



iNews

THE INFORMATION SCHOOL || AUTUMN 2025

25TH ANNIVERSARY EDITION • PAGE 16

Then, a vision; now, a force

*How the Information School grew from a big idea
to an engine of teaching, research and impact*

The making of the iSchool

Key events in a quarter-century of school history

Enduring impressions

Alumni share memories of favorite instructors and lasting lessons

The school's global reach

Alumni living and working in at least 38 countries worldwide





Page 26: Marcie Stone, the 2025 iSchool Distinguished Alumni Award recipient, worked on the frontiers of the internet in the 1990s, helping to create the first U.S. government websites. “We were making it up as we went along,” she recalled.

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DEAN’S MESSAGE



More essential than ever

ANIND DEY, DEAN AND PROFESSOR | Autumn 2025

Twenty-five years ago, there were no smartphones or social media. Most of us had dial-up internet. We went to Blockbuster when we wanted to rent movies and read newspapers when we wanted to stay informed. Artificial intelligence was the stuff of science-fiction movies. But the internet was evolving rapidly and changing how people interacted with information. Librarianship skills — categorizing, collecting, accessing and drawing value from information — were becoming increasingly powerful.

The University of Washington and the leaders of its Graduate School of Library and Information Science saw the school’s potential to meet the moment. They brought in Michael Eisenberg to lead the transformation, and in the 2000-01 academic year, the Information School became the 16th independent school or college at the university.

Fast forward to 2025, and our information environment is far more complex than it was at our school’s inception. Much of the world has high-speed internet, and smartphones put a wealth of knowledge at our fingertips. People try to stay informed through their social media feeds, but many curate their news so they only see things that fit their worldview. Information might be more accessible than ever, but fast-moving technology has pushed mass media gatekeepers aside, allowing misinformation to run rampant. Meanwhile, AI is in its infancy, and large language models have been let loose before they are ready to reliably provide quality information.

We are in a time of transition, and transitions tend to be rocky. People need the tools and knowledge to navigate a volatile information landscape. They need

to be able to recognize a deepfake and to be able to apply for a job without the risk that AI will discriminate against them. They need to get reliable search results and find trustworthy sources when their health and well-being are at stake.

That’s why the Information School is more essential than ever. We promote information literacy, inform wiser policy, solve business problems, and create tools that help people thrive. Our expertise remains rooted in our heritage as a library school, researching and teaching about who has access to information and how to make it more accessible and useful for people. Now and in the future, we are educating professionals who promote ethical uses of AI and create technology systems and processes that make people healthier and more informed.

Throughout the 2025-26 school year, we will be celebrating our anniversary, and we can’t do it without you: students, staff, faculty, supporters and our entire alumni community. That includes not only graduates of the past 25 years, but the librarianship alumni who preceded the formation of the school and the Museology alumni who joined us just a couple years ago. Read alumni reflections on the school and their favorite professors, and keep your eye out for a community celebration next year. Catch up on the latest research from our faculty and look for opportunities to engage with it in the work you do.

I hope you’ll see this anniversary year as an opportunity to get involved. Along with faculty, staff and supporters, our thousands of alumni are the heart of the Information School community. Our next 25 years will be even better, and we want you to be a part of it.

We are in a time of transition, and transitions tend to be rocky. People need the tools and knowledge to navigate a volatile information landscape.

Big ideas fly at PitchFest

The 2025 Husky PitchFest provided an opportunity for Informatics students to take that leap and pitch their startup ideas to an audience. Nearly 100 people gathered in Kane Hall for the competition, where startup groups and individuals had 60 seconds to pitch in front of a panel of judges.

One group of Informatics students drawn to PitchFest began their startup as a class project. Graduating seniors Karina Amaya, Li-Neishin Co, Mike Labrador, Elizabeth Skalatsky and Jenna Sorror comprise a startup called Quest, which seeks to create a community for gamers to share opinions and memorable moments playing video games. The team's tagline reads, "It's like the Letterboxd or Goodreads of video games."

In hopes of continuing their endeavor after graduating, the group attended the iStartup Lab's winter and spring pitch workshops. The lab, led by iSchool Assistant Professor Mike Teodorescu and Assistant Teaching Professor Jeremy Zaretsky, helps iSchool students across all programs develop entrepreneurial skills.

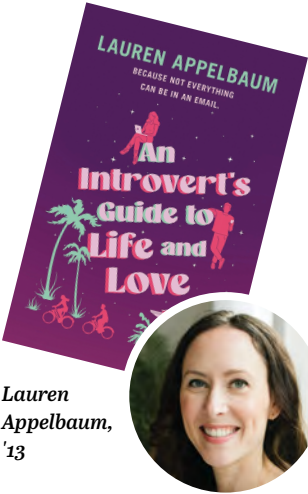
Quest team members said PitchFest was an incredible opportunity to hear from the judges and listen to impressive pitches from other participants — leaving them hopeful for the startup's future.

"As beginners, we had a chance to really step into the world of pitching and see a glimpse into how students of various backgrounds market their interesting projects and startups," Co said.



Research shines at symposium

Informatics student Ndeye Diop presents her poster, "Auditing Diversity in LLM (Language Learning Models) and TTI (Text-to-Image) Systems," during the 2025 Undergraduate Research Symposium in May. Diop was one of 22 Informatics students who participated in poster sessions and oral presentations, showcasing the work they've done outside the classroom. Throughout the daylong event, Informatics students presented on a variety of topics including the nature of cyberbullying toward the transgender community, diversity audits of AI systems, and government cloning conspiracies. Diop, who expects to graduate in spring, is an aspiring product manager whose time as an iSchool student has helped develop her problem-solving skills. "Over the past few years, I've led projects that have pushed me to think critically about design, communication and impact," she said.



Lauren Appelbaum, '13

Career that began in tech takes a novel path

Lauren Appelbaum worked in tech for a decade after earning her Informatics degree. Then her career took a plot twist.

Now a full-time author, Appelbaum, '13, recently released her second novel, "An Introvert's Guide to Life and Love." The book's protagonist is a remote worker who rarely leaves her apartment until her grandmother dies and she inherits a house in Florida, a chain of events that turns her life upside down.

Appelbaum, who lives in Seattle, worked in customer support and as a technical writer and editor, all while devoting her downtime to writing. She landed a publisher for her debut novel, "Rachel Weiss's Group Chat," in 2024. That book, a romantic

comedy that draws inspiration from Jane Austen's classic "Pride and Prejudice," also centers on a woman who works in tech.

Appelbaum's work experience continues to give her inspiration. "I got some of those professional skills in writing and editing, but I also got some material to write about, which I definitely use in both of my novels," she said.

You can find her books in stores and online. She said it's a thrill to walk into bookstores and see her work on the shelves. "It's great. It's kind of crazy," she said. "I'll go into a bookstore with my daughter to get a different book, and then she'll be like, 'Hey, Mommy, there's your book.'"

Movers and shakers

Library Journal recognized iSchool Assistant Professor Sandy Littletree and Master of Library and Information Science alum Nicola Andrews, '17, as 2025 Movers and Shakers in the "Change Agents" category. The annual list celebrates 50 individuals shaping the future of libraries and uplifting communities through transformative work.

Littletree and Andrews were selected for their collaborative work "Information as a Relation: Defining Indigenous Information Literacy," which explores Indigenous ways of knowing and challenges traditional frameworks in information science and librarianship.

Andrews (Pacific Islander/Māori), the Open Education Librarian at the University of San Francisco, has a background in Indigenous librarianship and advocacy. Littletree (Navajo/Eastern Shoshone) an iSchool Ph.D. graduate, centers her research on Indigenous information science. She told Library Journal that her work came from "a desire to talk about what Indigenous librarians are experiencing, their different practices, philosophies, and the ways we've been drawing on ways of knowing and teaching."



Assistant Professor Sandy Littletree (left) and Nicola Andrews, '17.



Librarian of the year

Jared Nistler, a 2020 MLIS graduate, recently was recognized as the Federal Librarian of the Year.

The award, announced by the Federal Library and Information Network (FEDLINK) through the Library of Congress, celebrates federal librarians who have developed innovative ways to serve and meet the nation's information demands.

A systems program manager at the Ralph J. Bunche Library in Washington, D.C., Nistler supports the 70,000 employees in the U.S. Department of State. He was nominated by fellow librarians who recognized his commitment to the user experience and his management of library service platforms.

Nistler specifically was recognized for his work improving user accessibility. "You want your library systems to be as accessible, seamless and smooth as possible," he said. "You want the patron to be able to discover something, click access and then have it open and have that all be very quick and frictionless."



Jared Nistler, '20 (above), is a systems program manager at the Ralph J. Bunche Library of the U.S. State Department, housed in the Truman Building.

Program climbs to top ranking

The Information School rose to a tie for the No. 1 spot in U.S. News & World Report's latest rankings of U.S. master's degree programs in library and information science. The magazine's "America's Best Graduate Schools" were released in April.

Cindy Aden, chair of the MLIS program and herself an alum who returned to the iSchool to join the faculty, said, "I've been waiting impatiently for this particular ranking to catch up with us and reflect what I've always known to be true: that we are the best program in the country."

The iSchool rose steadily up the rankings through the past two decades, reaching No. 2 in the U.S. News rankings in 2017 and holding a tie for that spot in 2021, before moving to No. 1 this year alongside the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign.

To create the rankings, U.S. News surveys deans, program directors and select senior faculty of more than 50 accredited library and information science programs.

I've been waiting impatiently for this particular ranking to catch up with us."

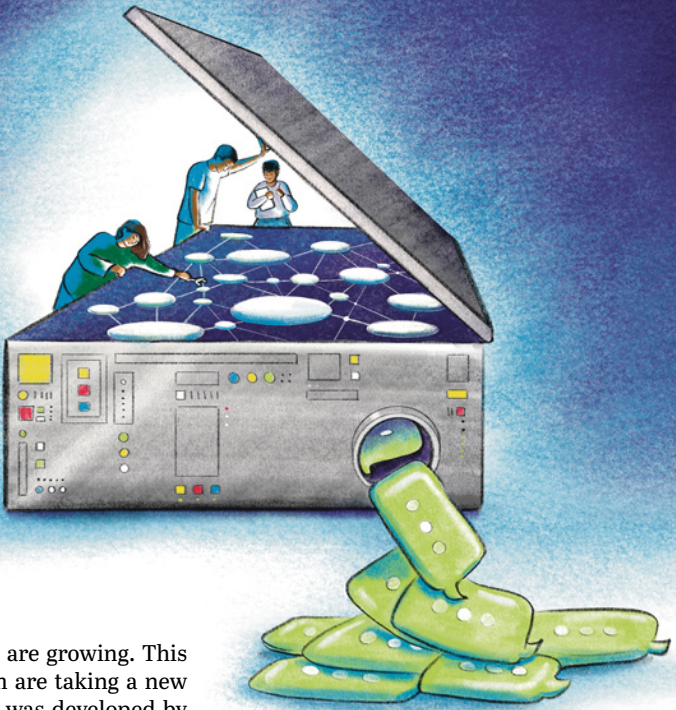
— Cindy Aden, MLIS program chair

Surging AI demand prompts new course

The iSchool’s course offerings in artificial intelligence are growing. This fall, some online students enrolled in the MSIM program are taking a new elective, Foundations of Artificial Intelligence. The class was developed by Professor Chirag Shah, co-founding director of the UW Center for Responsibility in AI Systems and Experiences (RAISE). From prompt engineering to large language models, the class equips students with a comprehensive understanding of the technical underpinnings and critical perspectives on AI. Fairness principles, ethical considerations and mechanisms for ensuring accountability and transparency are strongly integrated throughout.

“This new course was developed in response to incredible student and employer demand related to the effective application of AI in organizations. That starts with AI’s technical foundations,” said Associate Professor and MSIM Program Chair David Hendry. “Chirag is not only an expert in AI, but in its application in organizational workflows of all kinds.”

The course will be offered to online MSIM students regularly moving forward, and will be added to the on-campus course catalog in fall quarter of 2026 as the school evolves its AI specialization offerings for residential students.



ALEXIA LOZANO ILLUSTRATION

Fellowship provides room to dream

Afomia Assefa found inspiration in Tricia Hairsey’s novel “Rest is Resistance.” She applied for the University of Washington’s Bonderman Fellowship envisioning a life beyond grind culture — a decision that is taking her on an eight-month solo journey across the world this fall.

Assefa, an online Master of Science in Information Management student, is traveling to countries in Africa and Southeast Asia, exploring how rest, spirituality and self-care are honored across various cultures.

“I’ve been working since high school, through college and now grad school, but I’ve never really given myself the time to dream before diving deeper into my career,” Assefa said. “I’m so grateful to now have this space to integrate my learning into my travels and reflect on the impact I want to make in my career and in the world.”

