

Nitin Sawhney
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Artistic and research interests

Prof. Nitin Sawhney leads the *CRAI-CIS* (CRITICAL AI and Crisis Interrogatives) research group in the Department of Computer Science at Aalto University. Working at the intersection of Human Computer Interaction (HCI), responsible AI, and participatory design research, he examines the critical role of technology, civic agency, and social justice in society and crisis contexts. Prof. Sawhney has previously conducted research in speech/audio interaction, wearable computing, distributed open source collaboration, civic/participatory media at the MIT Media Lab and The New School.

At Aalto University, he is the principal investigator for a 3-year Research Council of Finland project on *Reconstructing Crisis Narratives for Trustworthy Communication and Cooperative Agency*, jointly conducted with the Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare (THL). It aims to analyze crisis narratives using mixed-methods, combining qualitative research with computational data analytics of crisis discourses in news, health communications, and social media. In December 2021, he received an award from the Kone Foundation for a 4-year research project *Civic Agency in AI? Democratizing Algorithmic Services in the City (CAAI)*, which was subsequently awarded an additional 4-years of funding from the Research Council of Finland in June 2023. In September 2022, he was awarded a Strategic Research Council grant for the project *Designing Inclusive & Trustworthy Digital Public Services for Migrants in Finland (Trust-M)*.

Prof. Sawhney is a member of the research program on AI and Society at the Finnish Center for Artificial Intelligence (FCAI). At Aalto University he helped establish the research areas on *Digital Ethics, Society and Policy* (Digital ESP) and *Human-Computer Interaction and Design* (HCID). His work has been published in journals including *IEEE Multimedia*, *ACM Transactions on Computer-Human Interaction*, *Personal and Ubiquitous Computing*, *Planning Practice & Research*, *AI & Society: Knowledge, Culture and Communication*, and *Digital Creativity*. He is an associate editor for the *International Journal of Child Computer Interaction*.

He has previously been involved in several tech startups in clinical data platforms and real-time news and social media analysis in Cambridge and New York, and co-directed two feature-length documentary films in Gaza and Guatemala.

CRAI-CIS Research Group: <https://crai-cis.aalto.fi/>

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Projects

CAAI: Citizen Agency in AI: Democratizing Algorithmic Services in the City

Sawhney, N., Drobotowicz, K. & Kajava, K.

01/01/2022 → 31/12/2025

CAAI-AoF: Civic Agency in AI? Democratizing Algorithmic Services in the Public Sector

Sawhney, N., Drobotowicz, K., Rannisto, A., Kajava, K., Gonzalez Torres, A. P., Lee, S. & Varanasi, U.

01/09/2023 → 31/08/2027

Co-Creative Artificial Intelligence of Music

Tahiroglu, K., Sawhney, N., Baffy, B. & Murhu, M.

01/01/2022 → ...

STN / Trust-M / Sawhney: Designing Inclusive & Trustworthy Digital Public Services for Migrants in Finland

Sawhney, N., Eskelinen, V., Serpytyte, R., Vitiugin, F. & Chizhikova, A.

01/10/2022 → 30/09/2025

Liquid Forms of AI-infused Disinformation: Improving Information Resilience in the Finnish News Ecosystem

Tikka, M., Sawhney, N. & Paakki, H.

01/07/2023 → 30/04/2025

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Naukkarinen, O. & Sawhney, N.

01/01/2021 → 31/12/2026

-: Reconstructing Crisis Narratives for Trustworthy Communication and Cooperative Agency

Sawhney, N., Leinonen, T., Paakki, H., Nelimarkka, M., Villaman, N., Hyökki, S., Viitanen, J., Aledavood, T., Kajava, K., Tikka, M., Kajava, K., Tikka, M., Truong, L., Varanasi, U., Paakki, H., Nariman Zadeh, H. & Aho, I.
21/08/2020 → 30/11/2023

-: THL Sawhney 2023

Sawhney, N.
01/01/2023 → 01/05/2024

Research outputs

Long-term assessment of social amplification of risk during COVID-19 : challenges to public health agencies amid misinformation and vaccine stance

Unlu, A., Truong, S., Sawhney, N., Sivelä, J. & Tammi, T., Apr 2024, In: Journal of Computational Social Science. 7, 1, p. 809-836 28 p.

Tracing the dynamics of misinformation and vaccine stance in Finland amid COVID-19

Unlu, A., Truong, S., Sawhney, N., Tammi, T. & Sivelä, J., 27 Mar 2024, (E-pub ahead of print) In: INFORMATION COMMUNICATION AND SOCIETY. 25 p.

