

# Pratheeksha (Isha) Nair

Contact: 96.pratheek@gmail.com



## SUMMARY

- PhD in Computer Science at [Mila](#) and McGill University
- Expertise in contributing to multidisciplinary teams and translating real-world challenges into technical problems

## TECHNICAL SKILLS

- **Machine Learning** – Weak supervision, graph neural networks (GNNs), large language models (LLMs), contrastive learning, generative models (e.g., VAEs)
- **Natural Language Processing** – Named entity recognition (NER), topic modeling, entity extraction, text classification, and sequence-to-sequence modeling, LLM few-shot prompt fine-tuning
- **Data Engineering** – Synthetic dataset generation, data augmentation, and self-supervised learning for structured and unstructured data
- **Tools and Frameworks** – PyTorch, TensorFlow, Hugging Face, scikit-learn, NumPy, Pandas

## SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

- Bijean Ghafouri, Shahrad Mohammadzadeh, James Zhou, **Pratheeksha Nair**, et al. [Epistemic Integrity In Large Language Models](#), *Safe Generative AI Workshop (Neurips 2024)*
- **Pratheeksha Nair**, Javin Liu, Catalina Vajiac, Andreas Olligschlaeger, Duen Horng Chau, Mirela Cazzolato, Cara Jones, Christos Faloutsos, Reihaneh Rabbany. [T-NET: Weakly Supervised Graph Learning for Combatting Human Trafficking](#), *Proceedings of the AAAI Conference on Artificial Intelligence (AAAI 2024)*
- Javin Liu, Hao Yu, Vidya Sujaya, **Pratheeksha Nair**, Kellin Pelrine, Reihaneh Rabbany. [SWEET-Weakly Supervised Person Name Extraction for Fighting Human Trafficking](#), *Findings of the Association for Computational Linguistics: (EMNLP 2023)*
- **Pratheeksha Nair**, Yifei Li, Catalina Vajiac, Andreas Olligschlaeger, Meng-Chieh Lee, Namyong Park, Duen Horng Chau, Christos Faloutsos, Reihaneh Rabbany. [VisPaD: Visualization and Pattern Discovery for Fighting Human Trafficking](#), *Companion Proceedings of the Web Conference (2022)*
- Yifei Li, **Pratheeksha Nair**, Kellin Pelrine, Reihaneh Rabbany. [Extracting Person Names from User Generated Text: Named-Entity Recognition for Combating Human Trafficking](#), *Findings of the Association for Computational Linguistics: (2022)*
- Wen, Zhi, **Pratheeksha Nair**, Chih-Ying Deng, Xing Han Lu, Edward Moseley, Naomi George, Charlotta Lindvall, and Yue Li. [Mining heterogeneous clinical notes by multi-modal latent topic model](#), *PloS one 16, no. 4 (2021)*
- Vajiac, Catalina, Andreas Olligschlaeger, Yifei Li, **Pratheeksha Nair**, Meng-Chieh Lee, Namyong Park, Reihaneh Rabbany, Duen Horng Chau, and Christos Faloutsos. [TRAFFICVIS: Fighting Human Trafficking through Visualization](#), *IEEE Vis (2021)*
- Yue Li, **Pratheeksha Nair**, Zhi Wen, Imane Chafi, et al, [Global Surveillance of COVID-19 by mining news media using a multi-source dynamic embedded topic model](#), *ACM Conference on Bioinformatics, Computational Biology and Health Informatics (ACM-BCB 2020)*
- Yue Li, **Pratheeksha Nair**, Xing Han Lu, Zhi Wen, Yuening Wang, et al, [Inferring multimodal latent topics from electronic health records](#), *Nature Communications volume 11, Article number: 2536 (2020)*
- **Pratheeksha Nair**, Anup Deshmukh, Shrisha Rao, [A Scalable Clustering Algorithm for Serendipity in Recommender Systems](#), *In the Workshop Proceedings of the 18th IEEE International Conference on Data Mining (ICDM 2018)*

## INTERNSHIP EXPERIENCE

- **NoriSpace** (June, 2024 - Sep, 2024) - *Mila Scientist-in-residence*
  - Implemented an automatic fraud detection system for low-quality insurance claim images in Korean
  - Developed a self-supervised method for identifying image splicing with 70% accuracy
- **IBM Research Lab Bangalore** (May, 2018 - Aug, 2018) - *Summer Internship*
  - Proposed automatic method name generation from method body for code summarization
  - Implemented a sequence-to-sequence model trained on small Java function body to generate function name with 45% BLEU score
- **Indian Institute of Space Science and Technology** (May, 2017 - Aug, 2017) - *Summer Internship*
  - Implemented pattern analysis algorithms like K-NN on a highly relevant astrophysics problems
  - Improved density estimation and detection of star clusters by 10%.

