

# Alina Striner

I am a UX researcher and designer with expertise in immersive entertainment, collaboration, and learning experiences. Despite our differences, I believe that we are all connected, and that technology can help us become more conscious, authentic, and kind.

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## Education

- 2014–2019** PhD, Information Studies  
*Advisor: Jennifer Preece*  
College of Information Studies, University of Maryland, College Park, MD
- 2012–2014** Master of Sciences, Human-Computer Interaction  
*Thesis advisor: Ben Bederson*  
College of Information Studies, University of Maryland, College Park, MD
- 2011** Graduate Studies, Industrial Design, Semester Abroad  
Università Commerciale Luigi Bocconi, Milan, Italy
- 2009–2011** Post-Baccalaureate, Marketing and Consumer Behavior  
*Research advisor: Anastasiya Pocheptsova*  
R. H. Smith School of Business, University of Maryland, College Park, MD
- 2005–2009** Bachelor of Arts, Music Performance  
Goucher College, Towson, MD

## Methods and Tools

- Research**
- Mixed methods: in-depth interviews, focus groups, surveys/questionnaires, contextual inquiry, heuristic evaluation, context mapping, A/B testing, and usability studies
  - Analysis: thematic analysis, content analysis, linear regression, MRA, factor analysis
  - Research Tools: R, SPSS, Qualtrics, Gephi, LaTeX
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- Design**
- Methods: bodystorming, cooperative inquiry, affinity maps, user personas, scenarios/use cases, storyboarding, paper prototypes, design sketches, wireframes
  - Prototyping Tools: Adobe Creative Suite, Figma, Miro, Balsamiq, Axure, JustinMind
  - Programming experience in Java, Python, MaxMSP, Javascript/HTML/CSS, Arduino
  - Game design using Unity/Oculus Rift/Blender
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- Other**
- Native Speaker of English and Russian. Competent in French and Italian, and learning Dutch. Proficient in the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) and German Diction
  - Proficient using Sibelius and Finale composition software. Some experience with SuperCollider/ Avid Pro Tools

## Awards & Honors

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| ICIDS Conference Best Long Paper Award (2019) - \$500  | Dean's Award for Outstanding iSchool Project (2016)                         |
| ERCIM Alain Bensoussan Postdoctoral Fellowship (2019)  | Goldhaber Travel Grant (2015, 2018) - \$600                                 |
| Ann G. Wylie Dissertation Fellowship (2018) - \$15,000 | International Conference Student Support Award (ICSSA) (2015, 2018) - \$500 |
| Research Improvement Grant (2018) - \$600              | Maryland Summer Scholars Grant (2011) - \$3,000                             |
| Dean's Fellowship Award (2017) - \$5,000               | Rosenberg Merit Scholarship for Music (2007) - \$2,500                      |
| University of Maryland Outstanding GA (2017)           | Polinger Scholarship for Performing Arts (2005) - \$3,000                   |
| Graduate Summer Research Fellowship (2016) - \$5,000   |   |

# Work Experience

**Postdoctoral Research and ERCIM Fellow [2019-2022]**, Distributed & Interactive Systems Group, Centrum Wiskunde & Informatica (CWI), Amsterdam, NL

- Conceptualized and designed the **Co-creation Space** tool for artistic co-creation as part of the TRACTION project through a multi-step user-centered design process, that included requirement gathering through focus groups, codesign sessions, personas, storyboards, and wireframes.
- Tested tool through usability studies and 2 open pilots, and authored related papers at CSCW and IMX. Created promotional video for tool, and wrote blog posts describing design process and promoting work.
- Helped conceptualize and design **Social VR lobby** and **Co-creation Stage** tools. Co-authored related research.
- Managed technology evaluation component for the TRACTION project, and authored several technical reports.
- Developed **Spectrum of Audience Participation for Entertainment Domains** through expert interviews, codesign sessions and an extensive literature review of theater, theme park, and game domains. Best paper award at ICIDS.
- Wrote grant proposals and mentored students in the DIS group.

**Doctoral Research in Information Studies [2014-2019]**, Human Computer Interaction Lab, College of Information Studies, University of Maryland, College Park, MD

- Designed **StreamBED VR**, a tool to train citizen scientists to make qualitative assessment of stream habitats in multisensory VR. Designed tool through a research-through design process, including expert interviews, focus groups, co-design sessions, and usability studies. Created 3D assets in Unity/Blender, and designed branding.
- Assembled and led a group of 6 student developers to build StreamBED VR in Unity, and to prototype the **Ambient Holodeck** multisensory system VR experience with ambient sensory stimuli (heat, humidity, wind, smell). Mentored students in HCI, and co-advised related master's thesis and undergrad project.
- Authored dissertation, conference papers, and several presentations on StreamBED. Wrote grant with climate scientist at NASA's Goddard Space Center to help laypeople experience the gradual nature of climate change in VR.
- Authored **audience participation research** on interactive participation in music performances. Conducted research through co-design sessions with KidsTeam through the cooperative inquiry method.
- Authored "Using Web Analytics" section in Rogers, Preece & Sharp Interaction Design Textbook.

**Visiting Scholar [2017-2019]**, OH Game Lab, Carnegie Mellon University, Pittsburgh, PA

- Conceptualized and created a **design space theme map for audience participation in game live streaming** on Twitch, a reflective tool to support future research and education in the domain. Developed the map through a thematic analysis of design process documents of a course on audience participation for Twitch. Supported related game design course, and gave students design feedback. Authored and presented CHI paper on design space.
- Mentored masters' students on semester project ("Lights Out") at the Entertainment Technology Center (ETC). Developed **design improvisation technique** for students to develop a narrative for their project design, to appraise and critique story fit for design goals, and shape design iterations to fit their narrative. Authored short paper about experience, and pitched mini course proposal to ETC.
- Planned and ran workshops at CMU and UC Irvine to study how audience interactivity can help designers create interactive audience VR prototypes for Broadway theater and game design.

**Research Associate [2016-2017]**, Disney Research, Pittsburgh, PA

- Proposed and built a **haptic sports experience** for audiences to feel an athlete's heart beat while watching sports using a tactor actuator and MaxMSP. Designed a haptics experience study and developed related questionnaire. Conducted and analyzed study using MRA. Presented research at Disney Research Pittsburgh.
- Co-authored and presented proposal for interactive multi-level storytelling experiences.
- Tutored interns to create visual advertisements using Photoshop. Designed study materials in Adobe Suite.

**Faculty Research Assistant [2012-2013]**, Language Technology User Experience, Center for Advanced Study of Language, University of Maryland, College Park, MD

- Evaluated usability of **translation memory software** for US government (FBI, NSA) through contextual inquiry, heuristic evaluation, usability studies, and analyses of language performance metrics. Coauthored a Human Factors paper and technical reports on user experience, and made recommendations about software purchases.
- Designed game-based **working memory/speech perception training iPad app**.
- Translated language coursework between Russian and English.

# Personal Interests

I enjoy observing patterns that occur across nature and art. I sing, do yoga, and restore vintage fashion in my spare time.