

Mina Rezaei, Ph.D.

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Summary

Ph.D. in Social Geography with a focus on Human-Computer Interaction. A UX researcher and empathy-driven storyteller, passionate about uplifting users' stories and experiences. Strong background in design and mixed-method research, with seven years of professional experience in the social aspects of design. Fluent in a wide range of UX methodologies and working with cross-functional teams with extensive experience teaching advanced Design, Social Science, and Human Development courses.

Work Experience

California Department of Transportation (Caltrans)

Remote, Sacramento, CA

ASSOCIATE TRANSPORTATION PLANNER

Jan. 2024 - Present

- Coordinated and supported the director in developing and documenting annual performance goals and objectives for executive staff and manages quarterly and final updates on performance.
- Coordinated and managed the reporting and analysis of transportation project funding programs that were augmented or approved in 2023. Updated the funding trackers of transportation project programs and coordinated meetings with managers of transportation project funding programs to track and develop reports on funding program progress to stakeholders.

Quantum Workplace

Remote, Davis, CA

UX RESEARCH INTERN

Jun. 2022 - Sep 2022

- Promoted research best practices to the product team by working effectively with the cross-functional teams, including design leads, product managers, designers, marketing managers, and engineers, to make a cloud-based employee engagement solution, which assists businesses of all sizes with conducting surveys and collecting feedback.
- Developed research agenda, carried out interviews, designed surveys, A/B testing prepared usability reports, and analyzed data from qualitative studies including usability tests, interviews, participatory design, and heuristic evaluations, resulting in a 20 percent increase in the conversion rate for the best places to work survey platform.
- Established a collection of research templates to standardize the process of research across the product teams.
- Proposed and implemented a common research repository by culling together the needs of various types of team members such as researchers, designers, engineers, and product managers and translated those needs into research approaches to improve the collaboration between cross-functional teams and expedite the research process.

Hack for LA

Remote, Davis, CA

UX RESEARCHER INTERN

Jun. 2021 - Sep. 2021

- Created research plan guides, Interview guides, screeners, and consent form templates for Hack for LA projects resulting in the facilitation of the research process.
- Created research template for generative and evaluative research to expedite the UX research process by UX researchers across Hack for LA.

Social Computing Lab, Computer science department, UC Davis

Davis, CA

GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCHER ON HUMAN COMPUTER INTERACTION

June 2022 - December 2023

- Designed a research study and recruited participants to evaluate the spatial experience of users in Social VR by conducting in-depth interviews and content analysis, analyzed and synthesized research data into actionable insights.
- Conducted end-to-end data mapping and visualizations in order to derive understanding and improvement recommendations
- Prepared grant proposals for research agencies including, NSF-funded projects about the spatial experience in social VR.
- Worked cross-functionally with the team on creating user-centered educational products, shared feedback, and developed recommendations
- Engaging in a reading group reviewing the newest trend in HCI scholarship to stay up-to-date with the latest research trends and methodologies.

University of California, Davis, several departments

Davis, CA

INSTRUCTOR AND TEACHING ASSISTANT

Sep2017 - December 2023

- Designed course syllabus, Led discussion sessions, Prepared lectures, and designed activities for classes with more than 95 students in lower-division and upper-division courses. Selected courses: Sociology of Youth, UI/UX, Human Development, Design Studios, People, Place, and Culture.
- Conducted foundational research to help inform product and design strategy end to end, including research, competitive analysis, synthesizing data, prototyping, wireframing, and usability testing for the "Creative Wanderer App". The App aims to improve young people's critical spatial thinking and civic engagement.
- Evaluated teenagers' involvement in designing the Rocky hill trail project by interviewing teens and decision-makers and reviewing related literature and documents to measure teens' quality of participation.
- Mentored and guided Junior researchers in doing observations and ethnographic research, Developed observation protocols on youth presence in public spaces for the "Growing up in Cities" project.
- Designed a research study and recruited participants to evaluate the spatial experience of users in Social VR by conducting in-depth interviews and content analysis.

International Center, UC Davis

Davis, CA

TEACHER

July 2023- Sep. 2023

- Designed course syllabus for STEM program for international youth and mentored Chinese and Japanese students about college life in the US.
- Taught different courses in entrepreneurship, STEM, and business to visiting international youth (ages 10-17 and college students).

