Saraschandra Karanam

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PROFILE

Senior UX Research Specialist (Ph.D. in CSE / specialization in UX, HCI & Cognitive Science) with 14+ years of experience leading complex mixed-methods research programs for global enterprise B2B SaaS platforms (Cisco Cloud Networking & Security, MathWorks Developer Tools). Subject matter expert in human-AI interaction, trust calibration, and product adoption metrics for intelligent systems. Proven track record of translating complex user workflows into actionable product strategies, establishing in-product telemetry (Pendo), and mentoring researchers to scale global research operations.

TECHNICAL SKILLS

Mixed-Methods Research	Customer Journey Mapping, Usability Evaluation, Contextual Interviews, UX Benchmark Studies, Survey Design, Statistical Analysis for Hypothesis Testing, Focus Groups, Diary Studies, Tree testing, Card sorting, API Usability testing, Heuristic Analysis
AI-UX Trust & Calibration	Evaluating Human-AI Collaboration, Explainability & Transparency UX guidelines, Trust Curve modeling, Error Recovery in probabilistic systems, AI ethics, UX Evals for LLMs
GenAI/LLMs for UX Research	LLM-augmented Qualitative Coding, AI-assisted Prototype Development (Claude/Cursor/Antigravity/Ollama), AI-assisted UX Research (Gemini/NotebookLM), Research Tool Building, Agentic Workflow Research, Human Oversight Protocols, Prompt Engineering
Product Telemetry	Pendo / Amplitude Behavioral tracking, Cohort and Funnel Analysis, Regressions, Cluster Analysis, SPSS, R, Power BI, Dovetail, Qualtrics.
Leadership & Mentorship	Scaling Research Operations, Establishing Central Insight Repositories, Cross-Functional Team Alignment (Product, Design, Engineering), Global-Local Team Coordination.

WORK EXPERIENCE

Principal UX Researcher, Blackbaud, Hyderabad — Sep 2026 - Present

- Evaluating strategic research opportunities in the Corporate Impact space and building UX Evals for UX Research skills on Claude.

Lead UX Researcher, Cisco, Bangalore — Feb 2020 - July 2026

Products: Cisco Catalyst Center (network automation), cdFMC (cloud-delivered firewall management), Cisco Secure Access(ZTNA/SSE)

- **Defined the human–agent contract for high-stakes firewall automation,** using moderated design probes to investigate trust, delegation, accountability, and autonomy; informed guidance for progressive trust-building, proof of work, risk-tiered autonomy.
- **Created a prioritized automation opportunity map across the end-to-end firewall lifecycle**, combining 267 screener responses, 64 survey responses, and 15 deep interviews to identify where user pain and comfort with AI automation aligned.
- **Turned a failing firewall migration experience into a prioritized product roadmap,** identifying end-to-end friction across the customer migration journey; 6 of 18 recommendations were adopted for immediate implementation.
- **Led longitudinal research across 3+ years of Catalyst Center releases,** helping reshape the configuration model for scalable brownfield automation and resolving key architectural decisions across wired, wireless, platform, and hardware teams.
- **Built a cross-platform UX measurement framework** combining NPS, SUS, CSAT, and HEART, establishing comparable baselines across eight products/features and using telemetry and pre/post measurement to evaluate design investments.
- **Led an 18-month initiative to create and operationalize a unified enterprise networking persona framework,** consolidating fragmented user representations into a shared source of truth and embedding personas into PRDs and user-story workflows.
- **Built AI-assisted research workflows and interactive research prototypes**, including “Ask the Report,” transforming 300+ qualitative highlights and 90+ tags into a queryable research artifact while retaining researcher-led validation and quality control.
- **Led 40+ generative and evaluative studies with enterprise customers globally,** influencing product strategy and roadmaps across engineering, product, design, and Go-to-Market teams in a complex matrixed organization

Senior UX Specialist, MathWorks, Bangalore — Oct 2017 – Jan 2020

- **Reframed fragmented hardware setup problems into a unified product opportunity**, synthesizing research across multiple hardware ecosystems and helping define the early Hardware Manager concept later released in MATLAB R2022a.
- **Shaped a 0→1 Motor Control Blockset experience** by mapping the end-to-end workflow—from motor parameter estimation and plant modeling through controller design and deployment—and informing guided workflows and task-oriented information architecture for its Simulink library.

