

Carlos Alvarez

ABOUT ME

I am a doctoral researcher and designer with interest in participatory design and the future of work. Previously, I have curated multimedia narratives around research-based topics. My research combines qualitative and participatory methods in Human-Computer Interaction (HCI).

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EDUCATION

PhD in Human-Computer Interaction

Northumbria University, United Kingdom, 2019 – Present

Primary Supervisor: Dr Marta Cecchinato

Secondary Supervisor: Dr John Rooksby

My PhD explores the concept of worker-centred design in the context of the freelancing gig economy platforms, such as Upwork and Fiverr. I use qualitative and participatory methods to expand the understanding of freelance knowledge workers and the impacts that platforms' managerial features have on their work-lives. Moreover, my research explores solutions to support online freelancers in enhancing their working experiences with gig economy platforms. My PhD has implications for practice, design, and policy in areas of HCI and Computer-Supported Cooperative Work and Social Computing (CSCW).

BSc Communications (First Class Honours)

Universidad Intercontinental, Mexico, 2012 - 2016

During my undergraduate degree, I specialised in visual communications and social research. I learnt a wide range of technical skills in video production, multimedia creation, and creative writing. My final dissertation explored the role of online communities, such as Facebook and Whatsapp groups, to promote the empowerment of women from low-income backgrounds engaged with a salesforce company in Mexico.

EXPERIENCE

Design and Communications Specialist

International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), Switzerland, October 2016 – September 2019

- Managed the design and digital consultations of 'The Future Red Cross', a two-year project that resulted in the creation of the organisational ten-year vision.
- Assisted the design and co-facilitation of global foresight engagements, including games and simulations, face-to-face workshops, and research activities.
- Drove engagement to the team's portfolios through creative communication pieces, such as videos, infographics, and other resources.
- Transformed conventional reports into compelling and accessible digital and analogue products. Including the curation of the first experiential futures humanitarian exhibition.

Design Jr Consultant

Uhma Wellbeing Consulting, Mexico, June - October 2016

- Facilitated wellbeing consultations with business partners at a national level.
- Coordinated external marketing campaigns.
- Led the production of quantitative reports for business partners.
- Handled sensitive health data from associate participants.

Communications Intern

Fuller Beauty Cosmetics, Mexico, June 2015 - 2016

- Researched women empowerment perceptions through communication campaigns.
- Assisted internal communication strategies through copy-writing and social media analysis.
- Led tasks, such as multimedia editing, graphic design, and content management.

PUBLICATIONS

First Author

- **Juan Carlos Alvarez de la Vega**, Marta E. Cecchinato, John Rooksby. 2021. “Why lose control?” A Study of Freelancers Experiences with Gig Economy Platforms. In Proceeding of the 2021 CHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems (CHI 2021). Forthcoming.
- **Juan Carlos Alvarez de la Vega**, Marta E. Cecchinato, John Rooksby. 2020. The Gig Economy in Times of COVID-19: Designing for Gig Workers’ Needs. In Proceedings of the 2020 Microsoft Research Virtual Symposium on the New Future of Work. [Download](#).
- **Juan Carlos Alvarez de la Vega**. 2020. Making the Gig Economy Work for Workers: An Exploration of Freelancing Platforms. In Proceedings of the virtual BCS HCI Doctoral Consortium. [Download](#).

Contributing Author

- Jay Rainey, **Juan Carlos Alvarez de la Vega**, Dan Richardson, Sara Armouch, Dan Lambton-Howard, Tom Bartindale, Shaun Hazeldine, Pamela Briggs, Patrick Olivier, Kyle Montague. 2020. TalkFutures: Supporting Qualitative Practices in Distributed Community Engagements. In Proceedings of the 2020 Conference on Designing Interactive Systems (DIS 2020). [Download](#).
- Daniel Lambton-Howard, Robert Anderson, Kyle Montague, Andrew Garbett, Shaun Hazeldine, **Juan Carlos Alvarez de la Vega**, John A. Sweeney, Patrick Olivier, Ahmed Kharrufa. WhatFutures: Designing Large-Scale Engagements on WhatsApp. 2019. In Proceeding of the 2019 CHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems (CHI 2019). [Download](#).

RESEARCH INTERESTS

- Human-computer interaction
- Future of work
- Gig economy
- Freelancing platforms
- Worker-centred design
- Digital wellbeing
- Participatory design