 2023.

https://dl.acm.org/doi/abs/10.1145/3544548.3581498

[C5] **ImageAlly: A Human-AI Hybrid Approach to Support Blind People in Detecting and Redacting Private Image Content**

Zhuohao Jerry Zhang, Smirity Kaushik, JooYoung Seo, Haolin Yuan, Sauvik Das, Leah Findlater, Danna Gurari, Abigale Stangl, Yang Wang

Symposium on Usable Privacy and Security (SOUPS). 2023.

https://www.usenix.org/system/files/soups2023-zhang.pdf

[C4] **GuardLens: Supporting Safer Online Browsing for People with Visual Impairments**

Smirity Kaushik, Natã M Barbosa, Yaman Yu, Tanusree Sharma, Zachary Kilhoffer, JooYoung Seo, Sauvik Das, Yang Wang

Symposium on Usable Privacy and Security (SOUPS). 2023.

https://www.usenix.org/system/files/soups2023-kaushik.pdf

[C3] **"How I Know For Sure": People's Perspectives on Solely Automated Decision-Making(SADM)** 🎖

Smirity Kaushik, Yaxing Yao, Pierre Dewitte, Yang Wang

Symposium on Usable Privacy and Security (SOUPS). 2021.

https://www.usenix.org/system/files/soups2021-kaushik.pdf

SOUPS IAPP Privacy Award.

Defending my castle: A co-design study of privacy mechanisms for smart homes

[C2] Yaxing Yao, Justin Reed Basdeo, Smirity Kaushik, Yang Wang

ACM Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems (CHI). 2019.

https://dl.acm.org/doi/pdf/10.1145/3290605.3300428

[C1] **Cooperative privacy and security: Learning from people with visual impairments and their allies** 🎗

Jordan Hayes, Smirity Kaushik, Charlotte Emily Price, Yang Wang

Symposium on Usable Privacy and Security (SOUPS). 2019.

https://www.usenix.org/system/files/soups2019-hayes.pdf

SOUPS IAPP Privacy Award.

Workshops and Panels Co-organized

[WP1] **Workshop on Inclusive Privacy and Security**

Taslima Akter, Kevin Butler, Joe Calandrino, Lynne Coventry, Sanchari Das, Roberto Hoyle, Smirity Kaushik, Ada Lerner, Abigail Marsh, Imani N. S. Munyaka, Lucy Qin, Shruti Sannon, Yang Wang, Noel Warford, Yaxing Yao, Tanusree Sharma,

Symposium on Usable Privacy and Security (SOUPS). 2015 - 2024.

Workshop Papers (Lightly Peer-reviewed)

[W3] **Governing Manipulative and Synthetic Content on Video-based Social media Platforms**

Smirity Kaushik, Madelyn R. Sanfilippo

6th Annual Symposium on Applications of Contextual Integrity. 2024.

[W2] **Cross-Country Examination of People's Experience with Targeted Advertising on Social Media**

Smirity Kaushik, Tanusree Sharma, Yaman Yu, Amna F. Ali, Yang Wang, Yixin Zou

ACM Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems (CHI) Late-Breaking Work. 2024.

[W1] **Enabling Privacy by Design in GDPR: An Analysis of Industry Tool Support**

Smirity Kaushik, Yang Wang

CHI Workshop on General Data Protection Regulation. 2018.

Technical Reports

[T1] **Copyright and Artificial Intelligence (AI)**

Gowri Saini Balasubramaniam, Sara Rachel Benson, Anita Say Chan, Keith Jacobs, Karen V Jenkins, Smirity Kaushik, Jiaqi Ma, Madelyn Rose Sanfilippo, Eryclis Rodrigues Bezerra Silva, Emmy Tither, Michael Twidale, Ted E Underwood, Yaman Yu, Kyrie Zhou

Public comments submitted to the US Copyright Office via the notice of inquiry on "Copyright and Artificial Intelligence (AI)". 2023.

https://www.ideals.illinois.edu/items/128265/bitstreams/428897/data.pdf

Working Papers

[C10] **"You Have Been Selected as the Winner": Characterizing User-Reported Scams on Tik-Tok**

Smirity Kaushik, Kyle Beadle, Gauri Nayak, Madelyn R. Sanfilippo, Mainack Mondal, Sai T. Peddinti, Yang Wang, Jingjie Li, Yixin Zou

Symposium On Usable Privacy and Security (SOUPS 2026) *(Under review).*

Honors & Awards

2025   **Lightning Talks Speaker Award**
Awarded 2nd best speaker award and cash prize at the Postdoc Appreciation Day, GW

2024   **NSF Student Travel Award**
Awarded financial support to attend the PrivaCI 2024 symposium.

2024   **Gary Marsden Travel Award**
Awarded financial support to attend the CHI 2024 conference.

2024   **President's Research in Diversity Travel Assistance Award**
Awarded travel assistance to attend the CHI 2024 conference.

2023   **Computing Research Association (CRA) Grad Cohort Workshop for Women Scholar**
Awarded a scholarship to attend CRA Grad Cohort Workshop for Women Scholars

2021   **IAPP Privacy award**
For *"How I Know For Sure": People's Perspectives on Solely Automated Decision-Making(SADM).*

2021   **Google CS Research Mentorship Program Mentee (CSRMP 2021)**
Received career and research mentorship from a Googler Mentor for a quarter.

2019   **John R. Weitzel Memorial Award Scholar for Information Systems Research**
Awarded by Syracuse University, iSchool, to the top graduate student for demonstrating excellence in the area of information systems through coursework and research.

2018   **IAPP Privacy award**
For *Cooperative privacy and security: Learning from people with visual impairments and their allies.*

2018   **Grace Hopper Conference 2018 (GHC'18) Scholar**
Awarded full scholarship to attend the world's largest conference of women in computing.

