



Design for autonomy and fairness of new technology users in the Global South



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Time: **11:00am to Noon**

Location: **ATLAS Hackery (ATLAS building, room 208)**

Abstract:

2017 saw half the world online. As technology penetration and ecosystem maturity increase, there is a growing intent to use technology for socio-economic development for new technology users. However, complex long-standing challenges like affordability, safety, and socio-religious diktats affect people at the cusp of the Internet. My work aims to empower new technology users with increased autonomy and fairness through technology. I present my prior work on (i) design and evaluation of a cost transparency tool intended to help new mobile Internet users; (ii) design to tackle abuse and safety vectors for women in Internet technologies; and (iii) design and deployment of an information broadcasting system for urban sex workers in India. I show how prevailing human-computer interaction (HCI) assumptions of privacy, trust, and user identities need to be challenged as Internet advances to reach all edges of human society. Through these projects, I show how large problems can be practically addressed through a combination of design, policy, and algorithms.

Biography:

Nithya Sambasivan is a researcher focused on technology design for social, economic, and political benefits in the Global South. Her research spans the areas of HCI and Information Communication Technology for Development (ICTD), and has won several recognitions at top conferences. She has been a researcher at Google since 2012, where she has co-founded a group to conduct future-facing research on under-represented topics, such as gender equity and new technology users. Her research has influenced several large-scale real-world projects for the next billion users, and has been directly translated to core libraries, metrics, and guidance for Android and Web developers at Build for Billions, design.google/nbu, and Google I/O talks. Nithya has a Ph.D. and MS in information and computer sciences from University of California, Irvine and an MS in Human Computer Interaction (HCI) from Georgia Tech. Her dissertation focused on technology design for the low-income communities of slums, urban sex workers, and microenterprises in India. She is a recipient of Google's Anita Borg and UC Irvine Dean's fellowships. She has interned at Microsoft Research India, Nokia Research Center, and IBM TJ Watson.