Assefa is one of eight recipients of the



Afomia Assefa

prestigious Bonderman Fellowship awarded by the University of Washington to select students each year. The fellowship offers students the opportunity to independently travel the world and visit four to eight countries of their choosing, empowering them to engage deeply with peoples and communities across the world.

UW ranks first in info management

The Information School led the UW to a No. 1 ranking in the U.S. and No. 2 in the world for library and information management, according to the QS World University Rankings by Subject.

This ranking tracks an analysis of reputation and research output, conducted by QS Quacquarelli Symonds, of academic subjects at 5,203 institutions around the world. The ranking consists of 1,747 institutions at 148 locations with more than 55 subjects across five broad faculty areas including arts and humanities; engineering and technology; life sciences and medicine; natural sciences; and social sciences and management.

The UW has 31 programs in the top 100, 16 in the top 50, and five subjects in the top 10.

UW recognizes alum’s lifetime of giving



Ellen Ferguson, ’78

The University of Washington Foundation honored Ellen Ferguson, Museology ’78, with the Gates Volunteer Service Award, recognizing her lifetime of philanthropic giving, volunteerism and impact.

Since she stepped into the Burke Museum as a graduate student in 1975, Ferguson has worn many hats: educator, volunteer, board member, development director and co-chair of the Campaign for the New Burke.

“When you talk about the Burke, there isn’t a single person who doesn’t mention Ellen,” Sarah Gonzalez and Gabriela Chavarria, the Burke’s interim and former executive directors, told UW Magazine. “And when you

talk about Ellen, there isn’t a single person who doesn’t mention the Burke.”

Ferguson’s parents launched the Hugh and Jane Ferguson Foundation, devoted to nature preservation, in 1987. Both through her family’s foundation and in her own name, Ferguson has championed and supported causes across the University’s three campuses, including the Intellectual House, the School of Public Health, University Libraries and UW Press.

“The UW is an incredible force of good, and there is literally something for everyone,” she said. “Whatever you care about, it’s happening here.”



Incluseum seeks a better future for museums

Near the end of her time as a Museology student, Rose Paquet saw a need for museums to communicate about their efforts to be more inclusive in a field that historically has struggled with elitism.

“In iSchool parlance, there was an information gap,” she said. “There was minimal information circulating on how museums can be more inclusive to all sorts of audiences.”

Shortly after she graduated in 2012, Paquet and fellow Museology alum Aletheia Wittman co-founded The Incluseum, a collaborative, grassroots project that advances new ways of being a museum through dialogue, community building and collaborative practice.



Rose Paquet, ’12, ’21

“We thought that if we started this platform, we could document examples of how this is happening, because we thought surely we’re not the only ones who are thinking about this,” said Paquet, who went on to earn a Ph.D. at the iSchool in 2021.

The Incluseum got a great reception from the start, Paquet said, and it’s still going 13 years later. Its resources have been widely adopted for professional development, graduate-level learning, and even policy design and implementation.

“I think what I feel the most proud of is creating something that spoke to so many people,” she said. “It gave people, in a sense, permission to do what they wanted to do and gave them a sense of community.”

Q&A

Amanda Yates Rodgers, ’25, is a maker programs specialist at the Pacific Science Center’s Maker & Innovation Lab. In her role, she designs, organizes, and facilitates the department’s drop-in programs. We asked her:

What’s your favorite thing about the museum field?

“Museums are true crossroads — they merge ideas, places, times, people, ideas, objects and fields that might not otherwise have met. Because of this, I think that museums allow us to really broaden the scope of the connections we’re able to make. Museums are also free-choice/informal learning environments, and I see so much potential for personal development and growth in museums. While not always the case, museum learning can feel less rigid than more formal learning environments, and particularly at this cultural moment, there’s something really powerful about creating agency in learning. I see it is a sincere privilege and honor to do this work and to get to think deeply about how these messages are communicated.”

Dissertation on AI wins international recognition



Yim Register, '25

Ph.D. '25 alum Yim Register is one of two recipients of this year's iSchools Doctoral Dissertation Award. Register became the second ever Information School student to receive the recognition.

"I am delighted and honored to have received this award. None of this would have been possible without such incredible iSchool professors and collaborators," Register said. "I am especially grateful to my committee (Emma Spiro, Jevin West, Wanda Pratt and Amy Zhang) as well as iSchool professors who shaped my learning and growth in immeasurable ways."

Register said Professors Amy J. Ko, Anna Lauren Hoffmann and Nicholas Weber were also particularly influential during their time at the iSchool.

The iSchools is an international organization of more

than 130 universities united by a shared interest in information research and learning. The annual iSchools Doctoral Dissertation Award recognizes individuals making strides in the information field and comes with a \$2,500 honorarium. Nominees are selected from doctoral dissertations across all iCaucus institutions.

Register received the award for their dissertation titled "The Future of AI Can Be Kind: Strategies for Embedded Ethics in AI education." Their research investigates examples of algorithmic harms and creates learning methods to teach students about these harms.

Register is currently an Applied Scientist at Amazon Web Services Machine Learning University, teaching software engineers to implement responsible and safe AI solutions.

MEET A PH.D. STUDENT:

Deaun Yoo

Advised by Professors Katie Davis and Jason C. Yip

"My research is about how creative activity can make a positive impact on people and how that can be assisted by generative AI. Specifically, I'm researching how multiple children can collaborate more effectively with generative AI and how visual expression can support people's emotional well-being.

"I believe that with the boom of generative AI, we need to be more critical about how it can support human abilities, rather than replace them or lead to over-reliance. I also think that early childhood is a particularly important stage, as identity and confidence are still developing. Therefore, we need to design technology carefully so that children can live in a healthier way alongside it.

"My hope is that my research will help the information field explore a better balance between human and technological intervention, rather than taking an overly optimistic or pessimistic stance toward specific technologies."



From left: Eva Maxfield Brown, David Farr and Shahan Ali Memon.

3 students win sustainability fellowships

Ph.D. candidates Eva Maxfield Brown, David Farr and Shahan Ali Memon were selected as Early-Career Fellows by the U.S. Research Software Sustainability Institute (URSSI), each receiving up to \$25,000 in research funding. The fellowship offers funding support for research in one of three areas: AI/ML Integration in Scientific Software Development, Scientific Software Sustainability, or Software Education Research. Since 2018, the fellowship has supported the URSSI's efforts to do research, develop policy and provide educational opportunities to improve the sustainability of scientific software in the U.S. It is funded by the Sloan Foundation with the goal of identifying and funding research projects focused on improving current disciplinary or domain practices in developing science software.



DOUG PARRY PHOTO

iSchool Associate Professor Tanu Mitra works with students at the RAISE Winter Expo.

Emphasis on integrity

Tanu Mitra receives NSF grant to support crucial information workers whose roles are under threat from artificial intelligence

A recent study named the jobs most at risk of being replaced by artificial intelligence. The list includes journalists, news analysts, proofreaders and technical writers — all workers who verify and communicate accurate information to the public.

Tanu Mitra, an associate professor at the University of Washington Information School, calls these and other individuals "information integrity workers." She recently was awarded a \$370,692 grant from the National Science Foundation to study how large language models will affect these information workers.

The Faculty Early Career Development (CAREER) award, titled "Understanding the Effects of Large Language Models on Online Community Information Work," will support Mitra's work over five years, during which she will identify common challenges and needs from information workers who are most affected by the advances in generative

AI, such as large language models (LLMs). The research, in particular, will focus on developing tools and frameworks to help front-line information professionals — journalists, fact-checkers, humanitarian responders, and content moderators — confront new threats posed by LLMs.

She chose a wide range of professionals to ensure the project has as large of an impact as possible.

"The technology has not caught up to help these information workers, or information integrity workers, to do their work," she said. "And so the overarching goal of the proposal is to serve them and to empower people who protect the health of our information ecosystem."

The CAREER award is one of NSF's most prestigious and is given in support of early-career faculty who have the potential to serve as academic role models in research and education.

“The overarching goal of the proposal is ... to empower people who protect the health of our information ecosystem.”

Trust and change

Both are required for responsible stewardship of Indigenous data, say leaders of project to put sovereignty principles into practice



“I think it’s really hard to overcome some of the deeply embedded practices. It’s hard for folks to think about other ways of doing things.”

iSchool Assistant Professor Sandy Littletree (above, Navajo/Eastern Shoshone), co-principal investigator

BY JESSI LOERCH

Responsibly managing Indigenous research data takes a great deal of care and intention, especially given a long history of harmful practices. A research team at the Information School is charting a path forward that respects Indigenous people’s sovereignty over their data.

The project, called Data Services for Indigenous Scholarship and Sovereignty, is helping information professionals gain a better understanding of data sovereignty and working with data repositories to ensure that Indigenous groups control representation, access and ownership of culturally sensitive data.

With support from a \$1.5 million grant from the Mellon Foundation, the researchers are moving on to the second phase of the project, in which they will create practical resources to support responsible stewardship of qualitative data about Indigenous communities. The Information School is leading the project, in collaboration with researchers across the UW and at other universities.

The first phase of work, also supported by a Mellon grant, developed case studies, learning resources and priorities for implementing the CARE (collective benefit, authority to control, responsibility and ethics) principles, which were developed by the International Indigenous Data Sovereignty Interest Group. The principles reinforce the rights of Indigenous communities, tribes and nations across the globe to control the data collected about them. The second phase of the project will create a repository testbed and practical instructions to support application of the principles in libraries and repositories, working in partnership with Indigenous scholars and data repository experts.

“We learned in the first phase how much the CARE principles apply to already existing archival collections sitting in institutions. Now, in addition to supporting how new re-

search data are archived, we’re asking how we can help with the collections that are already in library catalogs,” said Carole Palmer, an iSchool professor and principal investigator. “There really is this ongoing need to be able to improve how we care for Indigenous data, new and old.”

Christopher Teuton (Cherokee Nation), a professor in the Department of American Indian Studies, has joined the project as co-principal investigator. Teuton, co-author of the book “Cherokee Earth Dwellers: Stories and Teachings of the Natural World,” is leading work that will demonstrate how to ensure responsible archiving of research materials, including recordings, transcripts, drafts and more.

“I really stand behind the goals of the project,” he said. “The archiving and protecting of Indigenous data are really important. And it’s really important to look

at how data are maintained and archived and shared, no matter your discipline.”

Teuton and the UW team will collaborate with Cherokee community members and work with the Qualitative Data Repository (QDR) at Syracuse University to create a demonstration platform to show how the CARE principles can be put into ac-

tion. One aim of the platform is to effectively describe the origins and context of the data. That “relational integrity” is a vital part of working with Indigenous communities. Partnering with QDR makes it possible to build on processes and tools they have in place for describing qualitative data and limiting who has access to it. Together, the team will fine tune them to work well for Indigenous scholars and their communities.

Indigenous communities’ data is largely held in outside institutions, including libraries, museums, online databases and other collections. Indigenous peoples often do not have the legal rights to those materials, and many of the materials are incomplete, wrong or don’t contain proper information about where the data came from.

“I think it’s really hard to overcome some of the deeply embedded practices,” said Sandy Littletree (Navajo/Eastern Shoshone), an assistant professor at the



Professor Chris Teuton (Cherokee Nation), co-principal investigator



“Our work will help professionals who we train and educate in our school have a more complex understanding of research data stewardship, that it’s not all about moving toward openness.”

iSchool Professor Carole Palmer (above), principal investigator

iSchool and co-principal investigator. “It’s hard for folks to think about other ways of doing things.”

She said that while sometimes it is easy to get people to acknowledge harm, it can be harder to move from that to doing better. She hopes this project can help people find that better path forward. “Trust building is a core principle and goal of what we’re doing,” Littletree said. “We’re mindful that it will take time and lots of conversations.”

Palmer hopes to show good examples of relationships between institutions and Indigenous communities and discover steps to enhance those relationships, as well as make collections that are responsive to the needs and interests of the communities they came from. “We’re in a good spot to do that based on our collaborators.”

The most recent Mellon grant will help the project expand in this second phase. David Strand, MLIS ’25, has joined as a research coordinator; post-doctoral researcher Joshua Brown (Séliš/Aaniih/Nakóda) will join soon. The grant funding will make it possible to involve more collabo-

rators and experts, including Indigenous community members, and for researchers and collaborators to travel as necessary.

Palmer emphasizes the importance of reciprocity in stewarding Indigenous research data. As researchers gather data from Indigenous communities, they need to work collaboratively to ensure that those communities benefit. The importance of that, as well as practical skills and experience, will ultimately be passed on to iSchool students. Palmer hopes that as those students move forward into their careers, they will put those lessons to work.