Funding

Grants

2024   **Google Academic Research Award on Trust & Safety: Safeguarding Emerging Adults from Scams on Short-Form Video Platforms**
Co-PI with Yixin zou (PI, Max Planck Institute for Security and Privacy), Mainack Mondal (Co-PI, Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur). $100,000.

2021   **Meta Research Award: Global South Citizens' Privacy Perceptions and Management of Targeted Ads on Social Media.**
Co-PI with Yang Wang (PI, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign), Tanusree Sharma (Co-PI, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign), Yaman Yu (Co-PI, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign). $100,000.

Fellowships

2024-25   **Provost Match Fellowship**
Awarded by University of Illinois Urbana Champaign, Graduate College, to conduct dissertation research.

2017	**Information Management Faculty Engagement Scholar (IMFES) fellowship**
	Awarded by Syracuse University, iSchool, to conduct research under the mentorship of a faculty member.

Teaching Experience

Co-Instructor

Fall 2025	**CSCI 4533/6533 Introduction to Usable Security and Privacy**, Dept. of Computer Science, The George Washington University

Graduate Student Instructor

Summer 2025	**IS 400: iSchool Colloquium series**, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
Fall 2023	**IS 236: User Research & Evaluation**, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Guest Lectures

2025	**Introduction to Usable Security and Privacy** (1 lecture)
	CS1010 Computer Science Orientation, Dept. of Computer Science, The George Washington University
2025	**Targeted advertising and privacy in cross-cultural settings** (1 lecture)
	IS 400: iSchool Colloquium series, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign
2024	**Inclusive privacy in the age of emerging technologies** (1 lecture)
	IS 226: Introduction to Human-Computer Interaction (HCI), University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign
2023	**How to conduct online surveys? A case study** (1 lecture)
	IS 236: User Research & Evaluation	University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign

Mentoring

2025	Adryana Hutchinson (Ph.D., The George Washington University)
2025	Jialiang Yan (Ph.D., The George Washington University)
2025	Monica Kodwani (Ph.D., The George Washington University)
2025	Junho Eum (Ph.D., The George Washington University)
2025	Meira Gilbert (Ph.D., University of Washington)
2024	Emmanuel Tweneboah (Master's, Ruhr University, Bochum, Germany)
2024	Mindy Tran (Ph.D., Max Planck Institute for Security and Privacy, Bochum, Germany)
2023	Gauri Nayak (Master's, University of Washington → Ph.D., Cornell University)
2018	J.R. Basdeo (undergraduate, Syracuse University)
2018	Megha Jakhotia (Master's, Syracuse University → Product Security Architect, Bloomberg)

Service

Paper Chair

2023	Workshop on Inclusive Privacy and Security: Paper Chair with Imani N. S. Munyaka
2022	Workshop on Inclusive Privacy and Security: Paper Chair with Taslima Akter

Program Committee Member

2026	Symposium On Usable Privacy and Security (SOUPS)
2026	Privacy Enhancing Technologies Symposium (PETS)
2026	ACM SIGACCESS Conference on Computers and Accessibility (ASSETS)
2026	ACM Conference on Human Factors in Computing (CHI) Student Mentoring Program: Dissertation Research Roundtable track
2026	ACM Conference on Human Factors in Computing (CHI) Posters
2024, 2025	BuildSEC'25, co-sponsored by the IEEE Society on Social Implications of Technology (SSIT)
2024	ACM Computer Supported Cooperative Work and Social Computing (CSCW) Posters

Conference Organizing and Volunteering

2024	PETS Social Media Chair
2024	PETS Stipend Committee Member
2023, 2024	PrivaCI Student Volunteer
2024	CHI Student Volunteer
2021	SOUPS Student Volunteer
2021	CHI Student Volunteer

External Reviewer

Privacy Enhancing Technologies Symposium (PETS)
ACM Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems (CHI)
ACM Conference on Computer-Supported Cooperative Work and Social Computing (CSCW)
IEEE Security and Privacy (S&P)
Symposium for Usable Privacy and Security (SOUPS)
ACM Conference on Fairness, Accountability, and Transparency (FAccT)
ACM Conversational User Interface (CUI)
International Journal of Human-Computer Studies (IJHCS)
BuildSEC'25, co-sponsored by the IEEE Society on Social Implications of Technology (SSIT)

Invited External Talks

2026	**Trust and Safety on Social Media: Human-centered Insights and Governance Gaps** HCI Seminar, Dept. of Computer Science, The Johns Hopkins University (Feb 24)
2025	**Characterizing User-Reported Scams on TikTok** Capital-Area Colloquium on Trustworthy and Usable Security/Privacy, CACTUS/P 2025, College Park, MD (Dec 18)
2025	**Designing Human-Centered Security and Privacy Solutions for Diverse Users** Usable Security and Privacy, Barnard College (Oct 15)
2025	**Targeted advertising and privacy in cross-cultural settings** Google Privacy Sandbox UXR Team, Momentum Series (Jan 22)
2024	**Inclusive privacy in the age of emerging technologies** Law & Tech Lab at Maastricht University, Netherlands (Jul 04)
2023	**Supporting Safer Online Browsing for People with Visual Impairments** Sparkling Science speaker series	Max Planck Institute for Security and Privacy (MPI-SP) (Jun 15)

References

Dr. Adam Aviv, Associate Professor
The George Washington University
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Dr. Yang Wang, Professor
School of Information Sciences, University of Illinois Urbana Champaign
yvw@illinois.edu

Dr. Madelyn Sanfilippo, Assistant Professor
School of Information Sciences, University of Illinois Urbana Champaign
madelyns@illinois.edu

Dr. Yixin Zou, Tenure-track Faculty
Max Planck Institute for Security and Privacy
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