

# Alper Sarikaya

<https://alper.datav.is/>

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## EDUCATION

**PhD, Computer Sciences**  
MS, Computer Sciences (May 2013)

University of Wisconsin—Madison  
Aug 2011 – Aug 2017

**Bachelor of Science, Computer Science**  
**Bachelor of Science, Chemistry (ACS certification)**  
*College Honors* in Computer Science and Chemistry

University of Washington  
Sept 2004 – June 2009

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## INDUSTRY

**Senior Data Visualization Engineer, Power BI Self-Service Team**  
Microsoft Corporation, Redmond, WA

Aug 2017 – *current*

- + As a Visuals component owner, advocating between disciplines and leadership for strong visualization practices for new features and managing engineering and UX tradeoffs; driving accessibility, usability, and stability of visualization-driven experiences
- + Developing visualization authoring systems and integrating visualization best-practices into the (free!) product for worldwide use

**Software Development Engineer in Test II**  
Microsoft Corporation, Redmond, WA

Sep 2009 – Aug 2011

- + Ensured the stability of the business intelligence component of Windows crash reports; maintained and tested code that processed billions of messages daily; overlooked multi-terabyte databases. Validated the performance and stability of telemetric data marts for Windows 8

**Software Development Engineer in Test Intern**  
Microsoft Corporation, Redmond, WA

Jun 2007 – Aug 2007

- + Developed a testing tool to programmatically obtain and utilize virtual machines for testing System Center Virtual Machine Manager with itself

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## RESEARCH

I am interested in harnessing the power of data visualization and its applications to various problem domains, especially the power of visual summaries to understand and navigate large datasets. My graduate work has involved visualizing the binding interfaces of proteins to ligand substrates, visualizing overviews of large datasets and supporting identification and comparison tasks using WebGL, as well as visualizing co-occurrences of mutations on virus genomes. I am working toward creating both descriptive and prescriptive understanding of the design of visualizations designed to summarize, looking at how these visualizations are designed with respect to characteristics of the data and analyst task.

## Journal Articles

**Alper Sarikaya**, Michael Correll, Lyn Bartram, Melanie Tory, Danyel Fisher. “What Do We Talk About When We Talk About Dashboards?” *IEEE Transactions on Visualization and Computer Graphics* (InfoVis ‘18), 29(1): 682–692. 2019.

**Alper Sarikaya**, Michael Gleicher, Danielle Albers Szafir. “Design Factors for Summary Visualization in Visual Analytics.” *Computer Graphics Forum* (EuroVis ‘18), 37(3): 145–156. 2018.

**Alper Sarikaya** and Michael Gleicher. “Scatterplots: Tasks, Data, and Designs.” *IEEE Transactions on Visualization and Computer Graphics* (InfoVis ‘17), 28(1): 402–412. 2018.

**Alper Sarikaya**, Michael Correll, Jorge Dinis, David H. O’Connor, Michael Gleicher. “Visualizing Co-occurrence of Events in Populations of Viral Genome Sequences.” *Computer Graphics Forum* (EuroVis ‘16), 35(3): 151–160, 2016.

Danielle Albers Szafir, **Alper Sarikaya**, Michael Gleicher. “Lightness Constancy in Surface Visualization.” *IEEE Transactions on Visualization and Computer Graphics*, 22(9): 2107–2121, 2016.

Michael Correll, Adam L. Bailey, **Alper Sarikaya**, David H. O’Connor, Michael Gleicher. “LayerCake: A Tool for the Visual Comparison of Viral Deep Sequencing Data.” *Bioinformatics*, 31(21): 3522–3528, 2015.

**Alper Sarikaya**, Danielle Albers, Julie C. Mitchell, Michael Gleicher. “Visualizing Validation of Protein Surface Classifiers.” *Computer Graphics Forum* (EuroVis ‘14), 33(3): 171–180, 2014.

## Conference Proceedings

Zhuohao Zhang, John R Thompson, Aditi Shah, Manish Agrawal, **Alper Sarikaya**, Jacob O. Wobbrock, Edward Cutrell, and Bongshin Lee. “ChartA11y: Designing Accessible Touch Experiences of Visualizations with Blind Smartphone Users.” In *Proceedings of the 26th International ACM SIGACCESS Conference on Computers and Accessibility* (ASSETS ‘24), 55, 1–15. ACM, 2024.