“Our work will help professionals who we train and educate in our school have a more complex understanding of research data stewardship, that it’s not all about moving toward openness. Qualitative data has a lot of sensitivities,” Palmer said. “It’s beholden upon our profession to lead in the responsible stewardship and preservation of knowledge resources. The people we educate really need to be experts and authorities on how to steward different kinds of research materials over time.” @

Fall expo explores ethical AI

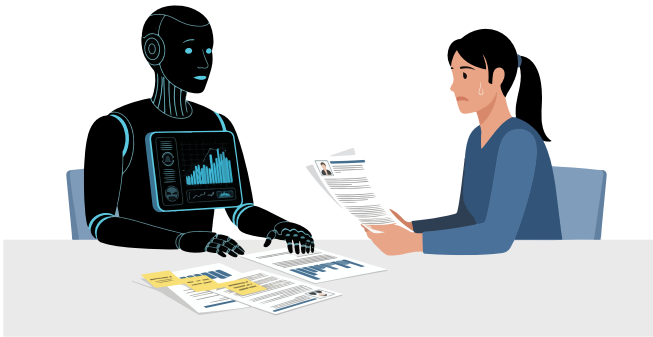
Informatics student Ruth Nakigozi presents her poster at the RAISE Fall Expo in downtown Seattle. The iSchool-based center, Responsibility in AI Systems and Experiences, hosted the event in partnership with Amazon's Women in AI/ ML chapter on Oct. 3. Nakigozi's research project focuses on AI literacy for teens. The research team has designed and tested games to learn whether they help young people understand the biases built into large language models.



Three LLMs used for hiring aren't so impartial, team finds

BY STEFAN MILNE, UW NEWS

The future of hiring, it seems, is automated. Applicants can now use artificial intelligence bots to apply to job listings by the thousands. And companies — which have long automated parts of the process — are now deploying the latest AI large language models to write job descriptions, sift through resumes and screen applicants. An estimated 99% of Fortune 500 companies now use some form of automation in their hiring process. This automation can boost efficiency, and some claim it can make the hiring process less discriminatory. But new UW Information School research found significant racial, gender and intersectional bias in how three state-of-the-art large language models, or LLMs, ranked resumes. The researchers varied names associated with white and Black men and women across over 550 real-world resumes and found the LLMs favored white-associated names 85% of the time, female-associated names only 11% of the time, and never favored Black male-associated names over white male-associated names. The team presented its research in late 2024 at the AAAI/ACM Conference on Artificial Intelligence, Ethics, and Society in San Jose.



“The use of AI tools for hiring procedures is already widespread, and it’s proliferating faster than we can regulate it.”

Kyra Wilson, iSchool Ph.D. student and lead author

“The use of AI tools for hiring procedures is already widespread, and it’s proliferating faster than we can regulate it,” said lead author Kyra Wilson, a doctoral student in the iSchool. “Currently, outside of a New York City law, there’s no regulatory, independent audit of these systems, so we don’t know if they’re biased and discriminating based on protected characteristics such as race and gender. And because a lot of these systems are proprietary, we are limited to analyzing how they work by approximating real-world systems.” Previous studies have found ChatGPT exhibits racial and disability bias when sorting resumes. But those studies were relatively small — using only one resume or four job listings — and ChatGPT’s AI model is a so-called “black box,” limiting options for analysis. The UW team wanted to study open-source LLMs and do so at scale. They also wanted to investigate intersectionality across race and gender. The researchers varied 120 first names associated with white and Black men and women across the resumes. They then used LLMs from three different companies — Mistral AI, Salesforce and Contextual AI — to rank resumes as applicants to over 500 real-world job listings. ©

Research news



“Raven and the Box of Daylight,” an exhibition of work by glass artist Preston Singletary curated by **Associate Professor Miranda Belarde-Lewis**, opened at the Northwest Museum of Arts and Culture in Spokane, where it will be on display until January. The exhibition is at its seventh venue since opening in Tacoma in 2018, among them the Smithsonian’s National Museum of the American Indian.



Assistant Professor Ben Lee brought together 15 scholars for a two-day conference on “AI and the Future of Holocaust Research and Memory.” The event explored how AI tools might shape the way Holocaust history is preserved and shared. The symposium featured four panels and a UW faculty roundtable, examining topics such as the ethical use of AI-generated content in archives and museums and the risks of decontextualized storytelling.



Associate Professor Aylin Caliskan and co-authors Joanna J. Bryson and Arvind Narayanan received the 2025 Frontiers of Science Award from the International Congress of Basic Science for their paper, “Semantics derived automatically from language corpora contain human-like biases.”

Postdoctoral scholar Ernesto Cuba received the Carlos Monsiváis Prize for his article titled “‘I Named Myself After Her’: Renaming Strategies in a Community of Transgender Women of the City of Lima, Peru.” This prize, given by the Sexualities Section of the Latin American Studies Association, is awarded to the best original article or chapter in peer-reviewed books on sexualities in the social sciences.



Associate Professor Marika Cifor received a Smithsonian Institution Senior Fellowship for a book project titled “The Treatment Underground: Buyer’s Clubs, Data Activism, and the Politics of Illness from AIDS to COVID-19.”



Assistant Professor Temi Odumosu wrote a chapter titled “Touching the Void: On Becoming an Art Historian and Studying Slavery at Cambridge,” for the volume “Rise Up: Resistance, Revolution, Abolition,” which accompanied an exhibition at The Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge, England.



Associate Professor Clarita Lefthand-Begay, Diné, hosted the Tribal Youth Water Summit on the UW campus in August. Themed “Sustaining Waters, Sustaining Knowledge—Tribal Water Security in a Data-Driven Future,” the daylong event featured conversations that elevated Indigenous youth voices and focused on how Indigenous knowledge and technology can support tribal water resources.

Ph.D. candidate Richard Lewei Huang received a Rhizome Microgrant for his digital art project “Yellow Pages for the Past Web,” a project of printed web directories from the late 1990s to early 2000s.



Professor Amy J. Ko and three co-authors’ paper, titled “An Exploratory Study of How Developers Seek, Relate, and Collect Relevant Information During Software Maintenance Tasks,” received a Most Influential Paper Award from IEEE Transactions on Software Engineering.

Professor Carole Palmer and co-authors including **Associate Professor Miranda Belarde-Lewis**, **Assistant Professor Sandy Littletree**, and graduate research assistant **Nestor Guerrero**’s paper “Stewarding Contextual Integrity in Data Services for Indigenous Scholarship” received the Best Short Paper Award at the 2024 ASIS&T Annual Meeting.

Professor Jacob O. Wobbrock and four co-authors’ paper titled “TOUCHPAD MAPPER: Examining Information Consumption From 2D Digital Content Using Touchpads by Screen-Reader Users,” received the Best Demo Award at the ACM Conference on Computers and Accessibility (ASSETS ’24).

Grant to launch new Neurodiversity and Employment Institute

The Canopy Neurodiversity Foundation awarded a \$15 million grant to the Information School to support the launch of the UW Institute for Neurodiversity and Employment. The new institute will bring together leading scholars and practitioners from various disciplines alongside employers to build the capacity of the UW, Washington state and the nation to create meaningful employment opportunities and career experiences for neurodivergent people.



Hala Annabi, *founding director*, Neurodivergent adults, such as those on the autism spectrum, or with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), dyslexia, dyspraxia, dyscalculia, or other cognitive differences, experience significant barriers to inclusion in education and employment due to disabilities that often aren’t obvious. Research shows that only 25% of autistic adults remain consistently employed over time, and just 67% of adults with ADHD are employed, compared to 87% employment among adults without ADHD. Studies suggest that up to 20% of the U.S. population is neurodivergent. Accordingly, efforts to improve the neuroinclusivity of academic institutions and workplaces have significant potential for impact on individuals, families and the U.S. economy.

“The lower education and employment outcomes are largely attributed to education and workplace environments that were designed to reinforce normative expectations,” said Hala Annabi, UW associate professor in the Information School and founding director of the Institute. “When learning and work environments are designed for neurodiversity — and managers and teachers are trained to be neuroinclusive — neurodivergent individuals achieve far better outcomes.”

Annabi is a leading scholar on neurodiversity and employment. Her work includes the publication of a series of Neurodiversity @ Work Playbooks that make a case for hiring neurodivergent people and offer concrete instructions for supporting their growth and career development.

They aren't human — but they're usually boys

Gender of animal characters in picture books reveals human biases, professor finds

"The Very Hungry Caterpillar," "If You Give a Mouse a Cookie" and "Clifford the Big Red Dog" are just a few of the iconic picture books that have shaped childhoods for generations. Those books are full of anthropomorphized animals, characters that are usually reflexively assigned male pronouns. Digital humanities expert Melanie Walsh wanted to know, "Which animals do we gender and why?"

Walsh, an assistant professor at the iSchool, analyzed hundreds of children's books and published her findings, "Bears Will Be Boys," with "The Pudding," a digital publication that explains ideas debated in pop culture with visual essays. Her team identified the most popular English-language children's picture books that featured at least one anthropomorphized animal, reading about



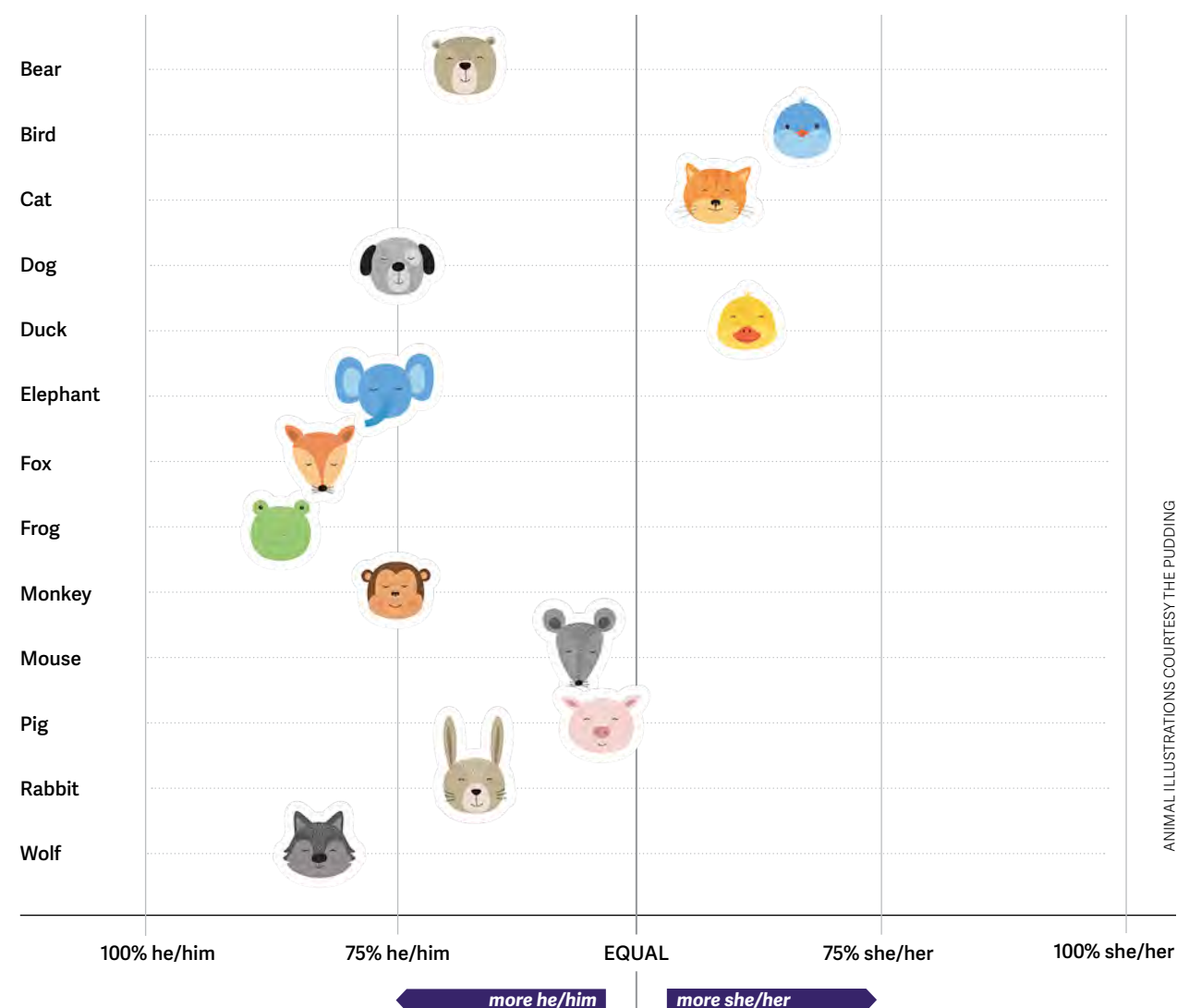
Melanie Walsh

300 books total. From there they noted the gender of each character that was important to the story.

To avoid projecting their own presumptions, they only referenced texts with feminine (she/her), masculine (he/him) or neutral (it/they/them) pronouns. They found that male animal characters were twice as common as female ones. Animals like frogs, wolves, foxes, monkeys and bears tended to be male, while only birds, ducks and cats were found to be more consistently gendered females.

