

Samantha McDonald, PhD

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EXPERIENCE

Meta — UX Researcher (September 2021 - February 2023)

- Served the Monetization pillar. Addressed advertising needs across a diverse range of clients, from small businesses (e.g., bakeries, hair salons, Etsy stores) to large corporations (e.g., Amazon, Nike).
- Investigated topics such as A/B testing, statistical literacy, and user trust in statistical measurements. Focused on UX areas of information accessibility, information recall, user retention, product actionability, and product flow.
- Impact:
 - Introduced a new rapid prototyping feedback method to significantly accelerate the user feedback process for product designers, decreasing turnaround time by 4-6 weeks.
 - Convinced my team's leadership to allocate 50% of our roadmap projects in the subsequent development cycle to address problems my research identified related to user retention.
 - My research projects designed to improve user recall were the only initiative to positively support our topline goal for incremental revenue in that business cycle.
 - Led a comprehensive multi-team literature with three additional researchers to improve access to historical research across all advertising measurement tools.
 - Spearheaded multiple research projects that targeted the accessibility of digital software interfaces for statistical tools used by small businesses.
 - Onboarded one FTE researcher and managed the activities of one CW researcher, facilitating their integration and development within the team.

POPVOX Foundation — Consulting Researcher (January 2021 - August 2021)

- Collaborated with the POPVOX Foundation as part of my doctoral research to pioneer what is believed to be the first asynchronous, single-topic, online town hall for Members of Congress.
- Impact:
 - Designed every aspect of the experiment over the course of a year, ensuring academic rigor and practical relevance on a public platform.
 - Demonstrated how single-topic deliberative platforms can improve discourse between Members of Congress and their constituents by bringing increasing diversity of voice and informed dialogue to Member-constituent engagement.
 - Developed a civic metric toolkit for participatory governance platform design in collaboration with POPVOX.
 - Public Report: *Digital Deliberation: Analysis of Lawmaker Driven, Online, Constituent Engagement Pilot Project*. Samantha McDonald.

University of California, Irvine — Lecturer (Spring 2020, Fall 2020)

- Instructed "ICS3: Internet Technologies and Their Social Impact." The class examined current Internet technologies and social implications at the individual, group and societal levels.
- Lectured ~300 students over two quarters.
- Developed the syllabus and all lecture materials, and managed two - three teaching assistants per semester.

Facebook — UX Research Intern (May 2020 - Aug 2020)

- Conducted research for the Business Integrity Transparency & Controls team.
- Designed an unmoderated user test to assess the effectiveness of Facebook's "Why Am I Seeing This Ad?" feature. Focused on user discoverability and actionability to determine if the design empowered users to manage their advertising experiences.
- My Impact:
 - Established a usability baseline for how users can personalize and control their advertising experiences, contributing to product improvements.
 - Presented findings to the cross functional team and wrote two internal articles highlighting the limitations of chevrons (i.e. a 3-dot menu) as interface tools for information accessibility.

Congressional Management Foundation — Consulting Researcher (May 2017 - June 2018)

- Visited 100 congressional offices and interviewed 48 congressional staffers to explore how legislative correspondents manage and interact with constituents who contact their offices.
- Mapped the congressional communication landscape, assessing the technologies used by congressional offices to manage, track, and leverage constituent communication.
- Performed data analysis for four Congresspersons deploying constituent satisfaction surveys in their districts. Results helped Members of Congress understand what influences constituents' satisfaction and how to improve constituents overall satisfaction with office customer service.
- Highlighted Publications:
 - News Article: *How Congress turns citizens' voices into data points. Samantha McDonald (2019) The Conversation. News Article. September 2019.*
 - Academic Papers: *Information Materialities of Citizen Communication in the U.S. Congress. Samantha McDonald and Melissa Mazmanian. ACM CSCW Conference on Computer-Supported Cooperative Work and Social Computing, Article 47. November 2019.*

Johns Hopkins Applied Physics Lab — Intern (May 2015 - August 2015)

- Supported SIRIUS, an Intelligence Advanced Research Project Activity (IARPA) to design and implement educational video games for mitigating cognitive biases in the intelligence field.
- Designed and deployed in-person surveys with participatory observation. Results helped determine the effectiveness of the video games to educate users on cognitive bias mitigation, and to select which video games to deploy to intelligence analysts training.

EDUCATION

University of California, Irvine — Ph.D. Informatics (April 2021)

University of California, Irvine — M.S. Informatics (May 2019)

University of Maryland, Baltimore County — B.S. Information Systems (May 2016)

VOLUNTEER

Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) of Orange County — Advocate (2017-2024)

- Completed over 60 hours of foster care system training, including topics of childhood trauma, foster care court procedures, and methods of foster care advocacy. Completed an additional 10 hours of continued education every year.
- Advocated for my assigned two children in court by writing bi-annual court reports and attending court hearings. Worked closely with multiple social workers, foster homes, and judges to ensure the best care and resources. Took children on bi-weekly outings to connect to and support each child.