

Kynneddy Simone Smith

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RESEARCH INTERESTS

human-computer interaction (HCI) · natural language processing (NLP) · generative AI · sociocultural alignment · AI safety

EDUCATION

Carnegie Mellon University, School of Computer Science

Pittsburgh, PA

Doctor of Philosophy, Human-Computer Interaction

2025 - Present

Advisors: Motahhare Eslami & Maarten Sap

NSF GRFP Fellow, GEM Fellow, CMU Rales Fellow, & CMU Block Center Fellow

Columbia University, Columbia College

New York, NY

Double Major: Bachelor of Arts, Computer Science & Cognitive Science

2021-2025

Research Advisors: Lydia Chilton & Brian Smith

ACADEMIC PUBLICATIONS

- **Kynneddy Simone Smith**, K. Rogers, P. Shrivastava, M. Eslami, J. Shen, M. Sap. “DISARM-ing the Hidden Puppetmaster: An Interface for Exposing Manipulative Tactics in Large Language Models”, IN SUBMISSION
- **Kynneddy Simone Smith**, M. Eslami, M. Sap. “POV-LENS: Highlighting Positionality Gaps in AI Answers to Mitigate Over-Reliance”, IN SUBMISSION
- **Kynneddy Simone Smith**, Lydia Chilton, & Danielle Bragg, [“Identifying, Explaining, and Correcting Ableist Language with AI”](#). CHI 2026
- J. Shen, A. Luvsanchultem, J. Kim, **Kynneddy Simone Smith**, V. Danry, K. Rogers, H. W. Park, M. Sap, C. Breazeal. [“The Hidden Puppet Master: Predicting Human Belief Change in Manipulative LLM Dialogues”](#), COLM 2026
- Rock Pang, Hope Schroeder, **Kynneddy Simone Smith**, Solon Barocas, Ziang Xiao, Emily Tseng, & Danielle Bragg, [“Understanding the LLM-ification of CHI: Unpacking the Impact of LLMs at CHI through a Metareview”](#). CHI 2025
- Grace Li, Yuanyang Teng, **Kynneddy Simone Smith**, Tao Long, and Lydia Chilton, [“Audiences Impressions of Personal Narratives in Science Communication”](#)
- Arnavi Chheda, David Rios, **Kynneddy Simone Smith**, and Brian Smith. [“Understanding Blind and Low Vision Users’ Attitudes Towards Spatial Interactions in Desktop Screen Readers”](#). ASSETS 2023 Poster
- Tao Long, Dorothy Zhang, Grace Li, Batool Taraif, Samia Menon, **Kynneddy Simone Smith**, Sitong Wang, Katy Ilonka Gero, and Lydia B. Chilton. [“Tweeterial Hooks: Generative AI Tools to Motivate Sciences”](#). ICCS 2023
- **Smith, Kynneddy** (2020). [Augmented Reality and Artificial Intelligence: The Dynamic Duo Revolutionizing Healthcare](#). The Best Of MOSTEC 2020 Science Writing, pg. 83, Massachusetts Institute of Technology

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Human-Computer Interaction Institute, Carnegie Mellon University

Pittsburgh, PA

PhD Student Advised by: Motahhare Eslami and Maarten Sap

August 2025 – Present

I create AI tools that promote sociocultural learning and prosocial behavior in human collaborative environments. Using methods from both HCI and NLP, I also investigate how AI disclosures and sociocultural alignment can strengthen trust and collaboration between people and AI systems. Ultimately, my goal is to develop AI systems that both avoid harm and actively enhance how humans understand and support each other. Here’s a short description of my current projects:

RAG Positionality Bias

- Developing a novel evaluation of RAG responses that visualizes unseen bias in both the AI retrieval and answer. Conducting user studies to assess how increased transparency impacts human-AI trust, reliance, and sensemaking with small datasets.

Empathy Manipulation Protection

- Studying how personalized empathy and emotional framing in generative agents influence persuasion and user autonomy. Developing a taxonomy, dataset, and detection tasks with the goal to protect users from manipulation.

