

# Zoë Natalia Cullen

PhD Candidate | University of Michigan School of Information  
[znatalia@umich.edu](mailto:znatalia@umich.edu) | [znatalia.com](http://znatalia.com)

## Research Interests

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Human-AI interaction, AI-augmented cognition, algorithmic personalization, relational reasoning and attribution, self-knowledge, sycophancy and AI bias

## Education

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### PhD in Information

*Expected Spring 2027*

University of Michigan, Ann Arbor

*Science, Technology, and Society Certificate Program*

Dissertation: The Algorithmically-Networked Self: How Personalized AI Shapes Interpersonal Relationships and the Self

**Advisor:** Dr. Nicole B. Ellison

**Committee:** Nicole B. Ellison, Jeffrey T. Hancock, Caleb T. Carr, Andrea Forte, & Hang Lu

### B.A. in Journalism, Minor in English Literature

*Spring 2019*

University of Massachusetts Amherst, Commonwealth Honors College

*Multidisciplinary Honors*

### Visiting Scholar, University of Oxford

*Oxford · Spring 2018*

Keble College, Hilary Term

## Peer-Reviewed Journal Articles

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Cullen, Z. N., Lee, A. Y., Davidson, B., Hancock, J. T., & Ellison, N. B. (2025). **Not Just ‘For You’: How the Algorithmic Crystal Mediates Communication and Identity Work on TikTok’s FYP.** Proceedings of the ACM on Human-Computer Interaction, 9(CSCW), Article 455. <https://doi.org/10.1145/3757636>

★ Best Paper honorable mention award (top 5% of papers).

Cullen, Z. N., Ellison, N. B., & Pasquetto, I. V. (2026). **Seeing Like an API: Platform-Mediated Research and the Politics of Access.** *Forthcoming, Big Data & Society.*

Pasquetto, I. V., Cullen, Z. N., Thomer, A., & Wofford, M. (2024). **What is research data “misuse”? And how can it be prevented or mitigated?** Journal of the Association for Information Science and Technology. <https://doi.org/10.1002/asi.24944>

## Under Review

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Campbell, S. W., Li, Y., Cullen, Z. N., Ellison, N. B., & Ross, M. **Extending the Self through AI-Mediated Communication: How Uses and Mindsets Explain Perceptions of Self-Extension.** *[Under review, Journal of Language and Social Psychology]*

Lee, A. Y., Cullen, Z. N., Ellison, N. B., & Hancock, J. T. **Development and validation of the Algorithmic Crystal Scale: A multidimensional measure of human-algorithm perceptions and interactions.** *[Under review, Telematics and Informatics]*

## Working Papers

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**Cullen, Z. N.,** Young, J., Forte, A., & Ellison, N. B. **AI-Mediated Self-Presentation and Self-Perception: Testing Identity Shift in AI-Assisted Writing.** [Data collection complete, manuscript in Progress]

- Experiment (N = 388) testing whether AI-assisted writing produces identity shift effects, extending Gonzales & Hancock (2008) to AI-mediated contexts.

Campbell, S. W., Li, Y., **Cullen, Z. N.,** Ellison, N. B., & Ross, M. **Extending the Self through AI-Mediated Communication: A Longitudinal Study on Mindsets and Uses.** [Data collection complete, manuscript in progress]

**Cullen, Z. N.,** & Ellison, N. B. **Discursive Personalization and the Algorithmically-Networked Self: AI-Augmented Interpretation of Relationships and the Self.** [Data collection in progress]

- Qualitative semi-structured interviews (N = 17) and computational analysis of donated ChatGPT transcripts examining how people use conversational AI to interpret their relationships and themselves. Target: CSCW 2027.

**Cullen, Z. N.,** & Ellison, N. B. **Testing the Consequences of AI Sycophancy in AI-Augmented Interpretation: Attribution, Empathy, and Conflict Resolution.** [Custom experimental platform built, piloting in progress]

## Peer-Reviewed Conference Presentations

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**Cullen, Z. N.,** Young, J., Forte, A., & Ellison, N. B. (2026, May). *Paper.* AI-Mediated Self-Presentation and Self-Perception: Testing Identity Shift in AI-Assisted Writing. Presented at *Comm Horizons @ UC Davis: Communication in the Age of AI and Algorithms*, Davis, CA.

Li, Y., Campbell, S. W., **Cullen, Z. N.,** Ellison, N. B., & Ross, M. Q. (2026, May). *Poster.* Extending the Self through AI-Mediated Communication: How Uses and Mindsets Explain Perceptions of Self-Extension. Presented at *Comm Horizons @ UC Davis: Communication in the Age of AI and Algorithms*, Davis, CA.

