Sharnya Govindaraj

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EXPERIENCE

User Research Apprentice   DIA Design Guild   Feb 2023 – Dec 2023

- o **Conducted usability testing** on a leading e-commerce mobile app's customer support UX and identified top pain points in the user journey
- o **Collaborated with senior UX stakeholders** to gain valuable insights on industry principles and compiled recommendations using low-fidelity wireframes to enhance the user experience

User Research Intern, Research & Insights   Cruise LLC (GM's autonomous vehicle subsidiary)   May 2022 – Aug 2022

- o Evaluated the usability of a training tool and provided recommendations to drive strategic decisions which resulted in **cost savings of $30k per month** for the company
- o Identified top usability pain points in an internal tool via contextual inquiries and **moderated usability testing**
- o Undertook end-to-end ownership of generative and evaluative consumer-facing and internal tools UX projects
- o Recommended **actionable insights** to cross-functional stakeholders, leading to product and design strategy shifts around internal tooling updates and consumer privacy
- o Conducted research using methods such as **competitive analysis, concept testing,** and **in-depth interviews** to understand public perception and concerns about a critical product feature

Lead Researcher @ The Baby Brain Lab   University of Texas at Dallas   Aug 2020 – Present

- o **Led** and **published research** on home language environments and impact on brain development
- o **Developed an annotation scheme** to reduce analysis time and derive high-level insights from around 4000 hours of audio data
- o **Recruited, trained,** and successfully **managed** a team of 10 research assistants to utilize annotation scheme for data analyses
- o **Discovered novel brain-behavior connections** in longitudinal study about impact of parental speech on infant brain development using advanced statistical analyses in R (ex. Regression, Principal Component Analyses)

Research Intern   Indira Gandhi National Center for the Arts, Bengaluru, India   2019 – '20

- o Performed cognitive research with NeuroSky (attention levels in the brain) to inform product strategy direction and presented insights to sponsors for funding
- o Developed a study for exploring the **feasibility** of a speech training module, **screened participants,** and **conducted interviews**
- o Authored a publication in *Vageeshwari* (journal) comparing interpretations of Indian music modes in historic documents

Volunteer Research Consultant   Manollasini Trust   2019 – '20

- o **Streamlined research direction** and led endeavors in a music therapy center for neurodivergent individuals
- o Oversaw a **survey study** on emotional impact of different Indian music modes (happy modes, melancholic modes) on people with no musical knowledge; **results of survey study** informed music therapy modules for clients, leading to high success rates

Correspondent   Reuters News   2017 – '18

- o Communicated business news critical to **decision making in stock trading** in the form of news alerts and wrote news articles
- o **Supervised a team** of 25 journalists during the shift and **systematized performance metrics** for weekly presentations

EDUCATION

Ph.D. (Cognition and Neuroscience) *University of Texas at Dallas, TX, USA*		2020 – 2024
M.S. (Applied Cognition and Neuroscience) *University of Texas at Dallas, TX, USA*		2020 – 2022
B.A. (Communication & Media, English, Psychology) *Christ University, KA, India*		2014 – 2017

KEY SKILLS

Tools: UserZoom Go, Survey Monkey, Miro, LucidChart, R, SPSS, MS Office, Google Suite

Research: In-depth interviews, focus groups, usability & concept testing, contextual inquiries, literature reviews, surveys, advanced statistics, data wrangling and visualization

Languages known: English, Kannada, Hindi, Telugu, Tamil