Setting the misinformation agenda : Modeling COVID-19 narratives in Twitter communities

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Invisible Lives, Visible Determination: Creative Agency as Resilience among Palestinian Children under Siege in Gaza

Sawhney, N., 2024, (Accepted/In press) *Lived Resistance against the War on Palestinian Children*. Morrison, H. (ed.). University of Georgia Press, 20 p. (Children, Youth, and War Series).

Language of Algorithms: Agency, Metaphors, and Deliberations in AI Discourses

Kajava, K. & Sawhney, N., Nov 2023, *Handbook of Critical Studies of Artificial Intelligence*. Lindgren, S. (ed.). Edward Elgar, 15 p.

Participatory Design for Whom? Designing Conversational User Interfaces for Sensitive Settings and Vulnerable Populations

Houben, M., Van As, N., Sawhney, N., Unbehaun, D. & Lee, M., 19 Jul 2023, p. 1-4. 4 p.

Collaborative Sensemaking in Crisis : Designing Practices and Platforms for Resilience

Varanasi, U. S., Leinonen, T., Sawhney, N., Tikka, M. & Ahsanullah, R., 10 Jul 2023, *DIS '23 : Proceedings of the 2023 ACM Designing Interactive Systems Conference*. ACM, p. 2537-2550

A User-Centered Lens into Digital Excess : Exploring the Superfluity and Environmental Burden of the Digital World

Olsson, T., Pyyhtinen, O., Rantasila, A., Laaksonen, S-M., Vigren, M., Ylipulli, J. & Sawhney, N., 14 Jun 2023, *LIMITS'23, June 2023, Everywhere All at Once*. ACM, p. 1-4 4 p. 91

Practitioners' Perspectives on Inclusion and Civic Empowerment in Finnish Public Sector AI

Drobotowicz, K., Truong, N. L., Ylipulli, J., Gonzalez Torres, A. P. & Sawhney, N., 29 May 2023, *Proceedings of the 11th International Conference on Communities and Technologies - Humanization of Digital Technologies 2023, C&T 2023*. ACM, p. 108-118 11 p.

Re-evaluating Evaluation : Looking for Value-based Metrics in Public Service Design

Varanasi, U., Serpytyte, R. & Sawhney, N., 29 May 2023. 3 p.

Contextual Inquiry of Affordances for Collaboration in Crisis : Lessons from the Finnish Context

Tikka, M., Ahsanullah, R., Varanasi, U., Härmä, V., Sawhney, N. & Leinonen, T., 2023, *Proceedings of the 20th International ISCRAM Conference*. University of Nebraska Omaha, p. 33-42 10 p. (ISCRAM Conference proceedings).

Emerging AI Discourses and Policies in the EU: Implications for Evolving AI Governance

Gonzalez Torres, A. P., Kajava, K. & Sawhney, N., 2023, (Unpublished).

Emerging AI Discourses and Policies in the EU: Implications for Evolving AI Governance

Gonzalez Torres, A. P., Kajava, K. & Sawhney, N., 2023, *Artificial Intelligence Research - 4th Southern African Conference, SACAIR 2023, Proceedings: CCIS*. Pillay, A., Jembere, E. & J. Gerber, A. (eds.). Springer, p. 3-17 (Communications in Computer and Information Science; vol. 1976).

Role of AI Regulatory Sandboxes and MLOps for Finnish Public Sector Services

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Devising Regulatory Sandboxes and Responsible Practices for Designing AI-based Services in the Finnish Public Sector

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Age Against the Machine: A Call for Designing Ethical AI for and with Children

Sharma, S., Kinnula, M., Iivari, N., Ventä-Olkkonen, L., Hartikainen, H., Durall, E., Molin-Juustila, T., Okkonen, J., Kotilainen, S., Sawhney, N., Eden, G. & Monga, C., 8 Oct 2022. 6 p.

Studying the potentials and pitfalls of ICT tools designed for crisis communication & management

Tikka, M., Ahsanullah, R., Sawhney, N., Leinonen, T. & Varanasi, U., Oct 2022.

An Approach to Computational Crisis Narrative Analysis: A Case-study of Social Media Narratives Around the COVID-19 Crisis in India

Paakki, H., Sawhney, N. & Ghorbanpour, F., 14 Sept 2022, p. 263-266.

Contestations in urban mobility: rights, risks & responsibilities for Urban AI

Sawhney, N., 4 Jul 2022, In: *AI and Society*. 16 p.