MIT Lincoln Lab*AI & Machine Learning Research Intern***Lexington, MA****May 2025 – August 2025**

- Designed retrieval-augmented generation (RAG) pipelines using Python, Hugging Face Transformers, LLaMA 3.1 (local deployment), and OpenAI GPT-4o.
- Developed frameworks to effectively evaluate the trustworthiness and positionality of a document corpus and RAG response.
- Refactored a RAG evaluator package to utilize local large language models and custom trustworthiness evaluation prompts.

Microsoft Research*Research Intern (Human-Computer Interaction & AI)***New York, NY****May 2024 – August 2024**

- Led a first-author research project to investigate AI's ability to identify, explain, and correct ableist language.
- Fine-tuned a large language model to understand and explain ableist concepts utilizing the OpenAI API.
- Conducted a user study where members of the disability community annotated GPT-generated ableism annotations and performed a quantitative and qualitative analysis of the results.

Computer Enabled Abilities Lab, Columbia University*Research Developer***New York, NY****January 2023 – October 2023**

- Designed the data processing workflow for a Google Chrome extension that integrates spatialized audio with screen reader technology to convey visual layout information to blind users.
- Led semi-structured user studies where blind participants compared their experience with our Chrome extension to their personal screen reader. Utilized topic modeling and affinity diagramming to analyze the results.
- Presented this work at the 25th International ACM SIGACCESS Conference on Computers and Accessibility.

Computational Design Lab, Columbia University*Research Developer***New York, NY****August 2022 – June 2023**

- Wrote and published engaging science tutorials via Twitter threads called [“tweetorials”](#).
- Developed, optimized, and user-tested a web app using Python to call OpenAI's language model, GPT-3, to help users generate topic ideas, leading hooks, use case narratives, and mechanism narratives for tweetorials.
- Analyzed our user studies for a paper presentation at the 14th Conference on Computational Creativity.

Pioneer Academics*Student Research Scholar (New York University and Davidson University)***Virtual****Summer 2020 – Spring 2021**

- Wrote a 27-page experimental survey on unsupervised machine learning algorithms on small datasets.
- Completed a 28-page research exploration using spatial analysis to investigate how relationships between K-12 schools and Cultural Institutions impact the quality of education in my hometown of Cleveland, Ohio.
- Ranked top 5% out of the hundreds of students in my class recognizing my scholarly achievement and curiosity.

WORK EXPERIENCE (Teaching + Software)

Columbia University*Teaching Assistant COMS 4107 User Interface Design***New York, NY****January 2024 – May 2025**

- Served as a teaching assistant for this course in the Spring 2024, Fall 2024, and Spring 2025 semesters.
- Mentored 60+ students in weekly coaching sessions to help them design, build, and test their final group projects.
- Graded assignments for the student mentees and was consistently available on Slack to answer questions.

Amazon*Software Development Engineer Intern (Machine Learning)***New York, NY****May 2023 – August 2023**

- Utilized the AWS services Cradle and Sage to analyze 9 technical and business performance metrics for a machine learning model that ranks the brand reputation for all fashion products on Amazon.com.
- Partnered with scientists and business stakeholders to design a dashboard with AWS QuickSight that displays the model's key metrics to customers, saving 100+ hours of engineer labor from answering customer questions.

Amazon*Software Development Engineer Intern (Amazon Future Engineer Intern)***Seattle, WA****June 2022 – September 2022**

- Collaborated with Amazon engineers on design discussions, coding, and release for new applications to reduce developer hardship (around maintaining a production service) for the entire Amazon Fulfillment Technology organization.
- Refactored the back end of an Amazon internal process website using AWS DynamoDB to optimize for speed, mass duplication, and automation.
- Wrote the model, implementation, and testing code for a Java-based data access object that interacts with database entries on a site that reaches over 5,200 engineers in 1,500+ different teams and 35+ organizations in Amazon.

Computational Design Lab, Columbia University

Research Developer Intern

New York, NY

January 2022 – May 2022

- Produced a text messaging application for students with limited access to computers and/or the Internet.
- Programmed and designed the UX of the text application using Python, Flask, JavaScript, HTML, and CSS.
- Debugged and solved problems within the program with a graduate student, assuming 50% of the responsibility for the functioning and stability of the program for teachers and students.

