

Ben Zefeng Zhang

www.benzhang.info · 105 S State Street, Ann Arbor, MI 48109 · bzfzhang@umich.edu

EDUCATION

- 2022 – Expected
May 2025 **Ph.D. in Information**, University of Michigan
Graduate Certificate in Science, Technology, and Society (STS)
Committee: Oliver Haimson & Michaelanne Thomas (co-advisors/chairs), Silvia Lindtner, and Cara Wallis, and David Ribes
- 2020 **M.Sc. in Applied Data Science**, Syracuse University
Graduation Award: John R. Weitzel Memorial Award for Information Systems Research
- 2014 **B.A. in Literary Studies / Communication (minor)**, University of Indianapolis
Graduated with Honor: *Magna Cum Laude*

RESEARCH & PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

- 2020 – Present **University of Michigan**, Ann Arbor, MI
Graduate Student Instructor and Researcher, School of Information
- Spring 2024 **Weizenbaum Institute for the Networked Society**, Berlin, Germany
Research Fellow, Data, Algorithmic Systems and Ethics Research Group
- 2018 – 2020 **Syracuse University**, Syracuse, NY
Graduate Student Researcher, School of Information Studies
- 2014 – 2018 **China Daily**, Beijing, China
Journalist and Columnist

SUMMARY

Research Areas

Human-computer interaction (HCI), social computing, science and technology studies (STS), critical data/algorithm studies, valuation studies, infrastructure, social media, data production and marketplaces, labor and work, migration and mobility, identity and marginality, platform governance, AI for development (AI4D), AI and ethics

Methods

Ethnography, interviewing, participant observation, usability testing, qualitative analysis, content analysis, community-based participatory design, and archival research

HONORS & AWARDS

- 2024 – 2025 Predoctoral Fellow, Rackham Graduate School, University of Michigan
Annual award supports students working on dissertations that are unusually creative, ambitious, and impactful.
- Spring 2024 Weizenbaum Fellow, Weizenbaum Institute for the Networked Society, Germany
- April 2023 Rackham International Research Award, University of Michigan
- May 2022 Graduate Student Instructor of the Year Award
Annual award recognizes overall exemplary performance as a graduate student instructor, including dedication, impact and instructional skills.

- 2020 Outstanding Graduate Student, School of Information Studies, Syracuse University
- 2020 John R. Weitzel Memorial Award for Information Systems Research
Annual award presented to one outstanding graduate student who has demonstrated excellence in the area of information systems through research.
- 2019 Graduate Program Excellence Tuition Scholarship, Syracuse University
- 2017 & 2018 Best Feature Article, first prize, China Daily Features
- 2013 & 2014 Outstanding Student Scholarship, University of Indianapolis

GRANTS & COMPETITIVE FUNDS

- 2024 – 2025 Predoctoral Fellowship, Rackham Graduate School, University of Michigan (\$38,970)
The Rackham Predoctoral Fellowship supports outstanding doctoral students who have achieved candidacy and are actively working on dissertation research and writing.
- Spring 2024 Weizenbaum Fellowship, Weizenbaum Institute for the Networked Society
Research fellow with the Data Algorithmic Systems and Ethics Group in Berlin, Germany.
- December 2023 UMSI Doctoral Student Academic Year Internship Grant
The internship grant covers tuition and mandatory registration fees.
- April 2023 International Institute Student Fellowship, University of Michigan (\$3000)
- Summer 2023 Lieberthal-Rogel Travel and Research Fellowship, Lieberthal-Rogel Center for Chinese Studies, University of Michigan (\$3000)
- January 2023 Rackham Graduate Student Research Grant, University of Michigan (\$3000)

Travel Grants

- 2020 – 2024 University of Michigan School of Information Travel Grant (\$9,000 in total)
- 2021 – 2023 University of Michigan Rackham Conference Travel Grant (\$1,600 in total)
- May 2022 Gary Marsden Travel Award to attend CHI in New Orleans, LA, (\$780)

PUBLICATIONS

* denotes equal contribution

Journal Articles and Conference Proceedings (Heavily Peer-reviewed)

- [J10] **The Making of Performative Accuracy in AI Training: Precision Labor and Its Consequences**
Ben Zefeng Zhang, Tianling Yang, Milagros Miceli, Oliver L. Haimson, and Michaleanne Thomas. ACM Transactions on Computer-Human Interaction (CHI’25) [Forthcoming].
- [J9] **Identity Alignment and the Sociotechnical Reconfigurations of Emotional Labor in Transnational Gig-education Platforms**
Ben Zefeng Zhang, Dipto Das, and Bryan Semaan. Computer Supported Cooperative Work (CSCW Journal) (2025): 1-43 [Forthcoming].
- [J8] **“Dialing it Back:” Shadowbanning, Invisible Digital Labor, and how Marginalized Content Creators Attempt to Mitigate the Impacts of Opaque Platform Governance**
Senami Kojah, Ben Zefeng Zhang, Carolina Are, Dan Delmonaco, and Oliver L. Haimson. The ACM International Conference on Supporting Group Work (GROUP’25).