Language of Algorithms: Agency, Metaphors and Deliberations in AI Discourses

Kajava, K. & Sawhney, N., 2022, (Unpublished).

Re-thinking Pedagogy and Dis-embodied Interaction for Online Learning and Co-Design

Ylirisku, S., Jang, G. & Sawhney, N., 15 Aug 2021, *Proceedings of Nordes 2021: Matters of Scale*. Design School Kolding, Vol. 9. 10 p. (Nordic Design Research Conference).

Augmented reality sandboxes: children's play and storytelling with mirror worlds

Leinonen, T., Brinck, J., Vartiainen, H. & Sawhney, N., 8 Jan 2021, In: *Digital Creativity*. 32, 1, p. 38-55 18 p.

Te Awa Tupua: Sacred Rivers and Cooperative Urban AI Ecosystems

Sawhney, N., 6 Jul 2020, (Unpublished) *Conference on Designing Interactive Systems (DIS 2020): Workshop on Urban AI: Formulating an Agenda for the Interdisciplinary Research of Artificial Intelligence in Cities*. Eindhoven, Netherlands: ACM, 9 p.

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Sawhney, N. & Tran, A. T., 15 Jun 2020, *16th Participatory Design Conference (PDC 2020)*. Del Gaudio, C., Parra-Agudelo, L., Clarke, R., Saad-Sulonen, J., Botero, A., Botero, A., Londono, F. C., Londono, F. C. & Escandon Suarez, P. A. (eds.). ACM, p. 172-181 10 p.

Cooperative Crisis Response among Emergency Responders & AI Systems

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Zona Intervenida: Performance as Memory, Transforming Contested Spaces

Sawhney, N., 2019, *Rethinking Peace: Discourse, Memory, Translation, and Dialogue*. Rowman & Littlefield

Audio Journaling for Self-Reflection and Assessment among Teens in Participatory Media Programs

Sawhney, N., Graver, C. & Breitkopf, E., 2018, *IDC '18: Proceedings of the 17th ACM Conference on Interaction Design and Children*. ACM, p. 93–105

Civic Engagement through DIY Urbanism and Collective Networked Action

Sawhney, N., de Klerk, C. & Malhotra, S., 2015, In: *Planning Practice and Research*. 30, 3, p. 337-354

Guatemala Después: Rethinking the Past, Reimagining the Future

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Mobilizing Collective Urban Actions through MicroActs

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Making Sense of Participatory Video: Approaches for Participatory Content Analysis

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New Directions in Participatory Video: Emerging Digital Technologies and Practices

Dougherty, A. & Sawhney, N., 2012, *The Handbook of Participatory Video*. AltaMira Press

Jerusalem and Belfast: Envisioning Media Arts for Cultural Identity and Urban Renewal in Divided Cities

Sawhney, N., Yacoub, R. & Norman, J., 2009, In: *Jerusalem Quarterly*. 39

Voices Beyond Walls: The Role of Digital Storytelling for Empowering Marginalized Youth in Refugee Camps

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ThinkCycle: Supporting Open Source Collaboration and Sustainable Engineering Design in Education

Sawhney, N., Presterio, T., Maguire, Y. & Griffith, S., 2008, *Engineering Education in Sustainable Development (EESD)*.

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ThinkCycle: Sharing Distributed Design Knowledge for Open Collaborative Design

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Aware Community Portals: Shared Information Appliances for Transitional Spaces

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Everywhere Messaging

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Authoring and Navigating Video in Space and Time

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Dynomite: A Dynamically Organized Ink and Audio Notebook

Wilcox, L. D., Schilit, B. N. & Sawhney, N., 1997, *Proceedings of the ACM SIGCHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems*. ACM, p. 186-193

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Nomadic Radio: A Spatialized Audio Environment for Wearable Computing

Sawhney, N. & Schmandt, C., 1997, *First International Symposium on Wearable Computers*. IEEE

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Abowd, G. D., Atkeson, C. G., Feinstein, A., Hmelo, C., Kooper, R., Long, S., Sawhney, N. & Tani, M., 1997, *Proceedings of the 4th ACM International Conference on Multimedia, MULTIMEDIA 1996*. ACM, p. 187-198 12 p.

Espace 2: an experimental hyperaudio environment

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HyperCafe and the "Hypervideo Engine": A Generalized Approach for Hypervideo Authoring and Navigation

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HyperCafe: Narrative and Aesthetic Properties of Hypervideo

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