

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 (FAI). 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/>

Personal Website: <http://www.NitinSawhney.org>

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.

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., Truong, N., Datta, P. & Vitiugin, F.

01/10/2022 → 30/09/2025

-: Profi6 Sawhney T31300

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. & Datta, P.

21/08/2020 → 30/11/2023

-: THL Sawhney 2023

Sawhney, N.

01/01/2023 → 01/05/2024

Research outputs

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.

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

Gonzalez Torres, A. P. & Sawhney, N., 2023, In: *The Review of Socionetwork Strategies*. 17, p. 297-318 22 p.

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

Sawhney, N. & Gonzalez Torres, A. P., 14 Dec 2022, *International Workshop on AI Compliance Mechanism (WAICOM 2022), 35th International Conference on Legal Knowledge and Information Systems (JURIX 2022)*, Saarland University, Saarbrücken, Germany.

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

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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.

Ecologies of Contestation in Participatory Design

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

Sawhney, N., 9 Sept 2019, *22nd ACM Conference on Computer-Supported Cooperative Work and Social Computing*. ACM

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

Acevedo, A. & Sawhney, N., 2015, *Asociacion Ciudad De La Imagination*.

Mobilizing Collective Urban Actions through MicroActs

Sawhney, N., de Klerk, C. & Malhotra, S., 2015, *Civic Media Project*. MIT Press

Ago for Mobile Media Narratives Created by Teens: Lessons from Co-Design, Prototyping and Evaluation

Sawhney, N., Dougherty, A. & Shim, L., 2013, *12th International Conference on Interaction Design and Children (IDC '13)*. ACM

Forward: International Conference on Interaction Design and Children (IDC 2013)

Hourcade, J. P., Sawhney, N. & Reardon, E., 2013, *International Conference on Interaction Design and Children*. Hourcade, J. P., Sawhney, N. & Reardon, E. (eds.). ACM

Digital Technologies, Visual Research and the Non-Fiction Image

Coover, R., Pat Badani, R. C., Caviezel, F., Marino, M., Sawhney, N. & Uricchio, W., 2012, *Advances in Visual Methodology*. SAGE Publications

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New Directions in Participatory Video: Emerging Digital Technologies and Practices

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

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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

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Cooperative Innovation in the Commons: Rethinking Distributed Collaboration and Intellectual Property for Sustainable Design Innovation

Sawhney, N., 2003, Massachusetts Institute of Technology. 130 p.

ThinkCycle: Sharing Distributed Design Knowledge for Open Collaborative Design

Sawhney, N., Griffith, S., Maguire, Y. & Presterio, T., 2002, In: *International Journal of Technologies for the Advancement of Knowledge and Learning*.

Aware Community Portals: Shared Information Appliances for Transitional Spaces

Sawhney, N., Wheeler, S. & Schmandt, C., 2001, In: *Personal and Ubiquitous Computing*. 5, 1, p. 66-70

Everywhere Messaging

Schmandt, C., Marmasse, N., Marti, S., Sawhney, N. & Wheeler, S., 2000, In: *IBM SYSTEMS JOURNAL*.

Nomadic Radio: Speech and Audio Interaction for Contextual Messaging in Nomadic Environments

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Nomadic Radio: Scaleable and Contextual Notification for Wearable Audio Messaging

Sawhney, N. & Schmandt, C., 1999, *CHI '99: Proceedings of the SIGCHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems*. ACM, p. 96-103

Auditory Context Awareness via Wearable Computing

Clarkson, B., Sawhney, N. & Pentland, A., 1998, In: *Energy*.

Speaking and Listening on the Run: Design for Wearable Audio Computing

Sawhney, N. & Schmandt, C., 1998, *Second International Symposium on Wearable Computers*. IEEE

Authoring and Navigating Video in Space and Time

Sawhney, N., Balcom, D. & Smith, I., 1997, In: *IEEE Multimedia*. 4, 4, p. 30-39

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

Merging the Benefits of Paper Notebooks with the Power of Computers in Dynomite

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Nomadic Radio: A Spatialized Audio Environment for Wearable Computing

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Teaching and Learning as Multimedia Authoring: The Classroom 2000 Project

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Espace 2: an experimental hyperaudio environment

Sawhney, N. & Murphy, A., 1996, p. 105-106. 2 p.

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

Sawhney, N. & Balcom, D., 1996, In: *SIGWEB Newsletter*.

HyperCafe: Narrative and Aesthetic Properties of Hypervideo

Sawhney, N., Balcom, D. & Smith, I., 1996, *Proceedings of the Seventh ACM Conference on Hypertext*. ACM SIGCHI