

AREZOU BEHFAR

Logan, Utah, USA

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[Portfolio](#) | [LinkedIn](#) | [Google Scholar](#)

SUMMARY

Innovative and impact-driven UX Researcher with over five years of hands-on experience in user experience design, usability evaluation, and human-centered research. Currently a PhD candidate in Computer Science with specialized expertise in Trust, Safety, and digital risk, focusing on how vulnerable users understand and respond to online harms such as cyberbullying, deception, and security threats. Proficient in a broad range of qualitative and quantitative methodologies, including semi-structured interviews, thematic analysis, behavioral experiments, and intervention design. Demonstrated success in translating complex research insights into actionable design recommendations that enhance user safety, engagement, and product effectiveness. Committed to advancing ethical, user-centered technologies and contributing to forward-thinking teams where research informs meaningful, real-world impact.

WORK EXPERIENCE

Graduate Research Assistant ,Utah State University

Aug 2021 - Present

Highlighted Projects

- Designed and conducted storyboard-prompted semi-structured interviews with 17 U.S. parents of teens to examine parental responses to cyberbullying and inform recommendations for multi-stakeholder safety communication and educational support.
 - Publication: “Strength in Connection: Navigating Support and Safety for Teens Facing Cyberbullying” [Taylor & Francis-IJHCI 2025]
- Designed and evaluated persuasion-based clickbait warning interventions through a preliminary participatory study, a lab study with 20 participants, and a large-scale online experiment with 773 participants, demonstrating the effectiveness of incentive- and consequence-driven designs in reducing click behavior.
 - Publication: “This One Weird trick gets Users to Stop Clicking on Clickbait” [Taylor & Francis-IJHCI 2025]
- Utilized user mental models to analyze clickbait perceptions and evaluate warning effectiveness through an online study with 770 participants, highlighting the importance of educational warnings to enhance online security behavior.
 - Publication: “It is Luring You to Click on the Link With False Advertising-Mental Models of Clickbait and Its Impact on User’s Perceptions and Behavior Towards Clickbait Warnings” [Taylor & Francis-IJHCI 2025]
- Conducted semi-structured interviews with 26 participants to explore user perceptions and experiences of interacting with fake social media profiles.
 - Publication: “A First Look into Fake Profiles on Social Media through the Lens of Victim's Experiences” [ACM-CSCW 2024]

- Usability Study and Graphic Design: Conducted a study with 130 participants using focus groups and surveys to test innovative metaphor-based password meters, achieving a 34.73% boost, in user engagement compared to conventional indicators.
 - Publication: “Can Password Meter be More Effective Towards User Attention, Engagement, and Attachment?: A Study of Metaphor-based Designs” [ACM-CSCW 2023]

Graduate Teaching Assistant ,Utah State University

Jan 2022 - Present

- **Instructor**
 - Instructed a cohort of 60 students in the Human Factors in Computing Course, emphasizing the practical application of human-centered design principles. Utilized popular platforms such as TikTok, SnapChat, and Zoom as case studies to explore usability challenges, prototyping, qualitative user studies, qualitative data analysis, iterative design processes, and quantitative data analysis.
- **Teacher Assistant**
 - 70 students in Event-Driven Programming and GUIs Course (JavaScript, CSS, HTML)/ 200+ students in Computer System Organization and Architecture Courses (Java)/ 80 students in a Operating System Course (Java).

Network Administrator ,RASA CO, SONY

Jan 2016 - May 2021

- Designed and implemented secure network infrastructure enabling deployment of advanced video surveillance systems and strengthening overall security protocols.
- Led end-to-end installation and integration of network systems in collaboration with SONY-affiliated teams.
- Conducted staff training on network fundamentals, system utilization, and maintenance to ensure long-term operational reliability.

EDUCATION

PhD Candidate in Computer Science

Aug 2021 - Dec 2026

Utah State University

- Specialization: Human-Computer Interaction (HCI) and UX Research
- Research Focus: Trust, Safety, and Digital Risk
- Dissertation on “ Human-Centered Digital Trust & Safety (ongoing).”.

Master of Science in Software Engineering,

Jan 2013 - Aug 2016

Azad University (IAU)

- Specialization in Wireless Sensor Networks (WSNs).
- Thesis on "Energy-Efficient Node Deployment Strategies to Mitigate the Energy Hole Problem in Wireless Sensor Networks".

Bachelor of Science in IT Engineering

Aug 2007 - Dec 2012

K. N. Toosi University of Technology

- Specialization in E-Commerce Systems.
 - Relevant coursework in Algorithms, Mathematics, Circuits, Computer Architecture, and Software Engineering.
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SKILLS

• Research

- Qualitative
 - Semi-structured interviews
 - Thematic analysis
 - Mental model analysis
 - Stakeholder research
 - Usability testing
- Quantitative & Experimental
 - Survey and experimental design
 - Behavioral studies
 - A/B testing, Statistical analysis
 - Data visualization
 - MTurk research
- Mixed-Methods
 - Sequential exploratory research design (qualitative → experimental validation)
 - Intervention evaluation
 - Integration of behavioral findings into system-level recommendations

• Trust, Safety & Security UX

- Design and evaluation of digital safety interventions
- User mental models of risk and security decision-making
- Online vulnerability and deception research
- Evidence-based safety communication and education design
- Multi-stakeholder safety ecosystem analysis

• Design

- User-centered design and personas
- Scenario building and rapid prototyping
- Research-driven product and safety experience design
- Iterative refinement based on empirical findings

• Technical

- Programming: Python, JavaScript, CSS/ HTML, SQL
- Adobe Creative Suite (Illustrator, Photoshop, InDesign, XD), Figma, MAXQDA

CERTIFICATION

- Google UX Design Professional Certificate
 - How to analyze Qualitative data
 - Human Research CITI Program
 - Meta Front-End Developer Professional Certificate
 - Python for Data Science and Machine Learning Boot camp
 - University of MICHIGAN Python for Everybody Specialization
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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- **Languages**
 - English (Full Professional Proficiency), Turkish (Professional Working), Persian (Native)
- **Scholarships/ Awards**
 - Received Takano Co., LTD. Electrical Engineering Endowment Fund from Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering (Iowa State University)