In a recent piece she wrote for "Publishers Weekly," Walsh went over her findings and how they reveal the biases humans reflect in animal characters. She noted that after the piece was published, many authors and parents reached out to discuss the findings. "I've heard from a lot of illustrators and authors who have said either that they're going to think twice or think more deeply about the characters of animal characters that they create and like how they gender them," she said.

Pronouns of animals in popular children's books (animals that appear in 10 or more books)



A group of students present their Capstone project at the iSchool Showcase.

New look for spotlight on student work

The Information School's big end-of-year academic event had a new look this year with the introduction of the iSchool Showcase.

In recent years, students have displayed their work at the iSchool Capstone Gala, an event that included presentations in multiple classrooms and awards from industry judges. This year, the school took a new approach, gathering instead in one ballroom where students had the opportunity to present their work using posters and other displays in one of three sessions.

Capstones, theses, independent research projects, study abroad experiences and more were on display, highlighting the diversity of student interests at the iSchool. Projects included teams developing new data sets to uncover the history of deaths from hazing, the history of dogs in museum digital artifacts, indexing public records, and many more.

Off campus, West rules the court

Jevin West wears several hats at the iSchool: professor, associate dean for research, and co-founder of the Center for an Informed Public to name a few. Off campus, he frequently dons a tennis hat, and recently he's had a lot of success on the court. He won a singles title in the Washington State Open in the 45 and over division over the summer and a doubles title with partner Alan Regala in the USTA's national clay court championships last spring in the same division in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. West was also selected to play for the U.S. team at the ITF Masters World Team Championships in Turkey.



Five iSchoolers among Husky 100

For the past 10 years, the Husky 100 has celebrated students who demonstrate excellence inside the classroom and beyond, showing a commitment to a set of criteria that include leadership, engagement and community impact. Five iSchool students were named among the 2025 Husky 100, bringing the grand total to 54 over the past decade. This year's honorees include (from left): Salley Fang, INFO '25; Fenny Keniya, MSIM '25; Sheamin Kim, INFO '26; Elizabeth Landeche, MLIS '25; and Madelyn Lee, INFO '25.





2000 vs. 2025

iSchool students

Then: 290

Now: 2,108

iSchool faculty

Then: 20

Now: 79

UW enrollment

Then: 36,139

Now: 63,727

State population

Then: 5,894,143

Now: 8,115,100

STORY BY
DOUG PARRY

ILLUSTRATION BY
ALEXIA LOZANO

WE'RE CREATING SOMETHING IMPORTANT THAT IS

'insanely great'

THAT WILL HELP US TRY TO MAKE SENSE OF THIS

technologically overwhelming society.

On its 25th anniversary, the iSchool has far surpassed its modest beginnings, but one thing remains unchanged: its commitment to the power of information for public good

Mike Eisenberg's trademark enthusiasm was on full display. It was Jan. 6, 2001, and the nascent Information School threw a party in the newly opened, state-of-the-art Mary Gates Hall.

In a few short years, the UW's Graduate School of Library and Information Science had been transformed. It had added an Informatics undergraduate program and a doctoral program, with a master's in information management soon to follow.

"We're creating something important that is 'insanely great' that will help us try to make sense of this technologically overwhelming society," Eisenberg proclaimed, borrowing a phrase from Steve Jobs. Eisenberg would become the new school's first dean later that year.

Now the iSchool is celebrating again. Its 25-year anniversary marks a quarter century of teaching and research that empowers people by connecting them with the right information at the right time. From its modest beginnings, the iSchool has grown to serve more than 2,000 students, with 70 faculty and a growing research portfolio that includes several research centers.

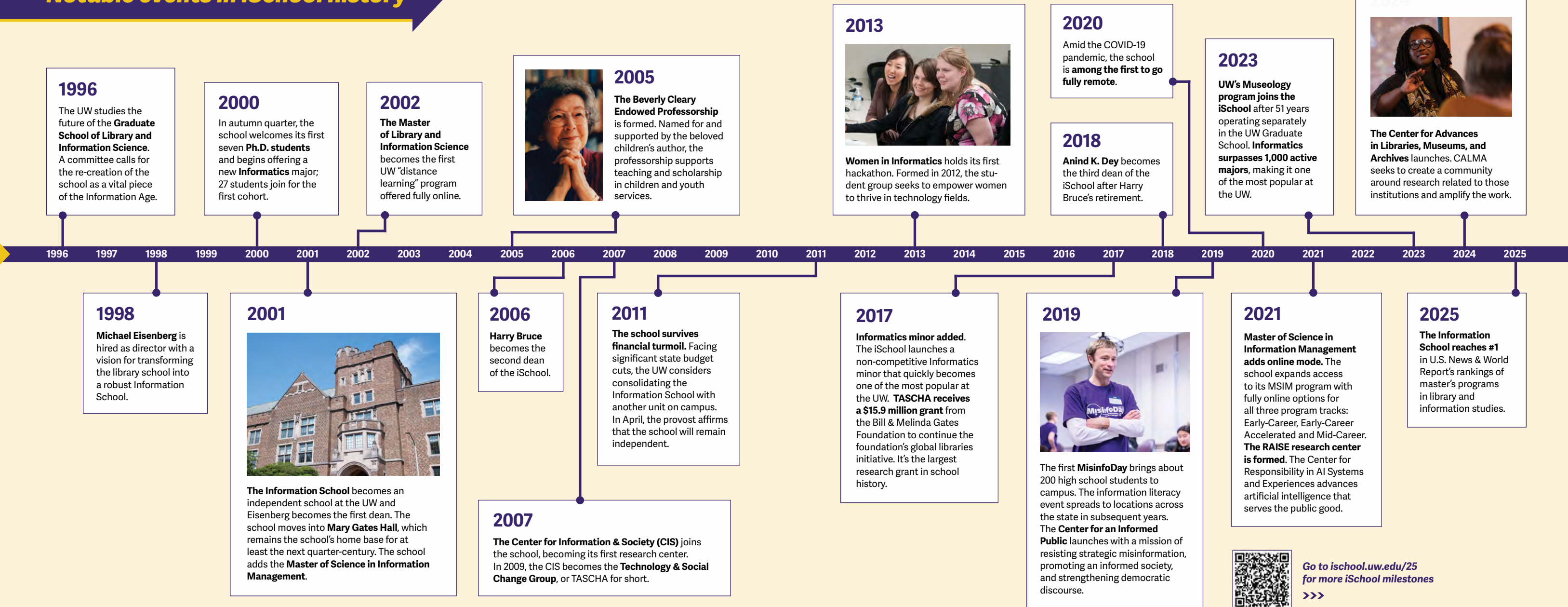
A UW "FUTURES COMMITTEE" put the wheels in motion in 1996, recommending bold action "to build a new and outstanding library and information science program that will rapidly achieve national and international prominence." At the time, the library school, founded in 1911, had only 150 students, with seven faculty and three staff members, and offered a single master's degree. The university launched a nationwide search for a director who could transform the school.

Eisenberg, then a professor at Syracuse University, interviewed and pitched an aggressive plan. He would double the size of the library science master's program, add more degree programs and bring in research funding. He would hire 20 more faculty and enough staff to support the growing research and academic enterprise. He would move fast and take risks, if necessary. And he would do it all while staying true to the values of librarianship.



*Mike Eisenberg,
first dean of the
Information School*

Notable events in iSchool history



To Eisenberg's surprise, UW leadership gave him everything he asked for.

"They bought into the promise and they were part of it," he said, noting that he got key support from then-Provost Lee Huntsman and Computer Science Chair Ed Lazowska. "It was like everything came together."

Eisenberg arrived in 1998, and he brought reinforcements with him. He convinced Harry and Lorraine Bruce, his friends and colleagues, to uproot their family from Sydney, Australia, and move to Seattle, sight unseen,

to join the faculty. He brought Scott Barker, a former student of his from Syracuse, as his IT director and made a raft of early faculty hires, including Joe Janes, who would become a longtime chair of the Master of Library and Information Science program, and Batya Friedman, who led the development of the Informatics major. Existing faculty, particularly Professor Raya Fidel, threw their support behind Eisenberg.

Tracie D. Hall had a first-hand look at the transformation as it happened. Hall, who is

now in her second year on the iSchool faculty as a Distinguished Practitioner in Residence, earned her library science degree at the school in 2000.

"I immediately began to understand what that meant as a student, because I started to see the shifts in our curriculum and how we were beginning to talk more broadly beyond the technique and the technologies of librarianship, and I began to think more about the theory and the critical histories," she said. "Being there when that shift was being made con-

tributed to the kind of practitioner, not only that I've become, but that I still hope to be."

THE SCHOOL WAS IN STARTUP MODE, and it needed room to grow. Eisenberg quickly moved its offices from the basement of Suzzallo Library to temporary quarters in the old Electrical Engineering Building, but he knew that wouldn't contain the school for long. He asked the administration where the next and best available space would be.

"They said Mary Gates Hall, but you can't

Words of wisdom

We asked alumni to tell us about something they learned at the iSchool that stays with them in their day-to-day lives. Here are some of their responses, which have been lightly edited.



Kawanna Bright, MLIS '03

I learned to be proud of who I am and what I can bring to the work I do in librarianship.

I entered the program knowing I wanted to be a librarian but dealt with imposter syndrome from the start. The program gave me a voice and taught me how to use it. I am a better library faculty member now because of what I learned during my time in the iSchool.



Harold Pham, Informatics '24

Organization pays dividends. The organizational and broader perspective I got from taking

different types of courses in the Informatics program helped me greatly during my onboarding at Visa, and especially to be able to ace my interviews. There are a lot of ways to frame things, and knowing how you need to frame and organize certain requirements will bring you more peace as you do your work.



Conrado Saldivar, MLIS '21

Many of the courses at the iSchool centered on community. When I go to work and have to make a decision, I ask myself if my actions will benefit my hometown community. If they won't, I'll reconsider and look at alternate solutions so that my community comes first.



Stacey Akahoshi, MLIS '18

Information wayfinding was one of my favorite projects. I still constantly think about

how everyone finds information differently. I use this at work when I look at signage or work on library websites.

Anuj Sinha, MSIM '25

Just keep at it. You will find a way.

Nicole Nobbay, Informatics '24

The importance of empathy in all aspects of life!



Harry Bruce (left) and Mike Eisenberg brought different styles to the role of dean. After Eisenberg brought his high energy to the school's startup phase, Bruce's steady demeanor helped him lead it through more than a decade of growth in size and influence.

have that," Eisenberg recalled. "And I said, 'Oh, good. That sounds really good. We'll take it.'"

People had a hard time saying no to Eisenberg. Eventually he got his way, negotiating to create a home for the school on the third and fourth floors of the new building. He also made a name change to Information School on his own, then "got called in to the principal's office."

"We changed the letterhead and all of our stuff to "Information School" and "iSchool." I got called in to see the vice provost, Steve Olswang, who was a great guy. And Steve goes to me, 'Mike, did you change the name of the school?' And I said, 'Yeah, I kind of did, Steve.'"

Olswang shook his head and laughed. Soon after, the Board of Regents made the Information School the UW's 16th independent school or college and made Eisenberg dean.

"You really had to feel that energy," said Mary Clark, who joined as the school's lead financial administrator in 2001 and stayed until her retirement in 2023. She likened Eisenberg to a football coach revving up his team in the locker room. "He'd say, 'Let's go. Come on, everybody. This is what we're going to do! And it's going to be fantastic. It's going to be great. It's going to be incredible!'"

All of that energy took a toll, however. Eisenberg suffered a heart attack after speaking at a university event on election night, 2004. It led

him to reevaluate his hard-driving style and step back from his role as dean, though he would stay on as an influential professor, researcher and teacher.

Harry Bruce was appointed as the next dean in January 2006. Bruce, who had served as the associate dean for research, brought a different style of leadership to the job. High energy, quick action and impatience with barriers drove Eisenberg; Bruce, on the other hand, was extremely adept at managing the politics and pace of change at a large university.

Their contrasting personalities would prove to be a very successful formula, making the iSchool a role model for information schools on university campuses around the world. Bruce attributed the success to the school's faculty, staff, students, alumni and supporters as well as other members of the school's leadership team.

"Mike and I might have been the right leaders at the right time for the iSchool, but its phenomenal success was due to the hard work, passion, loyalty, expertise and leadership of our stunning community," Bruce said.

THOSE FIRST FEW YEARS HAD BEEN A WHIRLWIND of new ideas, rapid hiring, program building and big promises. Enrollment swelled to 569 students by 2005.

"Our working community hadn't had time to breathe across our

Favorite instructors

We asked alumni to tell us about their favorite iSchool professor. Here are some of their responses, which have been lightly edited.



James Rosenzweig, MLIS '11

Joe Janes was such a generous and thoughtful mentor, offering advice when asked for it, and

always as honest in praise as in critique. He gave me a real sense of purpose as a reference librarian. That's something my library colleagues always comment on positively — the ethos of service, the seriousness about the work, the willingness to go extra lengths to understand an information need and find a source that meets it. I think of him and the classes he taught basically every week of my year, and I always will.