Xerox

Product Systems Engineering Intern

Webster, NY

July 2021 – November 2021

- Independently researched, designed, and developed an app for Xerox Multifunction Devices by utilizing Xerox's Software Development Kit, APIs, and Weblet samples.
- Collaborated with the Xerox Systems Engineering, Development, and Research Team to learn and execute the standard Xerox product life cycle and create a printer app relevant to Gen-Z.

AWARDS AND RECOGNITIONS

- **NSF GRFP Fellow, 2026**
- **Carnegie Mellon Block Center Fellow, 2026**
- Women Empowering Nations 2025 GLOW Global Cohort
- **Carnegie Mellon Rales Fellow, 2025**
- **GEM PhD Employer Fellow (MIT Lincoln Lab), 2025**
- Order of Omega Inductee (Honors Society), 2025
- Undergraduate Service Project Award, 2025
- AI Optimism Prize – Senior Thesis Award, 2025
- Kellet Fellowship (For Study at Oxford University), 2025
- Dennis Washington Leadership Fellowship Finalist, 2025
- **Rhodes Fellowship Finalist, 2024**
- Stanford Knight-Hennessy Fellowship Semi-Finalist, 2024
- Taco Bell Live Mas Scholarship, 2024
- Sorority Scholar Award, Columbia Greek Council, 2024
- Each One Can Help Others (ECHO) Service Award, 2024
- Poster Presenter, 25th ACM SIGASSESS Conference, 2023
- Google CS Research Mentorship Program Fellow, 2023
- Google Conference Scholarship: Grace Hopper Celebration, 2023
- Magazine Feature: Unstoppable 100 - Inspiring Women and Girls Shaping Our World, 2023
- **Unbossed, How Black Girls are Leading the Way, 2022**
 - **Chapter 7 - The Hero of Her Own Story: The Pacesetter of Kynneddy Simone Smith**
- Vital Voices 13 Young Women You Need to Know, 2022
- Palantir Women in Technology Scholarship, 2022
- Lockheed Martin STEM Scholarship, 2022
- Oprah Winfrey Leaders Scholar, 2021
- **Phi Beta Kappa Awardee** and Valedictorian, 2021
- Quest Bridge College Match Scholar, 2021
- Amazon Future Engineer Scholarship, 2021
- Ron Brown Scholarship, 2021
- Coca-Cola Scholarship, 2021
- Horatio Alger Scholarship (National), 2021
- Generation Google Scholarship, 2021
- KPMG Future Leader Scholarship, 2021
- Virtasant Future Leaders in Technology Scholarship, 2021
- Burger King Scholarship, 2021
- Elks Most Valuable Student Scholarship Quarterfinalist, 2021
- Generational Advantage Senior Success Scholar, 2020
- International Day of Youth Honoree, Sustainable Cleveland, 2020
- Act-SO Bronze Award for Classical Performance, 2020
- Alpha Omega Foundation Inc., APPLE Debutante, 2020
- Roth Community Service Honoree Award, 2019
- Bob Maciunas STEMM Research Symposium Award, 2019
- A Better Chance Scholar Award, 2015-2017, 2021

LEADERSHIP & SERVICE

The Dream Scholars

Founder/CEO

Virtual

November 2022 - Present

- Inspiring youth to pursue lives of service and scholarship by providing resources for college and scholarships.
- Presenting seminars on scholarship and college portfolios to over 500 students and counting.
- Managing a portfolio of five corporate and non-profit collaborators to help sponsor new programming for our students.
- Fundraising for scholarships, with our [first \\$500 scholarship](#) presented in May of 2023.

I Art Cleveland

Nonprofit Founder/CEO

Virtual

June 2014 – December 2022

- Created at the age 11 to connect underrepresented youth in Cleveland to arts funding, programming, and education sources.
- Hosted DART (date art) nights that helped families attend their first shows at the Cleveland Playhouse Square.
- Formed partnerships with local arts and music organizations to promote their programming to underrepresented students and negotiate discounted tuition fees.