## RESEARCH PROJECTS

- **LLMs for Weak Supervision in Graphs - ongoing**
  - Exploring LLMs as sources of weak labels for node classification in text-attributed graphs
  - Studying how the graph structure may be incorporated into LLM prompts
- **Weakly Supervised Graph Learning for Combatting Human Trafficking - McGill University**
  - Designed a Graph Contrastive Learning method that uses weak labels to provide 7% improvement in detection of suspicious activity from online escort advertisements.
  - Introduced a novel synthetic dataset developed using ChatGPT, enabling further research in this domain where data scarcity is an issue
- **Extracting Person Names from User-generated Text - McGill University**
  - Built an NER model for extracting names from very noisy user-generated online escort advertisements to estimate how many persons are advertised
  - Proposed an effective combination of classic rule-based and contextualized language model approaches resulting in 19% improvement in extraction compared to previous BERT-based methods
- **Mortality Prediction on Electronic Health Records from Hidden Topics - McGill University**
  - Modified an existing code base and designed and executed carefully curated experiments showing 5% improvement in accuracy
  - Consolidated ideas and feedback from a multi-disciplinary team involving clinicians, bioinformaticians and computer scientists
- **Improving Validity of Machine Generated Drugs - Master's thesis**
  - Proposed a novel training strategy involving a validity checker from RDKit library
  - Improved the validity of generated drugs using generative models like VAE by 5%

## ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENTS

Degree	University	Specialization	Year	Total
PhD	McGill University, Canada	Computer Science	2019-present	3.87/4.0
Integrated Master's	IIIT Bangalore, India	Computer Science Engineering	2014-2019	3.6/4.0

## ACHIEVEMENTS

- **Fonds de recherche du Quebec (FRQNT) Scholarship (2023)** - Awarded a doctoral training scholarship by the Quebec government for a 7 semester period.
- **3rd place in DataJam against Exploitation (Summer 2021)** - Led a team of 5 which won the 3rd place in the 2021 DataJam against Exploitation organized by the ICPC, the Human Trafficking and Migrant Smuggling Section of the UN, Fundación Pasos Libres and IBM Corporate Social Responsibility.
- **Computer Science Teaching Assistant Award (Fall 2020, McGill University)** – Recognized for inspiring and challenging undergraduate students. One among 45 TAs nominated for the award by students.
- **Dean's Merit List (IIIT-B, 2019)** – Recognized for academic excellence on graduating with 3.6/4.0 GPA.
- **GHCI Student Scholar 2018** – Scholarship to attend India's largest gathering of women technologists produced by AnitaB.org and ACM India.
- **World Rank 23/1500 (Adobe CODHERS Codesprint 2016)** – 21<sup>st</sup> place in India
- **World Rank 49/2500 (Women's CodeSprint 2016)** – 19<sup>th</sup> place in India
- **World Rank 7/1000+ (HackerRank Women's Cup 2015)** – 3<sup>rd</sup> place in India. Featured in a [YourStory article](#).

## LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE

- **Supervision (2022 - 2023)**
  - Co-supervised 3 interns on projects related to Anti Human Trafficking leading to publishing in top tier venues like EMNLP 2023
- **Head of events and Mentor - WISR India (2019 - 2023)**
  - Designed, planned and organized events for WISR (Women in STEM Research) India
  - Mentor in the WISR mentorship program for young Indian women undergraduates interested in exploring research in STEM
- **VP Finance at McGill Chapter for Scientista (Fall 2020 - Winter 2021)**
  - Managed finance and audits for the [Scientista](#) chapter at McGill
- **Mentor at Office for Student Disabilities (OSD) at McGill University (Fall 2020, Winter 2021, Summer 2021)**
  - Selected to become a mentor for two students registered in OSD on their daily academic life
- **Teaching Assistant (2018-2020)**
  - Held tutorial sessions for Introduction to Computer Systems (Winter & Fall 2020 at McGill University)
  - Conducted tutorial sessions, developed and graded projects for ML 101 (2018 at IIITB) and Programming Languages (2019 at IIITB)
- **Curator at TEDx IIITB (2018)**
  - Worked with three TEDx speakers in curating their speeches
- **Mentor at the Student Mentoring Program of IIITB (2017-2018)**
  - Mentored three freshman year students, assisting with short-term and long-term goal setting