- [J7] **“I’m Constantly in This Dilemma”: How Migrant Technology Professionals Perceive Social Media Recommendation Algorithms**
 *Cassidy Pyle, *Ben Zefeng Zhang, Oliver L. Haimson, and Nazanin Andalibi.
 Proceedings of the ACM on Human-Computer Interaction, 8(CSCW’24), pp.1-33.
<https://dl.acm.org/doi/10.1145/3637342>
- [J6] **Landscape of Large Language Models in Global English News: Topics, Sentiments, and Spatiotemporal Analysis.**
 Xian Lu, Lingyao Li, Yiwei Xu, Ben Zefeng Zhang, and Libby Hemphill,
 In Proceedings of the International AAAI Conference on Web and Social Media, vol. 18,
 pp. 1661-1673. 2024. (ICWSM’24)
<https://ojs.aaai.org/index.php/ICWSM/article/view/31416>
- [J5] **The Chinese Diaspora and the Attempted WeChat Ban: Platform Precarity, Anticipated Impacts, and Infrastructural Migration.**
 Ben Zefeng Zhang, Oliver L. Haimson, and Michaelanne Thomas.
 Proceedings of the ACM on human-computer interaction, 6(CSCW’22), 1-29.
<https://dl.acm.org/doi/10.1145/3555122>
- [J4] **Separate Online Networks During Life Transitions: Support, Identity, and Challenges in Social Media and Online Communities**
 *Ben Zefeng Zhang, *Tianxiao Liu, *Shanley Corvite, Nazanin Andalibi, and Oliver L. Haimson
 Proceedings of the ACM on Human-Computer Interaction 6, no. (CSCW’22): 1-30.
<https://dl.acm.org/doi/abs/10.1145/3555559>
- [J3] **Social Media’s Role During Identity Changes Related to Major Life Events**
 Shanley Corvite, *Ben Zefeng Zhang, and Oliver L. Haimson
 Proceedings of the ACM on Human-Computer Interaction, 6(CSCW’22), 1-22.
<https://dl.acm.org/doi/abs/10.1145/3555219>
- [J2] **The Online Authenticity Paradox: What Being “Authentic” on Social Media Means, and Barriers to Achieving It**
 Oliver L. Haimson, Tianxiao Liu, Ben Zefeng Zhang, and Shanley Corvite
 roceedings of the ACM on Human-Computer Interaction 5.(CSCW’21), pp. 1–18
<https://dl.acm.org/doi/abs/10.1145/3479567>
- [J1] **“Mapping the Narrative Ecosystem of Conspiracy Theories in Online Anti-vaccination Discussions**
 Joshua Introne, Ania Korsunska, Leni Krsova, and Ben Zefeng Zhang.
 International Conference on Social Media and Society (2020), pp. 184–192
<https://dl.acm.org/doi/abs/10.1145/3400806.3400828>
- Conference Proceedings (Lightly Peer-reviewed)**
- [C6] **Conceptualizing Precision Labor in Artificial Intelligence Training**
Ben Zefeng Zhang, Tianling Yang, Oliver L. Haimson, and Michaleanne Thomas.
 The 25th annual meeting of the Association of Internet Researchers, Sheffield, UK [Forthcoming]