John R Thompson, Jesse J Martinez, **Alper Sarikaya**, Edward Cutrell, and Bongshin Lee. “Chart Reader: Accessible Visualization Experiences Designed with Screen Reader Users.” In *Proceedings of the 2023 CHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems*, 802, 1–18. ACM, 2023.

## Refereed Workshop Publications

**Alper Sarikaya**, Emanuel Zgraggen, Rob DeLine, Danyel Fisher, and Steven Drucker. “Sequence Pre-processing: Focusing Analysis of Log Event Data.” In *Proceedings of the IEEE Vis Workshop on Temporal & Sequential Event Analysis*. 2016.

**Alper Sarikaya**, Michael Gleicher. “Using WebGL as an Interactive Visualization Medium: Our Experience Developing SplatterJs.” In *Proceedings of the 2015 Data Systems for Interactive Analysis Workshop* (DSIA). 2015.

Michael Correll, Eric Alexander, Danielle Albers Szafir, **Alper Sarikaya**, Michael Gleicher. “Navigating Reductionism and Holism in Evaluation.” *Proceedings of the 2014 BELIV Workshop: Beyond Time and Errors—Novel Evaluation Methods for Visualization* (BELIV ‘14). 2014.

## Refereed Abstracts

**Alper Sarikaya**, Michael Gleicher. “Tasks to Tease Apart Scatterplot Design Decisions.” *Poster Abstracts of IEEE VIS 2016*, October 2016.

**Alper Sarikaya**, Danielle Albers, Michael Gleicher. “Understanding Performance of Protein Structural Classifiers.” *Poster Abstracts of IEEE VIS 2013*, October 2013.

Danielle Albers, **Alper Sarikaya**, Michael Gleicher. “Lightness Constancy in Surface Visualization.” *Poster Abstracts of IEEE VIS 2013*, October 2013. {SciVis Best Poster Award}

### Theses

“Targeting Designs of Scalable, Exploratory Summary Visualizations.” PhD Thesis, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2017.

“The Limits of Adiabatic Quantum Computation.” Honors Thesis, University of Washington, 2009.

### Research Experience

I was under the advisement of Professor Michael Gleicher at the University of Wisconsin—Madison in computer graphics and data visualization. My primary undergraduate research in quantum computation was under Professor Dave Bacon at the University of Washington (now at Google).

#### **UW Graphics Laboratory**

Aug 2011 – Jul 2017

University of Wisconsin—Madison, Madison, WI

<http://graphics.cs.wisc.edu>

- + Synthesized task-centric typologies for the principled design of scatterplots from literature synthesis and the design of visual summaries from a literature content analysis
- + Designed scatterplot-based and matrix-based visualization using WebGL to support the overview of large datasets and rapid identification of ‘interesting values’ in the browser
- + Developed a visualization solution to view the performance of binary decision protein classifiers, allowing for visual understanding performance across corpus and individual proteins

#### **Microsoft Research** (mentor: Danyel Fisher)

May 2015 – Aug 2015

Microsoft Corporation, Redmond, WA

<http://research.microsoft.com/en-us/groups/vibe/>

- + Developed methods for pre-processing log event data to minimize noise and focus downstream analysis of log file data

#### **GEMSEC (Genetically-Engineered Materials Sci. & Engr. Center)**

Aug 2009 – Aug 2011

University of Washington, Seattle, WA

<http://depts.washington.edu/gemsec/>

- + Developed energy minimization techniques of graphite-binding peptides through MD simulation

#### **Quantum Computation Theory Group**

Jan 2008 – Jun 2009

University of Washington, Seattle, WA

<http://quantum.cs.washington.edu>

- + Developed code with SciPy to test polynomial speedup of adiabatic quantum algorithms over its classical counterpart

#### **Seattle (educational peer-to-peer network)**

Oct 2008 – Mar 2009

University of Washington, Seattle, WA

<http://seattle.cs.washington.edu>

- + Designed and constructed a proof-of-concept of MapReduce on the Repy framework. Reorganized DHT allocation of resources

**UrbanSim – Public Policy and Analysis Software** Jan 2007 – Jun 2007  
University of Washington, Seattle, WA  
<http://urbansim.org>

- + Through strict test-driven development (TDD), refactored and implemented unit tests for the entire codebase

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## TEACHING

**Teaching Assistant** for CS 765: Data Visualization Jan 2017 – May 2017  
University of Wisconsin—Madison, Madison, WI  
<http://graphics.cs.wisc.edu/WP/vis17spring>

