

Roya Pakzad

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royapakzad.co

EDUCATION

Columbia University , New York, NY	<i>Sept. 2015–May 2017</i>
M.A. in Human Rights Studies	
University of Southern California , Los Angeles, CA	<i>Aug. 2010–May 2012</i>
M.Sc. in Electrical Engineering	
Shahid Beheshti University , Tehran, Iran	<i>Sept. 2005–June 2009</i>
B.Sc. in Electrical Engineering	

EMPLOYMENT

Founder and Director	<i>July 2019– present</i>
<i>Taraaz, Santa Cruz, CA</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Researching human rights implications of new technologies and advising the technology industry, civil society organizations, and governments on human rights implications of digital products and services.	
Research Associate & Project Leader, Technology & Human Rights	<i>May 2018–June 2019</i>
<i>Stanford University, Global Digital Policy Incubator / Stanford Iranian Studies, Stanford, CA</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Researched and led public and private discussions on GDPi’s program in AI and Human Rights.• Conducted independent research and investigations about policies and practices of technology companies with respect to human rights.	
Program Associate, RightsCon	<i>Nov. 2016–Apr. 2017</i>
<i>Access Now, New York, NY</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Helped organize RightsCon Brussels programming including research, speaker outreach, reviewing sessions, logistics, and developing the conference’s final schedule. Recruited, led, and managed a team of 45 volunteers.• Developed RightsCon’s satellite program, Youth for Rights.	
Research Assistant	<i>Nov. 2015–Nov. 2016</i>
<i>Columbia University, Heyman Center for the Humanities, New York, NY</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Spearheaded creation of new digital humanities initiatives.	
ASIC/Layout Design Engineer	<i>Aug. 2012–Aug. 2015</i>
<i>Advanced Micro Devices (AMD), Austin, TX</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Conducted Design-for-Testability (DFT) of microchips for Sony’s PlayStation 4 and Microsoft’s Xbox One.	

PUBLICATIONS & WORKING PAPERS

- 2020 “Digital Health for Refugees: A Feminist Approach to Design and Deployment of mHealth,” (co-authored with Rita Dayoub), forthcoming in a special issue of *Global Perspectives* in 2021.
- 2020 “Digital Rights and Technology Sector Accountability in Iran,” Lead researcher and author. (co-produced with Taraaz and Filterwatch), November 2020.
- 2020 “Leap of FATE: human rights as a complementary framework for AI policy and practice,” Proceedings of the 2020 ACM Conference on Fairness, Accountability, and Transparency (co-authored with Corinne Cath, Mark Latonero, and Vidushi Marda), January 2020.
- 2019 “Incubating Hate: Islamophobia and Gab,” Working Paper, Digital Innovation and Democracy Initiative of the German Marshall Fund of the United States (co-authored with Karen Kornbluh, Samuel Woolley, and Nicholas Monaco), June 2019.
- 2019 “Social Media Councils, from Concept to Reality,” Conference Report, Stanford University Global Digital Policy Incubator (contributing author with GDPi, ARTICLE 19, & David Kaye), May 2019.
- 2019* “Opportunities and Challenges of Emerging Technologies for the Refugee System,” Research Paper, World Refugee Council, Center for International Governance Innovation, May 2019.
- 2019* “Anti Muslim Americans Computational Propaganda in the United States: Coordinated online attacks during the 2018 US midterm elections,” Institute for the Future, (co-authored with Niloufar Salehi), May 2019.
- 2019 “Silicon Valley Preaches Diversity and Inclusion while Excluding Iranians,” Atlantic Council, (co-authored with Mahsa Alimardani), April 8, 2019.
- 2018 “Private Sector Roles and Responsibilities: Protecting Quality of Discourse, Diversity of Content and Civic Engagement on Digital Platforms and Social Media,” Governance Innovation for a Connected World, Center for International Governance Innovation, (co-authored with Rebecca MacKinnon), November 2018.
- 2017 “Bits of Life: Leveraging Emerging Technologies to Improve the Livelihood of Refugees,” *Medienimpulse*, Vol. 3 (2017).

* Peer-reviewed

SCHOLARSHIPS & AWARDS

3 rd place winner, Twitter’s algorithmic bias bounty challenge	<i>Aug. 2021</i>
Resident Fellow, Thematic Residency on AI, Rockefeller Foundation Bellagio Center	<i>Oct. 2019</i>
Awardee, Facebook: Content Policy Research (with Niloufar Salehi and Nazita Lajevardi)	<i>Oct. 2019</i>
Deep Learning Diversity Fellowship, The Data Institute, University of San Francisco	<i>Spring 2018</i>
Awardee, Iranian-American Scholarship Fund	<i>Fall, 2016</i>

INVITED TALKS

- “Revolutionary Design: Conceiving a Future Forged with Antiracist Technology,” the WNET Group (America’s flagship of PBS station), May 2021
- “Human Consequences of Computational Propaganda: Muslim Americans,” Anti-Defamation League, Washington DC, May 2019.
- “A Technologist’s Journey into the Human Rights World,” CITRIS Research Exchange Seminar Series, UC Berkeley, CA, October 2018.

