KAORU SEKI

Designer/Researcher

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SUMMARY

Graduate student in Human-Centered Computing with a strong background in UX research, AI, and inclusive design. Experienced in prototyping, wireframing, and creating high-fidelity visuals using Figma. Passionate about human-centered design, inclusive solutions, and collaborative projects. Enthusiastic about contributing to impactful design projects that require research-driven, accessible, and visually appealing user interfaces.

EDUCATION

M.S. Human-Centered Computing | May 2024- December 2025

University of Maryland, Baltimore County

B.A. in Business Technology Administration | May 2021- May 2024

University of Maryland, Baltimore County

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

UX Research Intern | February 2024 - Present

UMBC Imaging Research Center, Baltimore MD

- Investigate how sensemaking and learning occur within an immersive VR application called System Exploration and Engagement Environment (SEEe).
- Capture and edit video recordings of participant interactions within VR to analyze human behavior, focusing on how users navigate, respond, and engage with the virtual environment.
- Conduct data collection through video sampling, participant interviews, and observational methods to build insights on user behavior patterns.
- Analyze collected data to identify key behavioral trends, which inform recommendations for enhancing user experience within VR systems.

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

BizChart | September 2024 - Present

UMBC, Baltimore MD

- Collaborating on a research project to develop and evaluate BizChat, a large language model (LLM)-powered system designed to assist entrepreneurs by automating back-office tasks, such as business plan creation and competitive analysis.
- Conducting literature reviews on the intersection of LLM technology and entrepreneurship to inform the project's development.
- Assisting with user testing and cognitive walkthroughs to explore how BizChat supports entrepreneurs, especially those with limited experience using LLM-powered systems, in overcoming digital divides and enhancing business efficiency.

ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE

EZfix Web application Graphic Design | August 2024 - Present
- Collaborated with a cross-functional team to design a user-friendly web application for the housing industry, focusing on service providers such as handymen and plumbers.
- Led graphic design aspects, creating intuitive user interfaces, visual elements, and cohesive branding to ensure a visually appealing user experience.
- Developed wireframes and interactive prototypes using Figma, iterating based on user feedback and usability testing, making the design process more efficient and visually appealing.
- Created iconography, color schemes, and typography to enhance visual hierarchy and accessibility, aligning the design with the target users' needs.
- Applied to Yincubator competition, focusing on delivering a polished product that meets industry standards.

TracCloud System Redesign | February 2024 - May 2024

UMBC, Baltimore MD
- Conducted a comprehensive analysis of the TracCloud tutoring system used at UMBC, focusing on enhancing user experience for students, tutors, and administrators.
- Redesigned the system using human-centered design principles, identifying usability issues through interviews, surveys, and heuristic evaluations.
- Created low- and medium-fidelity prototypes with Figma to address key problems such as affordance and navigation, resulting in a more streamlined experience for all users.

SKILLS

<Software>
JGrasp, Microsoft (Word, PowerPoint, Excel, Access), Traccloud, Adobe Acrobat, Adobe InDesign, Figma, Canva
<UX/UI>
Usability testing, wireframing, prototyping, design critiques, interactive prototyping, user journeys, personas
<Soft Skills>
Time-Management, Problem-Solving, Collaboration, Team-Leadership, Detailed-Attention
<Language>
Japanese

AWARDS/COMPETITION

- Magna Cum Laude | May 2024 UMBC, Baltimore MD
- Outstanding Senior | May 2024 UMBC, Baltimore MD
- 2nd Place, Social Impact Track - Idea & Innovation Challenge 2024 UMBC, Baltimore MD

CERTIFICATIONS

- Social/Behavioral Research | January 2024
- Researcher conducting no more than minimal risk research | December 2024
- Digital Tech Credential | December 2023