Susan Acharya, MSIM '25

Professor David Hendry was easily the most influential professor I had at the iSchool. What I loved most about his classes

was the balance he created between listening and contributing. He showed me the value of hearing others fully while also giving myself permission to take space in the conversation. That balance not only made me more involved in class, but it also inspired me to step up in my community, take on leadership roles, and trust myself more. I can honestly say his influence reshaped how I show up, both professionally and personally.



Riyana Patel, MSIM '24

Terri Eccles was my PM teacher and taught me SO much about how to approach business problems and think strategically. She was very helpful and quite an inspiration.



Joe Lollo, MLIS '24

Jin Ha Lee has been one of my most valued mentors. She is very in tune with her students' needs, ensured the classwork

was always relevant to them, and was always willing to help us find the most meaningful and creative outcome for our work. I would take a million classes with her if I had the chance!



Share your story about your favorite iSchool professor and read more stories on our website.
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startup phase,” Bruce said. “My immediate concern as the incoming dean was to deliver on the many things that we were saying the iSchool could do, but at the same time, not to burn out our faculty and staff.”

Over the next 11 years, Bruce presided over the iSchool’s steady growth in size and influence. The Informatics major grew from a single cohort of 27 students to 200, with hundreds more applying each year. The research enterprise grew quickly, and the school became a leader in areas such as data science, human-computer interaction, digital youth and Native North American Indigenous knowledge in addition to its core in library and information science.

In 2011, the iSchool faced one of its biggest crises to date when a state budget deficit resulted in deep cuts at the UW. The president and provost considered folding the iSchool under the College of Arts and Sciences.

Bruce rallied the community he had spent years building. To push back against the plan for consolidation, he pursued a “relentless, but not obnoxious” campaign, gathering support from the iSchool’s champions in Olympia, in tribal communities, in libraries, and in the state’s information and technology industries.

Along with Clark and others, Bruce put together a financial model demonstrating that the school could sustain itself and that cutting it wouldn’t save money. Within a few months, the provost wrote to the school, declaring that it would remain independent.

Bruce emerged from the episode with a renewed sense of purpose. “I think we were ready to get excited again and build,” he said, “so the years that followed were incredibly exciting.” The community united around his vision of an iSchool that would be “unassailable,” and Bruce led the school through a period of rapid growth until stepping aside as dean in fall 2017.

AFTER A NATIONWIDE SEARCH for Bruce’s successor, Anind K. Dey took over as dean in 2018. Whereas Eisenberg and Bruce had backgrounds in library science, Dey is a computer scientist who made his mark leading Carnegie Mellon University’s Human-Computer Interaction Institute. The choice reflected the evolution of the school in the years since its founding, Dey said.

“I think it was a recognition that while many information schools still have their core in library science, there has been a big push in information science into applied computer science,” he said.

Dey was upfront with the iSchool community that his background was in another field and he had a lot to learn about library



Dean Anind K. Dey speaks during an alumni event at Seattle Public Library’s Central Library in 2019. While Dey’s background is in computing and human-computer interaction research, he shares the core values of librarianship.

and information science. He shares its core values — access to information, equity, intellectual freedom, and serving the public good — and he wanted to be at a university where public service was the primary mission.

Once on the job, Dey saw that capacity constraints were preventing the school from serving that mission. He set out to increase access to Information School programs, starting with the Informatics major. “When I realized just how many students we were turning away at the undergraduate level, expanding access very quickly became a top priority for me,” he said.

“iSchool graduates stand out for their rare mix of curiosity, rigor, and adaptability. As AI drives the future, it’s exactly the kind of talent every industry now depends on.”

— Brian Lent, founding partner of YA6 Capital

Under Dey, the Informatics major has grown to more than 1,000 active students, making it one of the largest majors at the UW. The school has also increased scholarship support for all its programs and expanded access to the Master of Science in Information Management among domestic students by giving them an online option.

One of those students is Marquisha Hicks, ’22, who was one of the first online MSIM graduates. Hicks works remotely for Providence health-care system in Sacramento, managing software and DevOps engineers. In the MSIM program, she gained not only information management skills, but a skillset that will help her adapt to a constantly changing work environment.

“The world of technology is just growing at an extremely fast pace,” Hicks said. “We as individuals need to be cognizant of the fact that it’s moving at a faster pace than the regulations and the rules.

“You can’t just stop and rest on what you may have learned in school. You have to keep going.”

Hicks, who earned an MBA after her MSIM, exemplifies the kind of modern learner who is in demand, said Brian Lent, a founding partner of YA6 Capital who was previously CEO of Plunk and CTO at HERE Technologies.

“iSchool graduates stand out for their rare mix of curiosity, rigor and adaptability,” Lent said. “As AI drives the future, it’s exactly the kind of talent every industry now depends on.”

THE SCHOOL HAS EMBRACED the emergence of artificial intelligence with new courses and offerings, but also with an eye toward its potential harms. While some of the school’s research and teaching is at the forefront of developing large language models and harnessing the new technology’s potential, others study ways to mitigate issues such as AI-generated biases in hiring processes.

This dichotomy exemplifies the iSchool’s approach, said Eva Maxfield Brown, Informatics ’17 and a current Ph.D. candidate.

“We can build these things, but it’s especially important to be critical and ask, ‘Should we be doing this?’” Brown said. “One of the reasons why I like the iSchool is it’s not entirely tech positivist. It’s not just, ‘All tech is good all the time.’”

Dey’s term as dean has been marked not only by growth and the emergence of AI, but also the biggest challenges the school has faced since 2011. The COVID-19 pandemic wrought massive disruptions to learning, research and operations that continue to reverberate years later. Now, the school is contending with a stream of federal directives that have challenged a significant portion of the school’s research funding and its commitment to

2000 vs. 2025		MOBILE PHONES	TELEVISIONS	BEST-SELLING BOOK	TOP SONG, BILLBOARD 100	U.S. SENATORS (WASH.)	SEATTLE MARINERS’ SEASON RECORD
then and now						 	
		Flip phone	CRT TV	“Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire,” J.K. Rowling	Faith Hill, “Breathe”	Maria Cantwell and Patty Murray	91-71
		Smartphone	Smart TV	“Sunrise on the Reaping,” Suzanne Collins	Kendrick Lamar, “Not Like Us”	Maria Cantwell and Patty Murray	90-72

“I feel like before, you could go to college, get a job and work there for 20-30 years. But these days, it’s like, ‘Oh, that job that you had doesn’t exist. The job that you want also doesn’t exist yet.’ So many things are constantly in flux.”

— Andrea Chen, Informatics ’19

diversity and equity.

“In many ways, I feel like we’re stronger because of these challenges,” Dey said. I don’t think any of us came out of the pandemic unscathed, but as a school, we came out of it unified.”

Now, in the face of headwinds from the federal government, he said, “We’re reaffirming our values around social justice and information access and the importance of having trustworthy information, and we’re extending that to aspects of AI. If anything, what’s happening outside the institution is causing us to say, ‘Who do we want to be? And how do we get there?’”

ONE OF THE iSCHOOL’S STRENGTHS is its ability to stay nimble, Dey said. That has served it well in the face of adversity and the rise of AI. It will help the school embrace quantum information science and anything else that’s on the horizon.

Likewise, the iSchool’s programs stay nimble. Initiatives such as the Distinguished Practitioner in Residence program, which brought Hall back to the school to teach MLIS students, help ensure the degree programs are keeping pace with employers’ needs. Along with the curriculum, mentorship programs iSTAMP and iMentorship help equip graduates to navigate uncertainty, a crucial skill in a fast-shifting job market.

“I feel like the path is becoming more and more uncharted,” said Andrea Chen, Informatics ’19, who works as a product manager at Everybody Votes, a nonprofit voter registration organization based in Washington, D.C.

“I feel like before, you could go to college, get a job and work there for 20-30 years. But these days, it’s like, ‘Oh, that job that you had doesn’t exist. The job that you want also doesn’t exist yet.’ So many things are constantly in flux.”

Chen carries with her the iSchool ethos of using the power of information to help people. It’s a mission that traces back not just 25 years, but to 1911 and the school’s beginnings in librarianship. It echoes through every iSchool program: Informatics, MLIS, MSIM, Ph.D. and the Museology program that recently joined the school.

The Information School is a place where technologists can be librarians and librarians can be technologists, where scholars in fields as disparate as machine learning, Indigenous knowledge, digital literacy, information systems, management and museum studies all are welcome.

That will be key in the next quarter century and beyond, Dey said. To thrive, the school must be interdisciplinary. It must stay true to its values and serve the public good.

“It’s about focusing on who has access to information,” he said. “How do you ease that access? How do you mediate that access? How do you help people answer the questions that they’re trying to answer? That goal and mission will not change in the next 25 years.” ☺

Global reach

iSchool graduates live and work in 38 countries around the world

- United States: **15,216**
- China: **111**
- Canada: **65**
- India: **55**
- Taiwan: **34**
- South Korea: **21**
- United Kingdom: **8**
- Malaysia: **7**
- Japan: **9**
- Australia: **6**
- Indonesia: **6**
- Germany: **5**
- The Philippines: **4**
- Singapore: **4**
- Thailand: **4**
- The Netherlands: **3**
- Spain: **3**
- Austria: **2**
- Hong Kong: **2**
- Nigeria: **2**
- Vietnam: **2**
- Bangladesh: **1**
- Brazil: **1**
- Chile: **1**
- Egypt: **1**
- Fiji: **1**
- France: **1**
- Isle of Man: **1**
- Kazakhstan: **1**
- Nepal: **1**
- New Zealand: **1**
- Norway: **1**
- Peru: **1**
- Romania: **1**
- South Africa: **1**
- Sweden: **1**
- Switzerland: **1**
- Turkey: **1**



Update your alumni profile and tell us where you are
>>>



INTERNATIONAL SPOTLIGHT

AUSTRALIA

Jorge Retamales, MSIM’16, is in Brisbane, completing a Ph.D. at the University of Queensland on how generative AI is changing the work of data scientists.

THE NETHERLANDS

Li Zeng, Ph.D.’22, is an assistant professor in the Department of Methodology and Statistics at Tilburg University. Her research focuses on computational social science, using large-scale social data and machine learning to study online communication and social behavior.

Briana Mabson, Museology’16, is a collections manager at Eindhoven Museum.

SINGAPORE

Scarlett Hwang, Informatics’20, is a senior data analyst in digital bank strategy and analytics at Monee, a part of Sea, a major global consumer internet company. Hwang works to uncover business opportunities and optimize strategic directions for the digital bank.

SWEDEN

Christopher Erdmann, MLIS’05, is the head of Open Science at SciLifeLab Data Centre in Uppsala. “I was a bit lost earlier in my life and career and I would say that the iSchool definitely helped me pivot towards a new direction which has led to so many opportunities.”

CANADA

Parmit Chilana, Ph.D. ’11, is an associate professor in Computing Science at Simon Fraser University in Vancouver, British Columbia. “What I enjoy most is the combination of creativity, challenge, and collaboration that my work offers.”

SOUTH KOREA

Eun Youp Rha, MLIS ’13, is an assistant professor in the Department of Library and Information Science at Kyungpook National University in Daegu, South Korea. “What I value most about my job is the constant sense of youth and passion on campus.”

Jin Ahn, MSIM ’09, is a vice president and COO at Openplan Korea, an international insurance technology firm. “The iSchool gave me the insight to manage people, tech and information.”

TAIWAN

Jay Kuo, MSIM ’24, is a production planning engineer at Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Company. “I truly enjoy applying my analytical skills to solve problems and grow together with the company.”



DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI AWARD 2025

A career with many chapters

In the early 1990s, Marcie Stone was one of about 30 people on the Federal Web Consortium, a team responsible for creating the very first public-facing websites for the U.S. government’s Executive Branch agencies. Her decades-long career on the frontiers of digital information epitomizes the reach and relevance of librarianship. Yet, in her own words, she got to library school at the University of Washington “completely by accident.”

After Stone, a Seattle native, earned her undergraduate degree in English at the UW in 1969, she and her husband Dave, ’68, moved to Germany for Dave’s Army assignment. When he received orders for Vietnam, she set her sights on returning to the UW for graduate school. But her English M.A. application was not on time. She thought about her mother’s friend who was a librarian and UW alum. “She was a force of nature,” Marcie Stone recalled. “I figured if she enjoyed being a librarian, I probably would too. So I applied.”

Stone, M.Lib. ’76, is now a ubiquitous and valued fixture on campus. She also is the recipient of this year’s Information School Distinguished Alumni Award.

Marcie Stone spent 30 years as a federal librarian, helping to build some of the government’s first public websites; then she came home to give back to the UW

STORY BY KAYLA POHL
PHOTOGRAPH BY DOUG PARRY

“Marcie and Dave are very much creatures and citizens of the university,” said Associate Professor Joseph Janes. “The life of this university, the life of this campus, the life of this school — those all mean a great deal to both of them.” In her retirement, Marcie Stone has served on the MLIS Advisory Board, the UW Alumni Board of Trustees and the Meany Center Advisory Board.