CONFERENCES

- Conference lead-organizer**, “Cyber Abuse and How to Stop It,” the City of Santa Cruz’s Commission for the Prevention of Violence Against Women, October 2021
- Panelist**, “Maximizing Company Transparency in the Majority World,” RightsCon, June 2021
- Session co-organizer**, “Narratives and Counternarratives on Data Practices in the Global South,” ACM Conference on Fairness, Accountability, and Transparency, March 2021
- Panelist**, “Hope or hype? Hacking through the role of technology in refugee protection,” The Kaldor Centre for International Refugee Law, UNSW Sydney, November 2020
- Discussant**, “How to fight white supremacist extremism while protecting civil liberties: a multidisciplinary approach using technology, research, and policy,” 4th Workshop on Mechanism Design for Social Good, August 2020.
- Panelist**, “How state policies and private companies undermine digital rights in Iran,” RightsCon, June 2020
- Tutorial co-organizer**, “Leap of FATE: human rights as a complementary framework for AI policy and practice,” ACM Conference on Fairness, Accountability, and Transparency, Barcelona, Spain, January 2020.
- Panelist**, “Online Disinformation and Vulnerable Populations: Islamophobia and the 2020 United States Presidential Election,” The German Marshall Fund of the United States, Washington, DC, May 2019.
- Session organizer**, “Tech to counter false information and tech spreading false information. How to use tech to fight false information and bots ahead of the Iran parliamentary elections?” Iran Cyber Dialogue, Washington DC, May 2019.
- Session co-organizer**, “AI for Good Global Summit: AI, Human Dignity and Inclusive Society,” May 2019, Geneva, Switzerland
- Session organizer**, “AI for Social Good,” Women in Tech Symposium on the Future of AI, UC Berkeley, March 2019.
- Panel moderator**, “Social inclusion technologies used by governments,” Paris, France, October 2018.
- Panelist**, “The Role of Technology in Addressing the Global Migration Crisis: Transparency and Accountability,” World Refugee Council, Center for International Governance Innovation, Berkeley, CA, June 2018.

Session organizer & chair, “Prisoners’ Rights in the Digital Age,” RightsCon Toronto, Canada, May 2018.

Session organizer & chair, “Apps for Refugees: Successes and Challenges,” RightsCon Brussels, Belgium, March 2017.

Panelist, “The Digital is the Political: Anti-Oppression Resistance and an Introduction to Migrant Rights for Digital Advocates,” RightsCon Brussels, Belgium, March 2017.

Presenter, “Apps for Refugees: Gauging Their Successes, and Challenges,” NetHope Global Summit, Atlantic, GA, November 2016.

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

Advisor at the Facebook’s Actor & Behavior Expert Circle, January 2021-present.

Commissioner for the Prevention of Violence Against Women, City of Santa Cruz, January 2021-present

Affiliated Scholar, The CITRIS Policy Lab at UC Berkeley, September 2019-present.

Co-organizer, Data Governance and Data Economies, The Mechanism Design for Social Good (MD4SG), September 2020- April 2021

Committee Member, 4th Workshop on Mechanism Design for Social Good, August 2020.

Committee Member, ACM FAT* Conference 2020 (Fairness, Accountability, and Transparency in Socio-technical Systems).

Committee Member, “AI for Sustainable Development and a More Equal World,” Ethically Aligned Design, Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE).

Jury Member, Techfugees Global Challenges Competition, October, 2018.

Co-founder, MENA Graduate Group at Columbia University, NY.

SKILLS

- Data Science, Stanford University Continuing Studies (2018)
- Intermediate Python and R
- Intermediate knowledge of Machine Learning and Deep Learning
- Experience building websites with WordPress, Jekyll, and Hugo
- Experience in working on OpenStreetMap, Ushahidi and QGIS
- Five years of experience programming in register-transfer level (RTL) languages including Verilog
- Advanced knowledge of Excel

OTHER EXPERIENCE

Justice-in-Education Initiative, Rikers Island Jail, Queens, NY

Feb. 2016-Dec. 2016

Workshop Instructor

Women for Afghan Women (WAW), Queens, NY

Sep. 2015-Dec. 2015

Workshop Instructor

Asian Family Support Services of Austin (AFSSA), Austin, TX
Direct Service Volunteer/ Member of Women Empowerment Committee

Apr. 2014-July 2015

AMD's Women Forum (AWF), Austin, TX
University Relations Coordinator

Oct. 2012-Aug. 2015

One Million Signatures for the Repeal of Discriminatory Laws, Iran
"Change for Equality" workshop organizers

Jan. 2007-Jul 2008

LANGUAGES

Farsi	(Native)	English	(Fluent)
Dari	(Fluent)	Arabic	(Basic speaking, intermediate reading)