- [C5] **The Technopolitics of Waiting: Case Studies of AI Training In China and Homeless Services Systems in the U.S.**
 *Pelle Tracey, Ben Zefeng Zhang, Oliver L. Haimson, Michaelanne Thomas, and Patricia Garcia.
 The 25th annual meeting of the Association of Internet Researchers, Sheffield, UK [Forthcoming]
- [C4] **Identity alignment and the sociotechnical reconfigurations of emotional labor in transnational gig-education platforms**
Ben Zefeng Zhang, Dipto Das and Bryan Semaan.
 Panel: Everyday doing and identity making: how do digital platforms co-configure identity(s)?. The 2024 quadrennial joint meeting of the European Association for the Study of Science and Technology (EASST) and the Society for Social Studies of Science (4S). Amsterdam, Netherlands., 2024
- [C3] **The Promise and Precarity of AI4D: Precision Labor and Its Consequences. Panel: Politics of accumulation and resistance in automation**
Ben Zefeng Zhang.
 Panel: Politics of accumulation and resistance in automation, Society for Social Studies of Science (4S). Honolulu, Hawaii., 2023
- [C2] **Reimagining Ethnography in HCI: A Relational Approach**
 Michaelanne Thomas, Ben Zefeng Zhang, Suanmuanlian Tonsing.
 Panel: Ethnography and the Neoliberal University: A critical evaluation of ethnography in emerging disciplines, Society for the Social Studies of Science (4S). Honolulu, Hawaii., 2023
- [C1] **The Labor of Training Artificial Intelligence: Data Infrastructure, Mobility, and Marginality**
Ben Zefeng Zhang.
 Companion Publication of the 2023 Conference on Computer Supported Cooperative Work and Social Computing. [Doctoral Consortium Paper]
<https://dl.acm.org/doi/abs/10.1145/3584931.3608926>
- Conference Workshop Papers (Lightly Peer-reviewed)**
- [W5] **Five Declarations on Borders for HCI: A Series of Position Statements from the AnthroTech Lab**
 Sylvia Darling, Ben Zefeng Zhang, Shanley Corvite, Alexis Herrera, Hibby Thach, and Michaelanne Thomas.
 Development Consortium: HCI Across Borders, ACM Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems (CHI). New Orleans, LA., 2022.
- [W4] **Migrations in the U.S**
Ben Zefeng Zhang.
 Development Consortium: HCI Across Borders, ACM Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems (CHI). New Orleans, LA., 2022.
- [W3] **The Chinese Diaspora: Overlapping Life Transitions, Barriers, and HCI**
Ben Zefeng Zhang, Michaelanne Thomas, and Oliver L. Haimson.
 CHI Workshop on Migration and Mobility in HCI: Rethinking Boundaries, Methods, and Impact. Changed to virtual, 2021.

- [W2] **Gig Platform Migration as Destabilization: “Non-Normative Postcolonial Computing”**
 Ben Zefeng Zhang and Bryan Semaan.
 CHI Workshop on Worker-Centered Design. Honolulu, HI. Changed to virtual, 2021.
- [W1] **Gigging as Resilience: Managing Emergent Life Situations and Job Transitions**
 Ben Zefeng Zhang.
 Workshops of the 2019 ACM Conference on Computer Supported Cooperative Work and Social Computing: Research and Design for Times of Life Change. Austin, TX., 2019.

INVITED TALKS & PANELS

- 2024 **Conceptualizing Precision Labor in Artificial Intelligence Training**
 2024 Association of Internet Researchers Conference (AoIR) | Sheffield, UK (November 2)
- 2024 **The Technopolitics of Waiting: Case Studies of AI Training in China and Homeless Services Systems in the U.S.**
 2024 Association of Internet Researchers Conference (AoIR) | Sheffield, UK (November 1)
[w/ Pelle Tracey]
- 2024 **Turning Data into Assets: Labor, Infrastructure, and Policy in China’s Emerging Data Trading Ecosystem**
 DiPLab, Télécom Paris | Virtual (April 24) *[w/ Tianling Yang]*
 Fellow talk. Weizenbaum Institute for the Networked Society | Berlin, Germany *[w/ Tianling Yang]* (April 18)
- 2023 **The Labor of Training Artificial Intelligence: Data Infrastructure, Mobility, and Marginality.**
 Digital Ethnography Research Symposium | Melbourne, Australia (February 27)
 CHI workshop on Behind the Scenes of Automation: Ghostly Care-Work, Maintenance, and Interferences | Hamburg, Germany (April 19)
 Doctoral Consortium, CSCW | Minneapolis, MN, USA (October 15)
 Doctoral Colloquium, the Association of Internet Researchers | Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA (October 18)
- 2022 **The Chinese Diaspora: Overlapping Life Transitions, Barriers, and HCI I [Human-Computer Interaction]**
 CHI workshop on Migration and Mobility in HCI: Rethinking Boundaries, Methods, and Impact | Virtual (May 8)
- 2021 **UMSI Graduate Student Instructors (GSI) Orientation Panel**
 Panel speaker. | Ann Arbor, USA (October 26)
- 2019 **Gigging as Resilience: Managing Emergent Life Situations and Job Transitions**
 Life Transitions & Social Technologies CSCW Workshop | Austin, TX, USA (November 9, 2019)
- 2019 **International Student Orientation Panel**
 Panel speaker. | University of Indianapolis, IN, USA (September 1)

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Graduate Student Instructor

Received 2021-2022 Outstanding Graduate Student Instructor of the Year Award at UMSI

SI 350: UX Field Research in the Public Sector | University of Michigan

Spring 2022 Undergraduate course on design and human-computer interaction (13 students). Led discussion sections, held office hours, and graded assignments. Oversaw three consulting projects with the local government led by undergraduate students.