Stone’s career in federal libraries got its start in Germany on a small Army post, where, since it was the only English-speaking library around, she did everything from storytime and salt clay relief map workshops to helping with doctoral dissertations. When she and Dave were transferred to Washington, D.C., she worked at the Pentagon Library, managing classified military documents and wrestling with clunky encryption equipment she hoped would boot up each morning. Later, at the Defense Technical Information Center (DTIC), she worked to support the center’s mission of documenting and distributing technical reports about research performed with Department of Defense funding.

“Then the internet happened,” she said. “And that changed everything.”

The government looked to the DTIC to create the first websites for the Office of the Secretary of Defense and the Army and Air Force. Overseen by the National Science Foundation, the team ultimately created around 100 websites, and their work established the foundation for thousands of Defense Department and military websites to come. Shepherding the executive branch into the digital age was exhilarating for the team, Stone recalled. “Working with the new technology was one of the most exciting professional opportunities that any of us had had. We were making it up as we went along,” she said.

Stone approached this pioneering work as a librarian, frequently relying on a skill she developed at the UW: the reference interview, during which the interviewer guides clients or patrons to articulate what they actually need, rather than what they initially ask for. She explained that her team would field customer requests that often described the technology they thought they wanted to use rather than the outcome they desired. She’d respond: “Don’t tell us how to do it yet. Just tell us what you want done, and we’ll figure out how to do it.” Collaboration was also key. She worked with a program analyst and IT specialist, and, she recalled, “we listened with different kinds of ears to what they were saying.”

If Stone’s journey to the UW library school, which is now, of course, the iSchool, was happenstance, so was her return to and ensuing involvement on campus. “I picked her up in a bar,” former Dean Harry Bruce said, referencing a running joke between the two of them. They’d met at an alumni event at a bar in Washington, D.C., and Bruce was captivated by her intelligence and how she’d applied her education and training.

He recalled: “She’d spent all of her career working in government, not in traditional library, public library or university library settings. I knew our students would be very inspired by the career path she had chosen.” Stone herself was interested in how the Graduate School of Library and Information Science was transforming into the Information School, broadening the options and opportunities it offered.

Bruce invited Stone to get involved in the iSchool community if she ever returned to Seattle, and to his surprise, a few years later, she knocked on his office door. Stone co-chaired the iSchool’s portion of the university-wide \$6 billion “Be Boundless” fundraising campaign, which easily surpassed the iSchool’s contribution goals using a message rooted in librarianship’s humble and rewarding sense of purpose.

Stone admits she never expected the Distinguished Alumni Award. “It’s validation for what I did, obviously, but still I was very surprised and gratified,” she said. “What Dave and I do on campus are things we enjoy so much that we don’t realize that we’re doing anything extraordinary.” ©

GOLD AWARD 2025

Nishit Bhasin, MSIM ’24



BY CURRAN NIELSEN

Developing a startup from the ground up can feel intimidating, especially while navigating the uncertainty and pressure of entrepreneurship.

After receiving his Master of Science in Information Management, Nishit Bhasin, ’24, launched IncSkill, a comprehensive AI-powered accessibility platform designed to help enterprises enhance digital accessibility, automate compliance and build inclusive experiences for employees and customers with disabilities. Bhasin and MSIM ’25 graduate Lakshya Garg were recognized among Forbes’ ‘30 Under 30’ for Social Impact for their product. Bhasin is the recipient of this year’s Graduates of the Last Decade (GOLD) Award, celebrating his contributions to the information field. We quizzed him about launching a startup.

Q: How do you balance empathy with execution?
A: Empathy is built into our structure. Many of our team members, including my co-founder, live with disabilities. That proximity keeps us grounded. We also involve the community in development and ensure the whole team understands the “why” behind our mission.

Q: How do you convince investors about the importance of inclusive design?
A: We stopped framing accessibility as a “feel-good” mission and started showing it as an untapped trillion-dollar market. With new legal mandates, accessibility isn’t optional anymore. Our pitch focused on solving a real pain point with our product automating a slow, expensive process.

Q: Advice for future startup founders?
A: Don’t keep your idea to yourself. Talk to people, get feedback and enter competitions. The first version of your product won’t be the final one, so stay flexible. School is the best time to experiment and build, especially with mentors and resources around you.

Crossing boundaries

When people think of information science degrees, big tech companies like Microsoft or Google often come to mind. But for graduates of the iSchool, their skills open up possibilities in a variety of sectors — not just tech.

iSchool alumni are applying their skills across sectors — including business, sports, education and public service — showcasing the broad value of an information science education.

BY CURRAN NIELSEN



“Even though I hadn't worked professionally in sports before, I had an expansive enough portfolio that helped me land the role.”

Max Kahn
Senior analyst, San Francisco 49ers

Max Kahn, MSIM '22, works as a senior analyst of business intelligence for the San Francisco 49ers, where he finds ways to use data to drive revenue and brand affinity. “From ticketing and concessions to post-game surveys and focus groups, all of the business data that the 49ers have lives in my domain,” Kahn said. “It's my job to empower the organization to make data-driven decisions.”

In the MSIM program, Kahn focused on sports analytics, completing projects like studying home-field advantage during the pandemic and fan accessibility via public transport. These helped him secure his role with the 49ers. “Even though I hadn't worked professionally in sports before, I had an expansive enough portfolio that helped me land the role,” he said.

With a background as a geography major during his undergrad at the UW, Kahn enjoys finding connections between geography and data. One of his projects involved analyzing TV broadcast metrics to determine where fans watch 49ers games.

“One of the things we learned is that we have a surprisingly strong contingent of fans in Iowa,” Kahn said. “And that was one of the big things that I brought to the table thanks to the MSIM program ... finding ways to use the data to learn where our fans are located, and then building a map to help us visualize and understand it.”



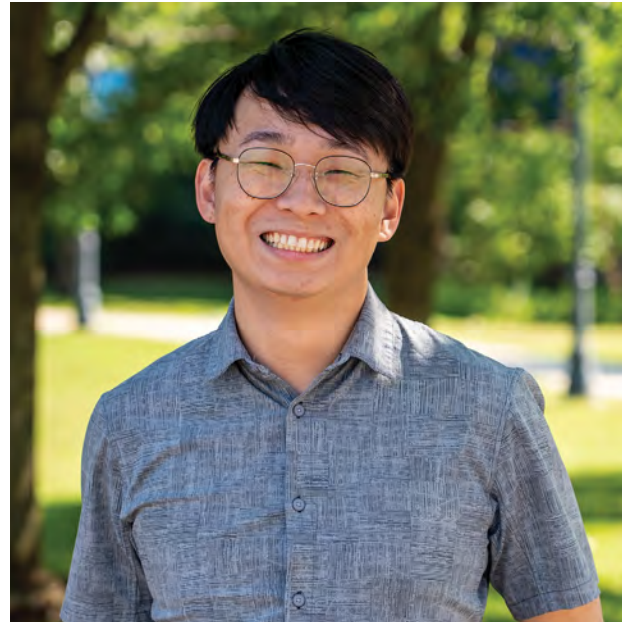
Godgiven Caelin Grogan
Product manager for Orchestrate platform, GMR Marketing

Another iSchool alum drawn to sports is Godgiven Caelin Grogan, Informatics '20. Her work as a product manager for GMR Marketing's Orchestrate, an event execution and management platform, has given her the opportunity to work on high-profile events including the Paris Olympics, the FIFA World Cup and the Super Bowl.

Grogan manages data systems for major events. When she went to Paris for the 2024 Summer Olympics, she was in charge of data management and reporting and managing the package ticketing system for various clients. In Grogan's work, the pressure is high and there are many moving parts and challenges around event planning and execution for VIPs and major events, but she finds those challenges exciting.

Her advice to those figuring out what career is best suited for them is to remember what they loved to do as a child. For Grogan, it was doing puzzles. Now as a product manager, Grogan gets to solve complex problems and find the best solutions for her clients. “That's why I love what I do,” Grogan said. “I'm just solving problems, it's just little puzzles or big puzzles every day.”

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Aaron Zhao

Admissions counselor, Marquette University

As he pursued his Informatics degree, Aaron Zhao, '22, hoped to work in higher education. Now, he is an admissions counselor at Marquette University.

"I chose a field, especially in informatics, where I feel like the human aspect of technology and the technology itself are talked about equally," Zhao said. "I [wanted] to go into educational technology to make education more accessible."

At Marquette, Zhao uses his Informatics background to improve access to education through technology. His leadership at the UW and experience advising students shaped his path in higher ed.

While at the UW, Zhao was president of the Informatics Undergraduate Association. It helped him understand how the university works, which led him to where he is now. He also was involved as a teaching assistant for introductory classes such as INFO 200 and INFO 201 and was an undergraduate peer advisor, helping students apply to the Informatics major.

"Explore different areas, different industries," Zhao said. "We very much need students of those backgrounds. We need graduates who understand those concepts and who have those skills, and we desperately need them."

“I chose a field where I feel like the human aspect of technology and the technology itself are talked about equally.”

Alan Butler

Data analytics, City of Tacoma

MSIM '22 alum Alan Butler is applying his education in the public sector, working for the City of Tacoma on its data analytics team.

"The iSchool is definitely the pivotal moment in my career," Butler said. "[It] does a really good job of setting you up for sustainable research practices [and] talking to people that aren't just data engineers."

On the data analytics team, Butler has worked with local vendor management, on information access and on Tacoma's Open Data Initiative, where he worked to create an open and transparent operating process to align with the city's goals as well as to support the public.

Assignments like the Open Data Initiative that benefit the community are what drew Butler to working in the public sector. His advice to students and alumni is to find jobs that encourage professional development.

"Take that exciting leap," Butler said. "Lean into roles that push your other boundaries."

“Take that exciting leap. Lean into roles that push your other boundaries.”



Kris Tomasovic Nelson

Head of sustainable investing, Russell Investments

Kris Tomasovic Nelson, MSIM '15, works as the head of sustainable investing at Russell Investments, a financial services firm based in Seattle. She works across the investment teams to ensure they have the policies and processes in place to deliver on sustainable objectives for their clients.

After a long career in finance and investing, Nelson didn't expect to become an information professional. She pursued her MSIM with the desire to use her degree in the investing world and help her to understand how corporations are adapting to the rise of data-driven business decisions.

"It allowed me to think about things from a more project point of view," she said.

Nelson remains involved in the MSIM program 10 years after obtaining her degree, serving on the MSIM advisory board.

She advises current students and professionals to not be afraid to try something new and to step up to challenges. As a mid-career professional, getting her MSIM was a chance she took that has benefited her in her investing career.

"The MSIM degree is so applicable across a broad number of industries," she said. "Look for projects that you can get involved in that will be your steppingstone to where you want to be." ☺

“Look for projects that you can get involved in that will be your steppingstone to where you want to be.”

INFORMATICS

Manav Agarwal, '25, began working as an AI and data technology consultant at EY.

Azri Azmi, '15, started a new position as lead Engineer in SEEK, a global leader in online employment marketplaces, based in Australia and Malaysia.

Jacky Yiu Chung Cheung, '22, was promoted to UX Designer II at Amazon.

Daniel Huie, '16, moved to New York City to work for Sotheby's and pursue his photography business, shooting portraits, events, weddings and engagements.

Tom Jubin, '24, is working as a cybersecurity auditor for Liberty Mutual and volunteering for Seattle non-profit organization Project Umbrella.

Elliot Keder, '15, exited the corporate world after a decade working in tech and is taking a planned career break. He is volunteering for Washington Trails Association, building trails and backpacking around the Pacific Northwest.

Anthony Mayer, '11, relocated to Germany and is the VP of Engineering at Charles, helping businesses connect with customers via WhatsApp.

Nicole Nobbay, '24, works as a UX designer for PwC Commercial Technology and Innovation in Seattle.

Jerome Orille, '22, transferred into health-care software in 2025, moving to Wisconsin and working at Epic as a technical solutions engineer.

Harold Pham, '24, joined Visa as a software engineer engaged in AI-related development.

Pournami Varma, '25, joined Starbucks as an associate product manager for the Digital Ordering Team.

Yuxing Wu, '19, earned her Ph.D. in Informatics from Indiana University Bloomington and joined Pennsylvania State University as an assistant teaching professor.

MLIS & M.Lib.

Veronica Adair, '20, is the student engagement librarian at BYU Idaho.

Stacey Akahoshi, '18, started a new position as the branch coordinator III at Mesa Public Library. She manages the main branch location in downtown Mesa, Arizona. She was recently selected for the 2025 PLA Leadership Academy.

Shaye Anis, '24, works as a reference and outreach specialist at King County Archives in Seattle.

Margaret Ansell, '12, served as interim chair for the University of Florida Health Science Center Library over the summer. In 2021, Margaret was awarded promotion and tenure at the University of Florida.