- **Led technical developer research for hardware APIs and SDKs**, uncovering gaps between hardware-centric interfaces and developer mental models and influencing API semantics, units, naming, abstractions, and control models.
- **Improved the usability and safety of physical computing experiences**, using moderated testing to identify how ambiguous software parameters could translate into real-world hardware failures, including drone crashes and motor-control errors.
- **Drove iterative validation across complex developer workflows**, including nine research/design cycles for a foundational hardware SDK, using task success, comprehension, error recovery, and observed coding behavior to resolve critical issues before release.
- **Expanded quantitative research capability in the Bangalore UX organization**, training five researchers and helping standardize quantitative methods across global research practice.
- **Managed concurrent research across four product teams**, (40+ team members) balancing discovery and evaluative work and helping teams shift toward more user-centered, demand-driven development.

Postdoctoral Researcher, Utrecht University **Oct 2014 – Sep 2017**

- **Cognitive Search Modeling**: Designed and executed a comprehensive NWO-funded research program modeling how individual cognitive factors like age and domain expertise dictate web navigation and information search behavior.
- **Inclusive Assistive Design**: Developed and validated an interactive cognitive support tool tailored to bridge usability gaps for older adults and low-expertise digital users navigating complex websites.
- **International Research Consortium**: Managed and coordinated cross-functional research operations and data sharing across a multinational network spanning France, USA, Spain, and The Netherlands.
- **Academic & Mentorship Excellence**: Authored over 10 peer-reviewed scientific publications in top-tier journals while directly mentoring and guiding 3 graduate student research assistants.

Research Scientist, Xerox Research Center, Bangalore **Jan 2012 – Aug 2014**

- **Enterprise Crowd Computing:** Led the strategic benchmarking of global crowdsourcing platforms to design and develop CrowdUtility, a secure enterprise platform optimizing workflow digitization for corporate environments.
- **Algorithmic Workflow Optimization**: Co-developed machine learning-based task scheduling and platform recommendation systems, aligning data-driven task assignment with complex crowd worker behavioral models.
- **User-Centered System Architecture**: Designed the frontend user experience (UX) and orchestrated seamless client workflow integrations, bridging the gap between advanced backend ML systems and corporate end-users.
- **Intellectual Property Generation**: Served as a lead or co-inventor on 5 granted US patents focusing on advanced crowdsourcing mechanics, systemic task allocation, and predictive worker behavior modeling.
- **Innovation Grant Leadership**: Co-secured and managed a $40K Xerox Open Innovation grant, driving cross-functional applied research initiatives to scale enterprise document and workflow processing.

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY AND PUBLICATIONS

- **Granted US Patent Portfolio:** Served as lead or co-inventor on 5 granted patents (Xerox / Conduent) specializing in predictive worker behavior modeling, algorithmic task allocation, and crowdsourcing platform recommendation engines (e.g., US9710769B2, US9489624B2).
- **Peer-Reviewed Scientific Literature:** Authored over 30 peer-reviewed articles and 3 book chapters across premier HCI and cognitive science venues, including ACM CHI, IFIP INTERACT, JASIST, Information Retrieval Journal, and Springer HCI Series

ACADEMIC HONORS AND SERVICES

- **Prestigious Fellowships & Awards:** Awarded the highly competitive NWO ORA Plus Postdoctoral Fellowship (Netherlands, 2014–2017) and received the Best Research Paper Award at IndiaHCI 2016.
- **HCI Community Leadership**: Served as Associate Chair for ACM CHI 2020 (Understanding People track) and CHI Late-Breaking Work (2022–2023), alongside Program Committee contributions for IndiaHCI (latest: 2026)

EDUCATION

- **Ph.D. in Computer Science (Human - Computer Interaction, Cognitive Science, User Experience)**
  International Institute of Information Technology, Hyderabad (IIIT-H), 2011 (in collaboration with Utrecht University)
- **B.Tech. in Computer Science (Honours, Cognitive Science)**
  International Institute of Information Technology, Hyderabad (IIIT-H), 2007