- + Gave six guest lectures (e.g., introduction to vis, theory/application of multi-variate encodings, Tableau/Excel tutorial), led in-class critique of visualization, and designed mini-lessons for small-group work

**Teaching Assistant** for CS 765: Data Visualization Jan 2015 – May 2015  
University of Wisconsin—Madison, Madison, WI  
<http://graphics.cs.wisc.edu/WP/vis15>

- + Facilitated and evaluated student discussion via the Canvas LMS (nearly 6,000 student posts), critiqued vis prototypes and distributed for peer-review, provided tool support (Tableau tutorial)

**Chemistry Tutor** Oct 2010 – Jun 2011  
Shorecrest High School, Shoreline, WA

- + Taught core chemistry concepts in small-group and individual settings to high-school students on topics like redox, stoichiometry, ionic charges, and interpreting the periodic table of elements

**Teaching Assistant** for CS 451, CS 461 Jan 2008 – Mar 2009  
University of Washington, Seattle, WA

- + *CS 461: Computer Networks (three quarters)* – Graded assignments; ran bi-weekly discussion sections discussing transmission speed, error correction, routing algorithms, and addressing; assisted students with NAT poking, RFID simulation, and C++ programming on Netgear routers
- + *CS 451: Operating Systems (one quarter)* – Graded assignments; created first Windows-based homeworks projects for the department (previous incarcerations of the class were in Linux); ran weekly recitation sections discussing RAID, file systems, concurrency, and process scheduling

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## COMMUNITY

### Reviewing Experience

*As a program committee member:*

- + InfoVis Full Papers (2020–23, 2025), VIS Short Papers (2019–21, 2024)

*As an external reviewer:*

- + CHI (2019–24, 2026), ASSETS (2024), EuroVis (2016–22), TVCG (2016–22), InfoVis (2016–20), VAST (2013–14, 2016–20), UIST (2019–20), SciVis (2014, 2016–17), SIGGRAPH (2014), BioVis (2013)

\* Special recognition for two reviews (CHI 2022 & 2024) for papers that won awards in re-submission.

**IEEE VIS Web Chair**

Oct 2017 – Nov 2021

<http://ieeveis.org>

Working in collaboration with fellow researchers on the IEEE VIS Organizing Committee to ensure content is accessible and discoverable. Participated in the design exercise of redesigning the website appearance and enforcing the automatic deployment of content via GitHub pull requests.

Architected a virtual website in reaction to the COVID-19 crisis, supporting 5,000 attendees to attend live workshop/paper talks online for the 2020 and 2021 conference years: <https://virtual.ieeveis.org>

**TGIF, Welcome Weekend co-organizer, UW ACM Student Chapter**

Sep 2011 – May 2013

<http://sacm.cs.wisc.edu>

Co-organized logistics for prospective students for the 2013 academic year. Helped coordinate visitation and logistics for 60 prospective graduate students for the 2012 academic year. Organized weekly TGIF graduate-student get-togethers and picked tasty food for consumption by able bodies (2011-2012)

**UW – Madison Scratch Club Volunteer**

Sep 2012 – Dec 2012

<https://sites.google.com/site/uwmadisoncsafterschool/>

Helped run sessions and build lesson plans to introduce fourth- and fifth-grade students to Scratch programming and associated concepts (e.g. events, loops, objects) at Van Hise Elementary School

**Mass Care Worker, American Red Cross – Disaster Relief**

Nov 2009 – Aug 2011

Volunteered computer, logistical, and medical skills in emergency shelters for local apartment fires

**Eagle Scout, Boy Scouts of America**

Fall 1993 – Summer 2006

Gained extensive leadership experience through the roles of Patrol Leader, SPL (at summer camp), and webmaster. Completed Eagle Scout Project at Little Bit Therapeutic Riding Center (Woodinville, WA) and constructed concrete pads for stable on- and off-loading of riders onto horses

**Professional Memberships**

Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineers (IEEE student member, 2011–17)

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**HONORS AND AWARDS**

IEEE VIS Doctoral Colloquium Fellowship, 2016

IEEE SciVis Best Poster Award (with D. Albers, M. Gleicher), 2013

UW Department of Computer Sciences Summer Research Fellowship Winner, 2012

NSF Graduate Research Fellowship Program, Honorable Mention, 2012

University of Washington, Dean's List, 2005–2009

National Merit Finalist, 2004

Full acceptance into the University of Washington at age 16 through UW Academy for Young Scholars

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**REFERENCES**

Personal and professional references are available upon request.