Maureen Barney, '01, was named the university librarian at Linfield University in Oregon. Maureen has been an assistant professor and literacy librarian since 2020.

Megan Barnes, '15, recently published an article titled, "Artificial intelligence policies in K-12 school districts in the United States: a content analysis shaping education policy" with Associate Professor Lauren Eutsler and Ph.D students



Carolyn Chen, Informatics '25

I'm working in Seattle as a Business Intelligence Engineer intern at Amazon within the People eXperience and Technology organization. My work focuses on improving internal system automation and employee experiences through data-driven insights. It's rewarding to see my reports directly drive improvement and help accelerate progress toward organizational goals in real time.

My time at the iSchool played a big role in shaping how I approach this work. It taught me that strong communication and collaboration are just as important as technical skill. Through team-based projects and presentations, I learned how to navigate ambiguity and connect with diverse perspectives, lessons that have been invaluable in my current role.

Brittany Musgraves-Rivera and Julie Cummings, all of the University of North Texas.

Jonathan Betz-Zall, '76, returned to the profession as an "intermittent" (i.e. on-call) librarian for the Seattle Public Library after seven years of retirement from the community college system.

Scott Beveridge, '03, is a software engineer, doing remote consulting in .NET. He is currently developing a SaaS product for insurance carrier loss control management.

Jennifer Bisson, '02, works as a teen services librarian at the Greenwood Branch of the Seattle Public Library. She also volunteers with the Northwest Immigrant Rights Project to create social services information pathways for the clients, lawyers and social workers within the youth division.

Katherine Bouchard, '15, has been working at the Latah County Library District in Moscow, Idaho, as the youth services manager.

Kawanna Bright, '03, earned tenure and promotion to associate professor at East Carolina University. She was awarded the ALISE Excellence in Teaching Award (Senior Faculty) at the 2025 ALISE Annual Conference in Kansas City, Missouri.

Chloe Bryant, '22, and her husband just welcomed their first child, Anthony David Bryant, on July 30.

Emily (Bolton) Cabaniss, '14, is a consulting archivist for

organizations in the Pacific Northwest and California.

Kaijsa Calkins, '04, returned to the UW as associate dean of University Libraries for UW Tacoma after 19 years at University of Wyoming Libraries.

Stephen Coker, '06, is serving as athletic director and teacher librarian at North Thurston High School in Lacey.

Danette Colin, '15, recently moved into the role of senior Agile product owner at NovelList, a division of EBSCO Industries, merging longtime tech and product experience with their MLIS degree.

Tiffany Coulson, '16, works as an embedded research librarian and curriculum designer for Altera, an educational nonprofit in Eastern Washington. She has written a series of articles for School Library Journal on environmental topics, supporting positive climate mental health for youth.

Janet Crum, '92, was appointed Dean of Library Services at Fresno State University.

Olivia Davis, '23, is a medical librarian at the Cleveland Clinic as head of the Interlibrary Loan department.

Alice Erickson, '18, began a new position as a school resource services librarian for the Alameda Free Library, providing outreach services to K-8 students throughout the city.

Gabrielle Garcia, '24, started their first full-time position as an archivist at Lambda Archives of San Diego.

Melissa Gill, '13, serves as head of metadata strategy at the Getty Research Institute in Los Angeles. Melissa also teaches a graduate-level metadata course in UCLA's MLIS program.

Jinglin Hou, Museology '22

I'm living in Victoria, British Columbia, and working at the BC Archives as a digital access technician in the Collection and Preservation Division. My job is all about opening up access to BC's archival collections by digitizing records and creating online surrogates. The part I love most is knowing that what I do helps researchers and communities connect with history more easily. It feels meaningful — like I'm not only working with history but also helping shape how people experience it today. Plus, I get to see all kinds of fascinating documents every day, which makes me feel like I'm constantly uncovering little pieces of the past.

The Museology program gave me a great mix of theory and hands-on practice. I still draw on what I learned in collection management, and my internship at the Seattle Art Museum as a Visitor Experience Evaluator taught me how to gather and analyze data in real-world settings. Those experiences really shaped how I approach my work now — blending care for collections with the skills to make them more accessible and meaningful for people.



Seth Kurke, MLIS '21



I run my own communications and marketing consultancy, EchoPoint Strategies, which I started after being laid off earlier this year. In addition, I serve as communications assistant at the Evergreen Council on Problem Gambling, also headquartered in Olympia. ECPG partners with tribal communities, casinos, and Washington state agencies such as the Health Care Authority and the Washington State Lottery, as well as local media outlets like KING-5 News, to promote public health awareness and responsible gaming.

I value the opportunity to work at the intersection of public advocacy, communications and community well-being. My work allows me to engage with diverse stakeholders, including tribal leaders, public health officials, educators and media professionals, while building outreach strategies that make a real difference. Beyond my professional work, I also coach youth sports locally, and those experiences remind me how community issues such as youth mental health, screen time and gambling connect to broader public health goals.

Mary Hansen, '06, recently published her debut novel, "The Traveling Archivist." The story follows an archivist to eastern Oregon, where she finds evidence in the records of a massacre of 34 Chinese gold miners over 100 years ago.

Taylor Hazan, '25, recently began a new role as the adult services manager at the Wilkes County Public Library in western North Carolina.

Laura Home-Popp, '07, became the director of Greenlease Library in 2021.

Monica Jackson, '02, has been at Sno-Isle Libraries since 2011 as a children's librarian at the Lake Stevens Library, an assistant library manager at the Mukilteo Library, and presently the library manager at the Arlington Library.

Adam Lathrop, '16, is working from home

in Edmonds as an advisor on the HR Data Analytics and Reporting team at Peraton.

Thalia Lightstone, '25, received a fellowship to be a librarian-in-residence, an early-career development program at the Library of Congress.

Joe Lollo, '24, received his teaching endorsement in July 2025 and started working for the Bellevue School District a substitute teacher while looking for full-time work.

Pearl McCrea, '20, is the collection management librarian at the University of Washington Gallagher Law Library.

Natalie MacLagan, '25, is working as a youth services librarian for Kitsap Regional Library's Little Boston Branch, which is on Port Gamble S'klallam land.

Michael Maben, '88, recently retired after a 35-year career with the Indiana University Jerome Hall Law Library.

Thurston Miller, '89, is in his 33rd year as the physical sciences and mathematical sciences librarian at the University of Notre Dame. He's also in his 21st year of teaching undergraduate chemistry & biochemistry majors how to find chemical information.

Jon Norris, '95, recently became co-owner of the oldest microbrewery in Washington, Big Time Brewery in the U District. He also works at Microsoft.

Blynnne Olivieri Parker, '09, was named dean of Ingram Library at the University of West Georgia after a national search. Blynnne has been employed at the university since 2012.

Carolyn Pearson, '90, moved to Kamloops, B.C., where her wife will be attending nursing school.

Benjamin Riesenberg, '18, left the UW Libraries in 2024 and started work as a digital collections metadata librarian in the University of Oregon Libraries Digital Library Services unit.

James Rosenzweig, '11, is a professor on the library faculty and an education & children's studies librarian at Eastern Washington University in Cheney. He also teaches as an adjunct in the social studies education program at EWU, and he works as the volunteer librarian at the Episcopal Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist in Spokane.

Conrado Saldivar, '21, was elected as an ALA councilor-at-large for the 2025-28 term. His personal statement focused on his advocacy work in Wyoming and how that experience could benefit ALA.

Erin Sharwell, '07, was appointed deputy assistant director of Access and Fulfillment Services at Princeton University Libraries in Princeton, New Jersey.

Hope Svenson, '24, works as the architecture and design project archivist at the Oregon Historical Society.

Melody Winkle, '93, recently translated "Improve Values: Using Improv Theater for Self-Organization and Collaboration" from German into English. The book explores how principles from improvisational theater can foster more responsive, collaborative and self-organizing work cultures.

Michelle Young (Wong), '08, was recognized as 2024 Librarian of the Year by the Friends of the Library of Hawai'i.

MSIM

Shan Ming Gao, '24, works as the doctoral programs coordinator at the San Diego State University School of Public Health.



Malik Hussain, MSIM '10

I am currently based in Toronto, Canada, where I serve as the Head of AI Enablement at the Data & AI Academy at BASF, leading a global reskilling initiative for more than 100,000 employees. My role focuses on defining the organization's AI learning strategy, designing impactful learning experiences, and delivering programs that build the skills required to harness AI for innovation and productivity across business units.

What I appreciate most is being at the intersection of technology, learning and organizational transformation. It is deeply rewarding to work hands-on with emerging technologies, explore their potential, and translate that understanding into practical and scalable learning solutions.

I find great fulfillment in helping others discover how AI can amplify human potential rather than replace it. Seeing individuals realize how they can use AI to reimagine how they work, create and lead is profoundly inspiring. The combination of innovation, empowerment and human growth is what continues to motivate me every day.



Stefania Druga, Ph.D. '23

I'm currently focused on the intersection of AI, science and creativity. As an independent researcher, my main project is building LabMind: an AI Pair-Scientist, a platform that enables scientists and AI to collaborate on physical experiments in real-time. The goal is to create a true partnership in the lab to accelerate discovery. I am also a visiting researcher at Sakana.ai in Tokyo, where I'm exploring how evolutionary models and collective intelligence can generate new kinds of foundation models, pushing the boundaries of what AI can create and discover. This work complements my independent research, allowing me to bring the latest advancements in AI directly into scientific and educational tools.

It's incredibly rewarding to build tools that don't just automate tasks, but actually augment a scientist's intuition and creativity. I love bridging the gap between abstract AI reasoning and the messy, dynamic reality of a physical lab. Seeing a hypothesis being tested and refined in real-time by a human-AI team is a very tangible and deeply collaborative form of innovation.

Ketki Godse, '24, is working as a technology risk consultant at EY.

Chan Im, '18, works at Salesforce in the Global Compliance and Certification team within the Product Security organization. He focuses on driving the international expansion of Salesforce's core products.

Aditya Kaul, '16, is a senior data scientist at Google.

Manasi Kulkarni, '19, moved from Amazon to Scopely, a gaming company, where she works as a staff data scientist.

Joel Larson, '08, earned a Ph.D. in Information Technology (Information Assurance & Cybersecurity) from Capella University. Joel

serves as Director of IT Support, Networking & Disaster Recovery at Kalamazoo Valley Community College, Michigan.

Wenjing Li, '24, is working for Dailymail.

Ananya Nandi, '25, started working at TikTok as a prompt engineer program manager.

Karl Nelson, '03, recently joined EdReports as vice president, Product & Technology.

Alark Patel, '14, works as a senior manager in in Technical Program Management, Payments and Financial Services at eBay in the San Francisco Bay Area.

Riyana Patel, '24, started as a marketing manager at a pre-seed startup called PullFlow.

Prithvi Shetty, '19, is working as a lead data scientist at SAP, at the crux of user experience and data science.

Gosuddin Kamaruddin Siddiqi, '18, is working at Microsoft, focused on the NLP, ML and AI fields.

Anuj Sinha, '25, started as a machine learning engineer at Cuezen.

Shobhit Verma, '24, started as a software engineer at Apple.

PH.D.

Bryce Newell, '15, was awarded a Fulbright U.S. Scholar Award to Denmark and will be hosted at the University of Copenhagen for five months in 2026. He was named the David and Nancy Petrone Faculty Fellow in the University of Oregon's School of Journalism and Communication.

Achievements



Associate Professor **Alexis Hiniker** was honored with the prestigious Societal Impact Award at this year's ACM SIGCHI conference. The Association for Computing Machinery's Special Interest Group on Computer-Human Interaction is the largest group of professionals in the field. Hiniker has been a leader in designing technology centered around youth and families. Her research in HCI examines how consumer-facing technologies influence all audiences, but specifically children.

Jill McKinstry, MLIS '87, recipient of the Information School's Distinguished Alumni award in 2020, was honored at the 2025 UW Awards of Excellence. She received the Distinguished Retiree Excellence in Community Service award, given for the quality of her contributions in service to the community locally, regionally, nationally or internationally.

Professor **Jacob O. Wobbrock** and his co-authors Andrew D. Wilson and Young Li received the Lasting Impact Award from the ACM User Interface Software and Technology Conference for their 2007 paper "Gestures without libraries, toolkits or training: a \$1 recognizer for user interface prototypes." The award is presented to one paper older than 10 years that had a major impact on the field of user interface software and technology.

Professor **Chirag Shah** was among the 2025 cohort elected to the SIGIR Academy, which recognizes leaders who have significantly shaped the field of information retrieval. SIGIR is the Association for Computing Machinery's Special Interest Group on Information Retrieval. Shah also received the 2024 ASIS&T Research in Information Science Award, which recognizes a scholar or team each year for their contributions to the field.



Professor Emeritus **Batya Friedman** was one of three recipients of the Future of Life Award for her pioneering work on Value Sensitive Design. The award honors individuals whose contributions have significantly improved humanity's trajectory.

