

Computer Science

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IMPORTANT DATES & REMINDERS

Wednesday, November 26, 2025 University Offices Close at 5:00 pm for Thanksgiving Break

Friday, December 5, 2025 Master's Completion Form Due for Fall Master's Candidates

Monday, December 8, 2025 Fall Exams begin

Monday, December 15, 2025 Grades due 3:00 PM

Friday, December 19, 2025 Fall 2025 Degrees Conferred

Wednesday, December 24, 2025 Winter Recess Starts - University Closed Through January 1st, 2026

We want to hear from you!

Please send any upcoming news and events to
news@cs.northwestern.edu to be included in future bulletins &/featured
on our socials/website.

Events for the bulletin must be emailed by Thursdays 12PM to be in that Friday's bulletin.

Missed a seminar? No worries!
View past seminars via the Northwestern CS Website
(northwestern login required).

[View Past Seminars »](#)

UPCOMING SEMINARS

January

5th - Ari Holtzman

12th - Rana Hanocka

CS Department Events

TALK BY PAYAM POURASHRAF

Talk Title: Recommender Systems for Local Journalism

Description:

This talk traces the evolution of recommender systems from early heuristics and matrix factorization to modern learning-to-rank and LLM-enhanced approaches, then looks ahead to where the field is going. After a brief cross-domain survey, the focus narrows to news and local-news recommenders. Payam will present his recent research along with a forward-looking vision for how tailored recommender systems can help revitalize local journalism and support more informed, engaged communities.

Bio:

Payam Pourashraf works on the Advanced Capabilities (R&D) team at a financial company in Illinois. With a broad background spanning software, hardware, and computer science, he brings a full-stack perspective to his work.

He jokingly describes himself as a “jack of all trades, master of none... still learning,” reflecting his commitment to continuous growth. His recent academic research focuses on recommender systems for news, with a particular emphasis on supporting local journalism.

Beyond his industry role, Payam is committed to growing the region’s technical community as the elected Vice-Chair of ACM Chicago. He is also passionate about education, having spent five years as an adjunct faculty member at DePaul University, where he taught more than 30 course offerings in Python and applied data science.

🕒 **Wednesday, December 3, 2025**
6:00 PM - 7:00 PM CT

📍 **Mudd Hall, 3514,**
2233 Tech Drive, Evanston, IL 60208

Other Events

CHICAGO JUNIOR THEORISTS WORKSHOP 2025

The **Chicago Junior Theorists Workshop 2025** is being held jointly by Northwestern University and Toyota Technological Institute at Chicago on December 8th (Monday) and December 9th, 2025 (Tuesday). The focus of this workshop will be on junior researchers in all areas of theoretical computer science. The workshop is also supported by ACM SIGACT, IDEAL, NITMB and SkAI institutes, in addition to TTIC and Northwestern. Please help spread the word about the workshop by forwarding it to relevant mailing lists and groups in your institute.

If you are interested in attending, please register for the workshop here by December 4th (Thursday), 2025: <https://forms.gle/i2XZxSMBRZMATkes7>

🕒 **Monday, December 8th (TTIC day) &**
Tuesday, December 9th (Northwestern day@ SkAI/NITMB, downtown
Chicago)

📍 **Location for Day 1 (Monday): TTIC, on the 5th floor of 6045 S**
Kenwood Ave, Chicago, IL 60637
Location for Day 2 (Tuesday): SkAI Institute and NITMB which are
both located on the 35th floor of the Hancock Center, 875 N. Michigan

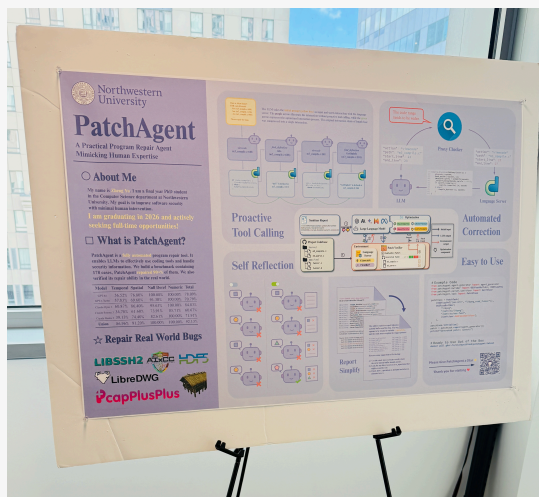
Avenue. Please enter on the Chestnut Street side of the building, 172 E. Chestnut Street.

[More Information »](#)

Awards



**PhD Student
Zhenyu Pan
Wins 2025
NeurIPS
Scholar Award
& Lambda's
Research
Grant Program**



**PhD Student Zheng Yu Wins
CSAW Applied Research
Competition 2025 - Runner-up
in Technical Impact**

[Award Details](#)



PhD Student Kexin Zhao Wins Best Student Paper Award at ACS 2025

Zhao and Professor Ken Forbus demonstrated the effectiveness of combining symbolic and neural methods for word sense disambiguation.

[***Read More***](#)



Northwestern Department of Computer Science
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