InnerPeak AI

Youth AI Technology Consultant

Virtual

January 2025 – Present

- Advises on AI product strategy, ethical model design, and accessibility considerations for an AI youth therapy platform.
- User tests and reviews new user interface and content releases on the app.

Ron Brown Scholar Program Alumni Association

Director of Undergrad and New-Grad Affairs

New York, NY

January 2023 – Present

- Appointed as the youngest Ron Brown alumni appointed to the Alumni Association Advisory Board.
- Advocating for the young members of the Ron Brown Networks by relaying their questions and concerns to the board.

Girls Who Code

Alumni Advisory Council Member

New York, NY

January 2024 – January 2025

- Facilitated innovative programming inspired by issues facing the tech industry and educational institutions.
- Provides insights at board meetings and staff retreats about trends and strategies to get girls involved in diverse tech fields.
- Represents the company on panels, strategy calls, and research focus groups with corporate partners like Accenture.

Columbia Undergraduate Science Journal

Editor-In-Chief + Co-president Emeritus

New York, NY

August 2021 -- May 2023

- Elected 2x to lead Columbia University's oldest and most prestigious undergraduate science journal.
- Leads and trains a team of 12 editors as we promote, edit, compile, and publish our namesake journal.
- Assuming complete responsibility for publishing the Fall 2023 and 2024 editions of our namesake journal.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Management Leadership for Tomorrow

Career Prep Fellow '25

Virtual

March 2023 – May 2025

- Selected among thousands of high-achieving applicants to participate in this career preparation program focused on professional and leadership development.
- Completing business case studies and assignments to hone analytical, quantitative, and technical skills.
- Attending conferences hosted by industry leaders such as LinkedIn, Netflix, Jane Street, Activision Blizzard, and more.

Girls Who Invest

2023 Online Intensive Program Fellow

Virtual

January 2023 – September 2023

- Learned about leadership and wealth management with a scholar cohort selected through a competitive application process.
- Earned certificates from the Chartered Financial Analyst Institute, Wall Street Prep, and Wharton Online through modules that teach the core concepts of finance and investment.

Capital One

Capital One Software Engineering Summit (SES)

Virtual

May 2022

- Engaged with Capital One engineers in hands-on workshops about full-stack development, IOS/android development, React JS, APIs, developing with augmented reality, and hardware using an Arduino.
- Earned 2nd place in a 24-hour hackathon by developing a mobile app that makes bank statements fun and easy to read.

Jane Street Capital

First-Year Trading and Technology Program

New York, NY

March 2022

- Programmed a bot using Python to buy, sell, and trade stocks, bonds, and exchange-traded funds during a simulated trading competition, earning around 2 million dollars in virtual currency.
- Won 1st place out of 12 teams in the Jane Street Estimation, in which I calculated 13 large estimations in 30 minutes with the help of my team.

Google

Google Computer Science Summer Institute

Virtual

July 2021 – August 2021

- Selected for the advanced cohort where I worked with Google engineers for 4 weeks to create projects using HTML, CSS, JavaScript, and Firebase.
- Collaborated on a final project called my-music-mix, which allows users to make an account and create a list that highlights their top artists, albums, songs, and genres. Implemented the platform using a Firebase database, and the Deezer music A

RESEARCH CONFERENCES: ACM SIGGCHI ('25, '26), COLM ('26), TADA ('26), ACM TAPIA ('24), ACM ASSETS ('23)

OTHER SKILLS & INTERESTS

Programming Languages: Python, C, Java, Scala, HTML, CSS, JavaScript, TypeScript, R, Mathematica

Research Competencies: LLM evaluation, retrieval-augmented generation (RAG) pipelines, generative AI & prompt engineering, AI fairness & accessibility, experimental design, mixed-methods research, privacy-aware ML, large-scale crowdsourced annotation

Frameworks & Libraries: Hugging Face Transformers, PyTorch, React, Flask, Spark Scala

Language: Conversational French