

PROMOTION RECOMMENDATION
The University of Michigan
School of Information

Joyojeet K. Pal, assistant professor of information, School of Information, is recommended for promotion to associate professor of information, with tenure, School of Information.

Academic Degrees:

Ph.D.	2008	University of California Berkeley, Berkeley, CA
M.S.I.	2004	University of California Berkeley, Berkeley, CA
B.A.	1996	University of Mumbai, Mumbai, India

Professional Record:

2011 – present	Assistant Professor, without tenure, School of Information, University of Michigan
2015	Visiting Scholar, Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies, Stanford University
2011 – 2012	Visiting Researcher, RCAST, University of Tokyo, Japan
2010	Visiting Assistant Professor, Polytechnic of NYU, Brooklyn
2009 – 2010	Professional Research Associate, ATLAS Institute, University of Colorado, Boulder
2008 – 2009	Post-doctoral Research Associate, University of Washington

Summary of Evaluation:

Teaching: Professor Pal has focused his teaching on three areas: technology and international development; accessible technology; and user experience research. His teaching has included both small seminar-style courses and large, required courses. In the areas of international development and accessibility, he has designed signature courses that have been exceptionally well-received by students, such as SI 657: Information Technology and International Development and SI 552: Technology and Accessibility. These courses have received consistently high ratings from students. In the area of user experience research, he inherited SI 622: Needs Assessment and Usability Evaluation, a large required course in the Master of Science in information degree that is required for all students specializing in user experience research and design. Professor Pal revised the curriculum, consulting with the Center for Research on Learning and Teaching on ways to create a more interactive classroom format for large numbers of students and attending practitioner conferences to update the content and techniques taught in the course. The results have made this a more relevant, theoretically-grounded yet skill-building course for the largest component of master's students in the School of Information (UMSI).

In addition to his regular classroom teaching, Professor Pal developed and implemented the Global Information Engagement Program (GIEP), which is the flagship international engaged learning program at UMSI. GIEP is an innovative approach to learning which partners non-profit, research, and educational organizations in an international setting with UM student teams to develop sustainable information management tools and practices that have positive societal impact. He mentored thirteen projects over two years in India. The program now operates in South Africa.

Research: Professor Pal's research is in the area of Information and Communication Technology for Development (ICTD or ICT4D) and examines technology in the developing world through a sociotechnical lens. In particular, his most notable contribution describes how the perceived symbolic and aspirational value of technology has real-world consequences in addition to the instrumental function of technology. He has explored the symbolic and aspirational value of technology in two contexts: disability and technology-enhanced accessibility and social media use by political leaders in India. In both of these areas, he has done pioneering research. His scholarship in these two areas is also unique because his work has appeared in top venues in two distinct disciplines: the computer science dominated

conference tradition and the communication studies journal tradition. In both of these disciplinary traditions, he has published in top venues. In computer science he has published in Association for Computing Machinery (ACM) International Conference on Information and Communication Technologies for Development (ICTD) and the ACM Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems (CHI), two highly competitive conferences. In communication studies, his work has been accepted in top tier journals, such as *International Journal of Communication*. Professor Pal has published eleven high visibility publications on disability and assistive technology in the developing world, largely in ACM venues and five high visibility publications on politicians' use of social media, primarily in communication studies venues.

Professor Pal's research on disability and technology-enabled accessibility in the developing world is path breaking. He has worked both to bring accessibility issues into the ICTD research community (seven papers at three successive ICTD conferences), and also to raise awareness of the developing-world context to the accessibility community (five papers at CHI, the World Wide Web Conference, the ACM Computer-Supported Cooperative Learning (CSCL) conference, and two disability-focused journals). This research is impressive. In "An accessibility infrastructure for the Global South," Professor Pal's geographical reach spans Costa Rica, India, Jordan, Malawi, Peru, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, and South Korea. His findings demonstrate how enabling technology represents more than its functional value – individuals in the developing world see these technologies as a symbol of their agency and often experience a boost in social standing through technology use. In this paper, he has set the standard for his field with multi-site comparative research that produces generalizable results while being sensitive to local context as well as shown that despite social and logistical barriers, excellent research can be done in the developing world contexts. In his 2017 paper, "Agency in Assistive Technology Adoption: Visual Impairment and Smartphone Use in Bangalore," Professor Pal investigates smartphone adoption among blind residents of Bangalore, India. He demonstrates how a widely established technology adoption model fails to capture adoption trajectories and user-initiated adaptations and how these trajectories unfold in the developing world. In both of these papers, Professor Pal has demonstrated how technology has not served these populations as well as it might and identified potential implementations that hold more promise.

Recently, Professor Pal has turned his attention to Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's technology use and rhetoric. Professor Pal has published five related papers on this topic, primarily in communication and media studies journals. In this line of scholarship, Professor Pal combines qualitative and quantitative analyses to identify trends in the tweeting behavior of Modi and his followers. In his 2017 *International Journal of Communication* article, "Innuendo as Outreach," he argues that Modi uses irony, sarcasm, and inside jokes to reach a broader and more sophisticated audience on Twitter. In this work, the theme of technology's symbolic value is prominent. For his ICTD 2017 proceedings paper, "The Technological Self in India," Professor Pal assesses the way Modi associates himself and his country with technology-driven aspirations and concludes that "The symbolic value of technology in each case helps propel the operational agenda rather than a priori empirical evidence of the likely outcomes." Indeed, the work has gained wide media attention in India and elsewhere for its recognition of Modi as the most-followed Indian on social media (37.5 M followers on December 4, 2017).