Fall 2021 **SI 482: Interaction Design Studio** | University of Michigan

Undergraduate course on design and human-computer interaction (97 students). Led two weekly discussion sections, held office hours, and graded assignments. Oversaw nine UX projects led by undergraduate students.

Guest Lectures

April 2024 SI 430: Information Technology & Global Society | University of Michigan

“The Promise and Precarity of AI4D: Precision Labor and Its Consequences.”(1 lecture)

Selected Community Outreach

Fall 2022 **Asians in Southeast Michigan: Information Networks and Placemaking as Responses to Racist Violence (1980s–Present) Project**

Worked with Dr. Matthew Bui and his colleagues as a research project manager. Identify and reached out to potential community partners based in Southeast Michigan. Designed and organized fieldwork trips, and conducted community-engaged research, including field site visits and meetings with community partners.

SERVICE

Program Committee Member / Associate Chair

2023 Associate Chair, Program Committee for ACM Designing Interactive Systems (DIS)

External Reviewer

2024 Association of Internet Researchers (AoIR)

2022 – 2025 ACM Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems (CHI)

2023 The Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences (HICSS)

2022 – 2023 ACM Designing Interactive Systems (DIS)

2021 – 2022 ACM Conference on Computer-Supported Cooperative Work (CSCW)

2021 & 2023-24 ACM CHI Late-Breaking Work 2021, 2023, 2024

Conference Volunteering

2023 ACM CHI, Student Volunteer

2021 ACM CSCW, Student Volunteer

Review Awards and Recognitions

2024 ACM CHI Special Recognition for Outstanding Reviews

2023 ACM CHI Special Recognition for Outstanding Reviews

2022 ACM DIS Special Recognition for Outstanding Reviews

Internal Service

2023 – present UMSI PhD Application Feedback Program: Volunteer Reviewer

2020 – present University of Michigan School of Information Graduate Student Peer Mentor

SELECTED MEDIA COVERAGE

- 2025 *States Newsroom*: “TikTok ban poised to disrupt information ecosystem, livelihood of millions of users” [\[link\]](#)
- 2025 *Michigan News*: “TikTok’s case could set a precedent for social media app bans” [\[link\]](#)
- 2024 *Michigan News*: “Three UMSI doctoral candidates earn Rackham Predoctoral Fellowships” [\[link\]](#)
- 2023 *Der Spiegel*: “Clickwork und Content-Moderation Das sind die Menschen hinter der KI-Revolution (Clickwork and content moderation These are the people behind the AI revolution).” [\[link\]](#)
- 2022 *Michigan News*: “UMSI graduate student instructors earn awards for exemplary performance.” [\[link\]](#)

AFFILIATIONS & MEMBERSHIPS

Research Centers/Groups

- 2024 – present Data Ecologies Laboratory (deLAB), Department of Human Centered Design & Engineering, University of Washington.
- 2023 – present Center for Ethics, Society, and Computing (ESC), University of Michigan
- 2021 – present Anthropology and Technology Lab (ATL), University of Michigan School of Information, *Supervisor: Dr. Michaelanne Thomas*
- 2020 – present The Community Research on Identity and Technology Lab (CRIT) Lab, University of Michigan School of Information, *Supervisor: Dr. Oliver Haimson*
- 2022 – 2023 Race and Data Justice Lab, University of Michigan School of Information, *Supervisor: Dr. Matthew Bui*
- 2021 – present Information and Communication Technologies and Development (ICTD) Group, University of Michigan School of Information, *Supervisor: Dr. Kentaro Toyama*
- 2020 – present Social Computing Research Lab (Previously, Social Media Research Lab) University of Michigan School of Information
- 2019 – 2020 Cognition, Computation, Communication, and Complexity (CCCC) Lab, Syracuse University, *Supervisor: Dr. Josh Introne*
- 2018 – 2020 Human-Centered Computing and Design (HCC+D) Lab, Syracuse University, *Supervisor: Dr. Bryan Semaan*

Associations

Association for Computing Machinery (ACM), Student Member
American Anthropological Association (AAA), Student Member
Society for the Social Studies of Science (4S), Student Member
Association of Internet Researchers (AoIR), Student Member

TECHNICAL SKILLS

Fluent with Python, R Studio, NVivo, ATLAS.ti, MS Office Suite, InDesign, and Lightroom

LANGUAGE SKILLS

English, Excellent fluency

Mandarin, Native

Wu Chinese (dialect), Native

REFERENCES

Dr. Oliver L. Haimson

Assistant Professor of Information

Assistant Professor of Digital Studies Institute

University of Michigan

haimson@umich.edu

Dr. Michaelanne Thomas

Assistant Professor of Information

University of Michigan

mmtd@umich.edu

Dr. Kentaro Toyama

W K Kellogg Professor of Community Information

Professor of Information

University of Michigan

toyama@umich.edu