

NASIM MOTALEBI – CV

Supporting technology ecosystems: user research, policy analysis, deployment, testing, and capacity building.

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EDUCATION

Ph.D. in Information Sciences and Technology, Penn State University, College of Information Sciences and Technology, Aug 2019- Oct 2023

M.S. in Architecture, Penn State University, College of Arts and Architecture, Aug 2015- May 2017

B.S. in Architectural Engineering, University of Tehran, Faculty of Fine Arts, Sep 2009- June 2014

WORK EXPERIENCE

Consultancies and Contract

United Nations OCHA, The Hague, Netherlands (Remote), May-Aug 2023

- Conducted extensive policy, ethics, user, and market research on Generative AI for Humanitarians by collecting and analyzing qualitative data from interviews with 29 AI experts and secondary sources from I/NGOs and tech corporations.
- Identified use cases, challenges, guardrails, and strategies for the adoption of Generative AI in the humanitarian sector.
- Drafted a comprehensive report titled "Generative AI for Humanitarians" published through Reliefweb and Digital Humanitarian Network and populated the United Nation's OCHA internal hub on Generative AI.

German Institute of Development and Sustainability (IDOS), Bonn, Germany, Feb-Mar 2023

- Conducted Policy Research on developing policy insight for forced migration response in Malaysia.
- Collaborated with IDOS researchers to exchange knowledge and develop insight on human mobility research.
- Drafted policy brief for the German ministry BMZ to support ongoing work on topics of Feminist Development Policy and forced migration response in Malaysia.

Same Skies Initiative, Remote, Dec-Oct 2022

- Conducted a capacity assessment project for Refugee-Led Organizations (RLOs)
- Helped Same Skies to develop a capacity-assessment strategy for RLOs.
- Drafted an impact report for Same Skies Initiative.

Research and Development, Humanitarian Informatics

Ph.D. Researcher, Penn State University, College of Information Sciences and Technology, Jan 2021-June 2023
Asset-Based Design Model of Information Practices among Refugee-Led Organizations.

- Lead and managed research by developing research proposal, protocol, and conducting qualitative research to evaluate the digital capacities of Refugee-Led Organizations through interviews with 20 RLOs across Uganda, Kenya, Malaysia, Indonesia, and Egypt.
- Analyzed qualitative data using NVivo and generated evidence of RLO activities including service delivery, visibility, and organizational performance in different geopolitical contexts of as Kenya, Uganda, Malaysia, and Indonesia.
- Developed practical design recommendation for strategizing ICT design solutions in the localization agenda.

Graduate Research Assistant, Penn State University, College of Information Sciences and Technology, Aug 2019-Dec 2021

Relief and Development Coherence Toolkit, Funded by the U.S. Department of State (Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration)

- Managed a cross-disciplinary group of researchers and conducted comparative case study research of forced migration response in Uganda and Ecuador
- Conducted mixed-methods research showcased in policy analyses and strategic assessment using qualitative data collection methods such as interviews with 50 donors and I/NGOs.
- Designed and developed a toolkit package of metrics and guidelines to measure relief and development coherence.
- Conducted a usability study to assess feasibility and effectiveness of the toolkit among organizations,
- Wrote 8 quarterly reports, 2 academic journals, more than 4 progress country case study reports, and a training workshop for I/NGO staff and donors.

Human-Centered Design, User Experience Research

Graduate Research Assistant, Penn State University, College of Information Sciences and Technology, Feb 2018- Aug 2019

Designing Smart-Speaker Assistants to Support Population-Level Mental Health Interventions

- Designed, developed, and tested low and high fidelity prototypes for an Amazon Alexa application to deliver scalable mental health interventions for patients with PTSD.
- Used wireframing and iterative design methods for low-fidelity prototyping. Used Node.js for high-fidelity prototyping.
- Collaborated with a team of communication researchers to implement research prototypes and evaluate usability.
- Developed 3 research protocols for controlled user studies.
- Conducted A/B testing, controlled experiments, and qualitative surveys to evaluate the efficacy and usability of the application.
- Published 4 conference papers in CHI, CSCW, and EAI.

Graduate Research Assistant, Penn State University, College of Arts and Architecture, Jan 2017- May 2017

Smart Woven Water Filter for the Guatemalan Community

- Designed a sustainable and localized method to create a culturally conscious water sanitation information ecosystem for the Guatemalan community.
- Adopted locally sourced Guatemalan textiles embedded with sensors to collect and share information regarding levels of water sanitation.

INVITED TALKS AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

FAO, ATARI Working Group, Generative AI for Humanitarians, Oct 2023

Research presentation for the Advanced Technology and Artificial Intelligence (ATARI) working group, Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) initiative.

United Nations OCHA, Information Management Team, Aug 2023

Research Presentation, "Generative AI guidelines and guardrails for OCHA"

Stuckeman Center of Design Computing (SCDC), Penn State University, Mar 2023

Lecture Series, "A home away from home? Architecture and the humanitarian-development divide in response to protracted forced migration crises."

Nethope, Workshop Series (Virtual), July 2021

Workshop presentation, "Relief and Development Coherence Assessment Toolkit."

CSCW Conference, Austin, TX, Nov 2019

Workshop presentation, "Smart Speakers for Rogerian Therapy".

Pervasive Health Conference, NYC, NY, May 2019

Workshop presentation, "Smart Speakers for PTSD Therapy".

DIS Conference, Brisbane, Australia, June 2016

Workshop presentation, "Augmenting communication, Clothes as social mediator."

ACADEMIC TEACHING

Adjunct Faculty and Teaching Fellow, Human-Centered Design, Penn State University, College of Information Sciences and Technology.

- Independently designed and taught an undergraduate-level course on the principles of design, practical prototyping skills, and usability testing based on UX design methods and cognitive psychology.
- Helped 10 student groups design and develop web and mobile prototypes to support local businesses.
- Managed the work of a teaching assistant who supported the course for grading and student support.

Teaching Assistant and Invited Lecturer, ICT in the International Context, Penn State University, College of Information Sciences and Technology.

- Lectured on topics of network connectivity and digital divide as well as the implications of technologies across different sectors and social issues such as agriculture, and migration.

RELEVANT PUBLICATIONS

Generative AI for Humanitarians. Digital Humanitarian Network, United Nations OCHA, Motalebi, N., & Verity, A. September 2023

Refugee-led Organizations and Intersectionality: Feminist Development Policy in the Lives of Refugees. IDOS. Motalebi, N., & Martin-Shields, C. April 2023

Relief and Development Coherence: An Evaluation of Host Country Policies and Strategic Mechanisms in Response to Forced Migration Crisis. Motalebi, N., Maitland, C., Jacobs, E., & Singh, L., (Forthcoming). 2023

Alexa is So Close to My Therapist, CHI. Motalebi, N., Cho, E., Abdullah, S., & Sundar, S. S., April 2022

Will deleting history make Alexa more trustworthy? effects of privacy and content customization on user experience of smart speakers. In Proceedings of the 2020 CHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems. November 2020

Can Alexa be your Therapist? How Back-Channeling Transforms Smart-Speakers to be Active Listeners. In Conference Companion Publication of the 2019 on Computer Supported Cooperative Work and Social Computing Motalebi, N., Cho, E., Sundar, S. S., & Abdullah, S. November 2019

Conversational agents to provide couple therapy for patients with PTSD. In Proceedings of the 12th EAI International Conference on Pervasive Computing Technologies for Healthcare, Motalebi, N., & Abdullah, S. May 2018.