Paramadan Consulting Firm

Tehran, Iran

DESIGN RESEARCH LEAD

Nov. 2015 - Sep. 2017

- Applied user-centered design in designing the built environment by holding stakeholder group meetings, conducting interviews, and surveying to identify the problems and address residents' concerns.
- Investigated users' behaviors and created behavioral maps resulting in a more inclusive design.
- Drove leadership buy-in and support by regularly meeting, presenting findings, and connecting to business and social outcomes of the revival of a historic districts in Tehran, Iran.
- Designed quantitative and qualitative user studies to evaluate the efficacy of users' spatial experiences and formulate insight.
- Mentored Junior designers and researchers and improved collaboration in the team of designers and engineers.

Farnahad Consulting Firm

Tehran, Iran

DESIGN RESEARCHER

Nov. 2014 - Sep. 2016

- Conducted studies using a range of techniques, including but not limited to interviews, focus groups, and ethnography studies.
- Evangelized research insights with stakeholders, including designers, engineers, program managers, and senior executives, to drive decision-making
- Supported and helped lead design research activities, including research planning, fieldwork execution, analysis, synthesis, research story, and related deliverables to present to the stakeholders
- Applied appropriate analysis methods to turn the data captured into meaningful and concrete insights/recommendations for the team.
- Collaborated cross-functionally with urban design, engineering, architecture, and sociology groups.

Payest Consulting Firm

Tehran, Iran

DESIGN RESEARCHER

Nov. 2015 - Sep. 2017

- Delegated tasks to teams of 3-9 urban designers, civil engineers, and architects and ensured the timely and smooth flow of the project.
- Mentored and encouraged my fellow teammates to improve processes, enhance the team's skillset, and foster great team culture.
- Did field works to explore the historical, environmental, and social values of the historic cemetery geared toward improving it as a tourist destination.
- Synthesized research data and created research reports to tell the empathetic story of the cemetery and its impact on the livelihood of the neighborhood, resulting in the conservation of the historic parts of the cemetery.

Skills

Programming HTML, CSS, JavaScript, Python, RStudio

UX design and Prototyping Adobe Creative suite, Procreate, Figma

Research and Data Visualization Tools Arc GIS, Hotjar, MAXQDA, Gainsight, Miro, Mural, User Testing

Product management Product board, Asana

Languages English(Fluent), Farsi(Native), Arabic(Basic)

Education

University of California, Davis

Davis, CA

PH.D. IN GEOGRAPHY WITH A FOCUS ON HUMAN COMPUTER INTERACTION

Sep. 2017 - Dec. 2023

University of California, Berkeley

Remote, Berkeley

BERKELEY I CORPS COHORT: ONE WEEK NSF-FUNDED VIRTUAL TRAINING AIMED AT TRANSLATING ACADEMIC RESEARCH INTO A

STARTUP.

Jan. 2021 - Jan 2021

- Activities: Worked on customer discovery and the business model of the Creative Wanderer App (my startup idea)

Keller Pathway Fellowship, UCDavis

Davis, California

KELLER PATHWAY FELLOW

Sep. 2021 - Jun 2022

- The Fellowship provided a multifaceted opportunity for student innovators to expand their network and move ideas off campus and into the world.

University of Tehran

Tehran, Iran

MASTERS IN URBAN PLANNING AND DESIGN, B.S IN LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

Sep. 2007 - Feb2014

Extracurricular Activity

Maptime Davis (Geospatial Skill Workshop Series)

Davis, California

COUNCIL MEMBER

Sep. 2021 - Jun. 2022

- Held and organized workshops to teach about GIS and other spatial programming tools such as D3.
- Collaborated with other leaders to plan different workshops during one academic year.

Medium, UXCollective

Remote

BLOGGER, MINA REZAEI MEDIUM BLOG

Jan. 2020 - Jun. 2020

- Contributed blog posts about UX knowledge and practice to improve the UX community knowledge sharing

Publications (Selected)

- Rezaei, M., Owens, PE., Young Humans Make Change, Young Users Click: Creating Youth-Centered Networked Social Movement, Accepted paper for workshop on Supporting Social Movements through HCI and Design Research, CHI conference,23-28 April 2023, Hamburg, Germany
- Rezaei, M., Owens, PE.,Wang, HC, (2023). Recreating Experience of Space in Social Virtual Reality, ACM transaction on Computer- Human Interaction (TOCHI), Submitted