To summarize Professor Pal's research record, since joining UMSI, Professor Pal has published a total of eleven (five first-authored) journal papers and nineteen (twelve first-authored) peer-reviewed conference proceedings. These publications have spanned several disciplinary communities: HCI; ICTD; disability studies; communication studies; and media studies. According to Google Scholar as of January 16, 2018, Professor Pal's research has been cited 1701 times, with an h-index of 17 and an i10-index of 33. His paper, "Of mouse and men: Computers and geeks as cinematic icons in the age of ICTD" won the best paper award at the 2010 iConference and he received the Council for Disability Concerns Certificate of

Appreciation from the University of Michigan in 2014 for his research on disability studies in the Global South.

Recent and Significant Publications:

- Pal J., Chandra, P., Song, J., Ferrari, L., Youngman, M., O'Neill, T., ... Semushi, C. (2016). An accessibility infrastructure for the Global South. In *Proceedings of the Eighth International Conference on Information and Communication Technologies and Development (ICTD '16)*. ACM, New York, NY, USA, Article 24, 11 pages.
- Pal, J. (2017). CHI4Good or Good4CHI. In *Proceedings of the 2017 CHI Conference Extended Abstracts on Human Factors in Computing Systems (CHI EA '17)*. ACM, New York, NY, USA, 709-721.
- Pal, J. (2017). The technological self in India: From tech-savvy farmers to a selfie-tweeting prime minister. In *Proceedings of the Ninth International Conference on Information and Communication Technologies and Development (ICTD '17)*. ACM, New York, NY, USA, Article 11, 13 pages.
- Pal, J., Chandra, P., Gonawela, A., & Chirumamilla, P. (2017). Innuendo as outreach: @narendramodi and the use of political irony on Twitter. *International Journal of Communications*, 11, 4197-4218.
- Pal, J., Viswanathan, A., Chandra, P., Nazareth, A., Kameswaran, V., Subramonyam, H., ... O'Modhrain, S. (2017). Agency in Assistive Technology Adoption: Visual Impairment and Smartphone Use in Bangalore. In *Proceedings of the 2017 CHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems (CHI '17)*. ACM, New York, NY, USA, 5929-5940.

Service: Professor Pal has been actively engaged in service at the school, university, and professional levels. Within UMSI, Professor Pal has served the program committees for three of our four academic programs: the Bachelor of Science in information; the Master of Science in information (MSI); and the Master of Health Informatics. He organized the Yahoo Seminar series for two years and was on the search committee for UMSI's endowed W.K. Kellogg Professor of Community Informatics. His more student-facing service includes coordinator (at different times) for the Community Informatics and Tailored specializations in the MSI, faculty advisor for the Community Information Corps, and organizer of the UMSI Information and Communications Technology and Development (ICTD) group. He also participated in the Social Justice seminar series and has run multi-session seminars on accessibility for students. He was a judge for the Libraries Design Contest in 2013.

Within the university, Professor Pal has helped build the accessibility community on campus as a member of the Council for Disability Concerns. He has spoken about his research on technology and accessibility for people with disabilities to the UM Medical Community, and is a faculty participant in UMINDS (University of Michigan Initiative in Disability Studies). He has participated in Rackham 580: Topics in Disability Studies and spoken to Invest in Ability on accessibility and the portrayal of disability in popular cinema. Also at UM, he helped sponsor and mentor a recipient of the Hughes Fellowship. He has worked with the Center for South Asia Studies (CSAS), co-organizing the 2013 Cell and Self Conference. This conference brought together leading scholars on mobile telephones from around the world.

Professor Pal has a strong record of external professional service. He has been a program committee member for the Association for Computing Machinery (ACM) Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems (CHI) and for the ACM International Conference on Information and Communication Technologies for Development (ICTD) several times. He also has served as an associate editor for *Information Technology and International Development* journal for five years. Professor Pal consulted with the Organization of American States (OAS) on behalf of the Government of Colombia and produced two reports. The first examined the role of mobile technology on youth; the second explored the potential for a more structured, institutional study of digital culture in Colombia.

External Reviewers:

Reviewer A: "...[Professor] Pal is well above average with his publication portfolio, with a clear focus and profile. He was able to develop over time a consistent record of publications on social inclusion and access to information technology of people with disabilities in the global south."

Reviewer B: "[Professor] Pal has built up an impressive body of work in the field of information and communication technology for development [ICTD]."

Reviewer C: "I find it highly unusual (and difficult) for scholars to move between the ACM coauthored, incremental research and journal publications particularly venues that publish work in a more interpretivist mode. These two worlds have vastly different publishing timelines and criteria for evaluation and [Professor] Pal has accomplished the feat of convincingly pursuing a dual intellectual identity of design researcher and media studies scholar (as well as documentary filmmaker). [Professor] Pal's body of work is utterly unique in this respect."

Reviewer D: "Given Professor Pal's record of publication and emerging reputation as a scholar, I have confidence that he will have a bright research future ahead of him."

Reviewer E: "[Professor] Pal's work is focused on important research topics. He has produced a substantial quantity of research. The quality is high and the impact is significant."

Reviewer F: "Within the broader research community I would regard him as a solid contributor to efforts at organizing and building the ICTD research community, as represented through workshop organizing, reviewing, and the mentoring of students and early stage researchers."

Summary of Recommendation

Professor Pal's accomplishments in the areas of teaching, research, and service meet the promotion requirements to achieve the rank of associate professor, with tenure. Therefore, with the overwhelming support of the promotion and tenure committee of the School of Information, I enthusiastically recommend Joyojeet K. Pal for promotion to associate professor of information, with tenure, School of Information.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "T. A. Finholt", written over a horizontal line.

Thomas A. Finholt
Dean and Professor, School of Information

May 2018