MSIM '24 graduate **Adrian Lavergne** was selected as a Presidential Management Fellow. Until recently, the PMF was a prestigious leadership development program for advanced degree holders, offering a pathway into careers in the federal government. A February 2025 executive order from President Trump ended the program, but Lavergne had already decided instead to take his talents to Adora, an AI startup based in Seattle.

Second-year MLIS student **Sarina Haryanto** is among the 60 recipients of 2025-26 Spectrum Scholarships, the American Library Association has announced. Haryanto, who was a residential MLIS student in her first year, is now an online student living in Rockville, Maryland.



The UW Center for an Informed Public honored iSchool doctoral candidate **Sarah Nguyễn** with the 2025 CIP Robert Mason Outstanding Mentorship Award for their efforts to foster students and junior researchers within the CIP's community. Nguyễn, who previously received a Master in Information and Library Science at the iSchool, has been a CIP graduate research assistant for the past five years.

Assistant Professor **Mike Teodorescu** was recognized as one of the Top 100 Romanians of 2024 in the Science Category by Newsweek Romania/Repatriot.

Professor **Jin Ha Lee** has been selected as a 2024-2026 Ewha Global Fellow. This fellowship is awarded to distinguished scholars who actively collaborate with Ewha faculty in research and education. Ewha Womans University, one of the world's largest women's educational institutions, is in South Korea.

Associate Teaching Professor **Heather Whiteman** was identified as a Top 20 Overall People Analytics Influencer in the 2025 Global People Analytics Network Census.

Professor **Wanda Pratt** was nominated for the Marsha L. Landolt Distinguished Mentor Award. She was one of only 17 faculty mentors from across the UW who were recognized as nominees by the Graduate School.





DOUG PARRY PHOTO

"Housing is where the personal and political meet in an intimate way."

Pelle Tracey, who joined the iSchool as an assistant professor this fall

In pursuit of housing justice

Pelle Tracey's research, into the effectiveness of tools that are used to allocate housing, comes at a crucial moment

BY MARY LYNN LYKE

Pelle Tracey is passionate about housing justice.

"Housing is where the personal and political meet in an intimate way," says the new Information School assistant professor, whose research examines how data-driven record-keeping tools used to allocate rare housing resources often miss the messy realities of homelessness.

The tools' algorithmic prioritization processes quantify each unhoused individual's level of vulnerability. Scores can determine who gets shelter and who gets left out in the cold.

"These tools struggle to capture the nuanc-

es of homelessness, leaving highly vulnerable people without assistance," says Tracey.

The tools, key to America's allocation system for homeless services, aim to improve efficiency but are not particularly effective or evidence-based, says the researcher. "Yet they have a huge impact on people's life chances."

Tracey's research comes at a critical time, when demand for homelessness aid far outstrips supply. Surveys show unhoused populations increased a record 18 percent in 2024, with many people experiencing homelessness for the first time. More and more are over the age of 55 and many are children; a government point-in-time survey reported an

almost 33 percent increase in homelessness among children from 2023 to 2024.

The homeless services system is an "infrastructure of last resort" for these individuals, the researcher says. "You have nowhere else to turn and you need a bed to sleep in."

After undergraduate studies at Earlham College in Indiana, Tracey switched gears and became a social services worker, doing everything from case management to housing services administration. "I was keen to try and have a more material impact in this world after spending four years in undergraduate school reading about it."

He spent several years on the front lines before returning to academic life as a graduate student at the University of Michigan's School of Information, where he earned his Ph.D. in May. As part of his dissertation, he volunteered at an outreach center, asking questions of workers and homeless clients while also preparing meals.

At the iSchool, Tracey plans to continue his research into more just, effective and person-centered systems to assess people's needs for services. "I was over the moon to get a job here," he says. @

Comings and goings

Young moves to professor role



Jason C. Young is taking on a new role on the iSchool faculty this fall, shifting from a principal research scientist to an assistant professor. Young's research explores the intersection between technology, knowledge systems and power, and utilizes community-based, participatory approaches. In this new role, Young will continue as the director of the Technology & Social Change Group (TASCHA) and a research fellow with the UW Center for an Informed Public.

Young joined TASCHA in 2017 after completing his Ph.D. in the Department of Geography at the University of Washington. He's also an affiliate assistant professor at the Jackson School of International Studies. Young has said that his research sits at the intersection of technology, society and the environment: "The through-line for my work is using technology to work with Indigenous communities to highlight their knowledge and to empower that knowledge to have greater impact for them."

New faces on the faculty:



ITZA CARBAJAL: Carbajal has joined the faculty as an acting instructor while she completes her Ph.D. at the iSchool. Carbajal, who anticipates earning her

doctorate in spring, focuses her research on children and their records. Through a social-historical lens, Carbajal stresses the role of historic and contemporary records in shaping personal and collective memories through K-16 learning with a special focus on disaster education. She holds a Master of Science in Information Studies with a focus on archival management and digital records from the University of Texas at Austin and a dual-degree Bachelor of Arts in History and English from the University of Texas at San Antonio.



BELÉN SALDÍAS: Like Carbajal, Saldías is committed to fostering empowerment, especially for young people and marginalized populations. Saldías has joined the

school as an assistant teaching professor, strengthening the Information School's expertise in human-centered design and AI. In her Ph.D., she explored how language models can support decentralized governance and increase user agency online. As an educator, Saldías teaches courses addressing pressing social issues such as generative AI ethics and data justice, alongside technical topics including databases and information

visualization. Saldías earned her Ph.D. at the MIT Media Lab and the Center for Constructive Communication. Previously, she held positions at Harvard University, Google Research, Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile, and several AI-focused companies and startups.

Departures:



LORCAN DEMPSEY: Dempsey completed his term as a Distinguished Practitioner in Residence, a program funded by a 10-year \$1.4 million grant from the

Gates Foundation that invites information professionals into classrooms to meld theory with boots-on-the-ground practice. Dempsey developed a course that focuses on collaboration and partnerships, a topic central to evolving library operations but often overlooked in library education. Dempsey was struck by his MLIS students' commitment to do meaningful work, to make a difference and to improve their communities. "I was also taken with their openness to learning and engaging. I admired their candor and frankness, their willingness to espouse particular values and willingness to disagree, to be open to other views. It was quite refreshing," he said.



RICARDO GOMEZ: Retiring after 18 years at the Information School, Gomez has left a lasting impact both in the classroom and in the communities he works with

around the world. Gomez joined the iSchool in 2008, and taught several courses across the Informatics, Master of Library and Information Science, Master of Science in Information Management and Ph.D programs. One of his most notable courses was LIS 570: Research Methods, which he taught every year while at the iSchool. Gomez built a research program centered on public access to information — including computing and access to libraries, community telecenters and cyber cafes. "I came to academia from working with communities, and my academic work was always focused on trying to help improve the work of communities and the organizations I was working with," he said.



LAURA SCHILDKRAUT: An assistant teaching professor, Schildkraut made her mark at the iSchool as an educator and director of the iMentorship program.

Schildkraut developed and taught INFO 386: Professionalism in Informatics, which aims to prepare students to excel in the workplace so they can begin their internships and careers with confidence in how to perform and interact in a professional setting. Course content includes teaching the ability to present projects and business cases, teamwork and leadership, personal branding, and effective written and oral communication. She also designed and taught INFO 290: Orientation to Informatics, which prepares newly admitted Informatics students to be successful in the major. "I so value the ability to continually adapt the curriculum. A friend can share an insight about something that happened in their workplace, and I can fold that into classroom content, creating stories that are relevant, memorable and resonate with the students," she said. "I love having the freedom to do that."



HANS JOCHEN SCHOLL: Now a professor emeritus, Scholl retired in June after 22 years on the iSchool faculty. A renowned researcher, Scholl's work

has shaped the Sociotechnical Information Systems field, most notably in the realms of digital government and disaster information management. He has been recognized multiple times for his impact, including being named one of the 100 most influential people in Digital Government by Apolitical in 2018 and earning the Digital Government Society's inaugural fellowship in 2021.



“Instead of thinking about technology as a neutral tool, we need to think about it through a critical look at the kinds of relationships that it mediates in specific situations.”

— Nassim Parvin, iSchool professor and author of ‘Technocreep’



Bookshelf

Nassim Parvin takes on ‘creepy’ technology



Smart homes, health-tracking apps, voice assistants like Alexa, even pet robots can trigger an unsettling feeling that’s often referred to as creepiness. This sense of “creepiness” inspired Professor Nassim Parvin to co-author “Technocreep and the Politics of Things Not Seen,” a book that examines the emotional and political dimensions of our relationship with everyday technology.

In the book, Parvin, a professor at the University of Washington Information School, introduces a feminist theory of “creep.” She wrote it in collaboration with Neda Atanasoski, professor and chair of the Harriet Tubman Department of Women, Gender and Sexuality Studies at the University of Maryland, with contributions from authors and artists of multiple disciplines.

While it has no singular definition, Parvin and Atanasoski define creep across multiple dimensions such as intuition (a sense that something is there) or slow movement. These technologies are often in places where we expect privacy, which is part of why they can feel disturbing, but Parvin argues that there is more than privacy at stake. She invites readers to take the feeling that something is creepy as a starting point in creating better relationships with technology.

Parvin draws on feminist theory in “Technocreep’s” analysis to highlight how our understanding and design of technology is shaped by social contexts, histories and power dynamics. The book argues that labeling something “creepy” isn’t just about fear or discomfort, but also reflects complex dynamics of power, control, trust and intimacy.

“Instead of thinking about technology as a neutral tool, we need to think about it through a critical look at the kinds of relationships that it mediates in specific situations,” she said. “So the book moves away from the binary of good and bad technology and instead foregrounds the complex, and at times fraught, relationships that these technologies mediate.”

Ryan Calo: ‘We need to take a page from the Amish’



Ryan Calo holds a joint appointment as a professor in the Information School and as the Lane Powell and D. Wayne Gittinger Professor at the UW School of Law. Calo is a prominent voice in tech policy both on campus and globally, with his work appearing in leading law reviews. He is also co-founder of the UW Tech Policy Lab and the Center for an Informed Public.

In “Law and Technology: A Methodological Approach,” Calo outlines the legal challenges of technology and provides a step-by-step method for generating wiser tech policy. He argues for a more critical approach to the law during this time of rapid technological advancement.

“In the United States, we tend to accept technological change as inevitable and consequently view our role as legal scholars or policymakers as ensuring the law accommodates new technology,” he said. “However, we need to take a page from the Amish and ask, ‘Is this technology, in its present form, consistent with our community values?’

“It’s important to ask questions like ‘Does this technology promote human flourishing?’ and ‘If not, what parameters and regulations do we need to respond with?’”



Beverly Cleary (center) with then-Dean Harry Bruce (right) and the first Cleary professor, Eliza Dresang.

Beverly Cleary’s legacy lives on

iSchool’s endowed professorship supports high-impact research

BY SAMANTHA HERNDON

To honor the legacy of Beverly Cleary, who brought the relatably imperfect characters of Ramona Quimby, Henry Huggins and Ralph S. Mouse to life for generations, the University of Washington Information School created a special professorship in her name.

Since 2009, the Beverly Cleary Endowed Professorship in Children and Youth Services, supported by the Cleary family, generous alumni and other donors, has honored the writer who is perhaps our best-known alum. Cleary completed her bachelor’s degree in 1939 at what was then the School of Librarianship, a precursor to the iSchool.

While working as a librarian, Cleary connected with young readers who sought books about kids like them. She was inspired to write books that dealt with subjects such as sibling rivalries, families’ financial challenges, anger, jealousy, and quarrels with school friends.

“She was so needed for children,” said Priscilla L. Strand, M.Lib. ’71, who served on the committee that created the Cleary Professorship. “She wanted to read books about children like herself.”

Endowed professorships enable the university to recruit and retain faculty members who have achieved high-impact scholarship. Eliza Dresang, a longtime professor of library science who studied the impacts of the digital world on children’s litera-

ture, was the first Cleary professor and served in the role from 2009 to 2014.

Michelle H. Martin, a renowned author, lecturer, book critic, and champion of diversity in children’s literature, has been the Cleary professor since 2016.

“When I came out and saw the opportunities and the faculty, and the diversity of the disciplines of the faculty,” Martin said, “I thought this could be a fantastic opportunity, and it has been.”

The Cleary Professorship, currently the only endowed professorship at the iSchool, has deepened the kinds of research, writing, and community partnerships that Martin has pursued. In addition to teaching, Martin also spearheads the Spencer G. Shaw Lecture, mentors students, leads study abroad programs, and consults in publishing. She just completed a co-edited anthology on the works of Mildred D. Taylor.

Martin and Cleary met early in Martin’s time at the UW, and shared a love of inspiring children to become readers. “Her attention to, not the way kids should be, but the way kids really are, is something that has been important for me,” Martin said.

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