**Cullen, Z. N.,** Lee, A. Y., Davidson, B., Hancock, J. T., & Ellison, N. B. (2025, May). *Paper.* Not Just 'For You': How the Algorithmic Crystal Mediates Communication and Identity Work on TikTok's FYP. Presented at the *International Communication Association Annual Conference*, Denver, CO.

Lee, A. Y., **Cullen, Z. N.,** Ellison, N. B., & Hancock, J. T. (2024, May). *Paper.* The Algorithmic Crystal Scale: Development and Validation of a Measure of Perceptions of Personalized Algorithms. Accepted at the *International Communication Association Annual Conference*, Gold Coast, Australia. *Presented by co-author.*

**Cullen, Z. N.,** Lee, A. Y., Hancock, J. T., & Ellison, N. B. (2024, May). *Poster.* The Algorithmic Crystal: User Agency, Identity, and Well-Being on TikTok's FYP. Accepted at the *International Communication Association Annual Conference*, Computer and Technology Division, Gold Coast, Australia. *Presented by co-author.*

## Honors, Awards & Fellowships

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**HCIC Consortium** 2026

*University of Michigan Nominee, Human-Computer Interaction Consortium*

**Rackham One-Term Dissertation Fellowship Honorable Mention** 2026

*U-M Rackham Graduate School*

**ICA Doctoral Consortium** 2025

*Selected Participant, International Communication Association Annual Conference*

**CSCW Honorable Mention Award** 2025

*Top 5% of Papers — ACM Conference on Computer-Supported Cooperative Work*

## Research Memberships & Affiliations

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Social Media and Computing Research Lab, University of Michigan  
Social Media Lab, Stanford University  
Science, Technology & Society Program, University of Michigan

## Teaching Experience

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### Graduate Student Instructor · University of Michigan

SI 334: Social Influence and Persuasion Winter 2024, 2026  
*Instructor of Record: Dr. Alain Cohn*

SI 307: Introduction to User Experience Design Fall 2024  
*Instructor of Record: James Rampton*

SI 110: Introduction to Information Studies Fall 2022, 2023  
*Instructor of Record: Dr. Cliff Lampe*

## Guest Lectures & Invited Talks

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**“Personalized Algorithms & The Algorithmically-Networked Self”**  
*University of Michigan — SI 316: Interpersonal & Psychological Implications of Social Media* 2026

**“Digital Identity & The Algorithmically-Networked Self”**  
*Stanford Social Media Lab* 2025

**“TikTok’s FYP, Relational Maintenance, and AI Social Chatbots”**  
*University of Michigan — COMM 159: AI and Communication* 2024

**“How Identity Work Unfolds on TikTok’s FYP”**  
*University of Michigan — SI 429: Online Communities* 2024

**“What is a Problem Statement in UX Design?”**  
*University of Michigan — SI 307: Introduction to User Experience Design* 2023

**“Misinformation, Disinformation, & Accountability”**  
*University of Michigan — SI 110: Introduction to Information Studies* 2022

## Academic Service

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### University of Michigan

Social Media and Social Computing Lab Graduate Student Organizer 2024–2025

Science, Technology, & Society STeMS Speaker Series Coordinator 2023–2024

Science, Technology, & Society Steering Committee Member 2022–2023

STS Symposium Co-Organizer & Panelist — “Ensnaring Entanglements” Spring 2023

## Research Mentoring

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Research Experience Development Program (REDP) Mentor Jan 2024–present

Doctoral First Year Seminar Experience Panelist — “Navigating Advisor Relationships”  
*University of Michigan School of Information*

## Peer Review

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Big Data & Society (2025)

ACM Computer-Supported Cooperative Work (CSCW) (2024)  
International Communication Association Conference (2022–2026)

## Technical Competencies

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**Research Methods:** Experimental design, survey research, semi-structured interviews, grounded theory, computational text analysis

**Software & Tools:** R, Python, Atlas.ti, Qualtrics, ChatGPT API

**Domain Knowledge:** Human-AI interaction, AI-mediated communication, algorithmic personalization, attribution theory, relational cognition, LLMs

## Professional Experience

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**Marketing Director & SEO Specialist**

2019–2021

*aNetworks, Inc. (Cybersecurity)*

Developed SEO strategy and digital marketing campaigns; gained industry perspective on technology adoption and user behavior in industry contexts.