

Reza Ebrahimi

E-mail: ebrahimi@usf.edu

Lab Website: <https://star-ailab.github.io>

Assistant Professor, School of Information Systems and Management, University of South Florida

EDUCATION

- **Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.), The University of Arizona,** 2016 - 2021
Major: Management Information Systems
Minor: Computational Linguistics
- **Master of Science, Concordia University, Montreal** 2014 - 2016
Major: Computer Science
Thesis Title: Automatic Identification of Online Predators in Chat Logs by Anomaly Detection and Deep Learning
- **Bachelor of Science, Azad University at Qazvin** 2004 - 2008
Major: Computer Science and Engineering
Thesis Title: A Framework for Intelligent Crime Matching with Neural Network

RESEARCH INTERESTS

- **Secure Trustworthy and Reliable AI:** Adversarially Robust AI Agents for Cybersecurity, Privacy Preserving AI, AI-enabled Cybersecurity Analytics, Automatic Cyber Threat Detection, Cross-lingual Security Analytics
- **Machine Learning:** Adversarial Machine Learning, Differential Privacy, Transfer Learning and Domain Adaptation, Cross-lingual Knowledge Transfer, Reinforcement Learning, Deep Learning
- **Business Intelligence and Analytics:** Social Media Analytics, Online Predator Identification in Social Media

TEACHING

- **Machine Learning (ISM 6251)** – Undergraduate and Master's
- **Deep Learning for Business Analytics (ISM 7568)** – Ph.D. Seminar
- **Deep Learning (ISM 6152)** – Master's

JOURNALS AND SELECTED CONFERENCES

- Ebrahimi R., Chai Y., Li. W., Pacheco J., Chen H. "RADAR: A Framework for Developing Adversarially Robust Cyber Defense AI Agents with Deep Reinforcement Learning," ***MIS Quarterly***, Forthcoming, (<https://doi.org/10.25300/MISQ/2024/17339>).
- Ebrahimi, R., Hu, J., Zhang, N., Nunamaker, J., Chen, H. "Defending Deep Learning-based Raw Malware Detectors Against Adversarial Attacks: A Sequence Modeling Approach," ***Journal of Management Information Systems (JMIS)***, Forthcoming, (doi: [10.13140/RG.2.2.15331.26401](https://doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.2.15331.26401)).
- Birrell, J., Ebrahimi, R. "Optimal Transport Regularized Divergences: Application to Adversarial Robustness," **SIAM Journal on Mathematics of Data Science**, 7(4), pp.1801-1827., (<https://arxiv.org/pdf/2309.03791.pdf>).
- Granados A., Ebrahimi R., Pacheco J. "Risk-Sensitive Variational Actor-Critic: A Model-Based Approach," 2025, International Conference on Learning Representations (**ICLR**), (<https://openreview.net/rs-VAC>).
- Ebrahimi, R., Pacheco, J., Hu J., Chen, H. ,2025, "Learning Contextualized Action Representations in Sequential Decision Making for Adversarial Malware Optimization," ***IEEE Transactions on Dependable and Secure Computing (TDSC)***, vol. 22, no. 3, pp. 2086-2102, (<https://ieeexplore.ieee.org/document/10711271>).
- Birrell J., Ebrahimi R., Behnia R., Pacheco J., 2024, "Differentially Private Stochastic Gradient Descent with Fixed-Size Minibatches: Tighter RDP Guarantees with or without Replacement," **Neural Information Processing Systems (NeurIPS)**,

(<https://openreview.net/forum?id=TJsksnGasMy¬eId=pyTbqcmR8B>).

- Zhang Y., Behnia R., Yavuz, A. A., Ebrahimi, R., Bertino, E. 2025, "Efficient Full-Stack Private Federated Deep Learning with Post-Quantum Security," *IEEE Transactions on Dependable and Secure Computing (TDSC)*, (doi: 10.1109/TDSC.2025.3568704).
- Behnia R., Riasi A., Ebrahimi R., Chow S., Padmanabhan B., Hoang T., R. 2024, "Efficient Secure Aggregation for Privacy-Preserving Federated Machine Learning," in 2024 Annual Computer Security Applications Conference (ACSAC), Honolulu, HI, USA, 2024, pp. 778-793, doi: 10.1109/ACSAC63791.2024.00069.
- Ebrahimi R., Chai Y., Zhang H., Chen H., 2023, "Heterogeneous Domain Adaptation with Adversarial Neural Representation Learning: Experiments on E-Commerce and Cybersecurity," *IEEE Transactions on Pattern Analysis and Machine Intelligence (TPAMI)*, pp. 1862-1875.
- Ebrahimi R., Chai Y., Samtani S., Chen H. 2022, "Cross-Lingual Security Analytics: Cyber Threat Detection in the International Dark Web with Adversarial Deep Representation Learning," *MIS Quarterly*, 46(2), pp. 1209-1226.
- Zhang N., Ebrahimi R., Li W., Chen H., 2022, "Counteracting Dark Web Text-Based CAPTCHA with Generative Adversarial Learning for Proactive Cyber Threat Intelligence," *ACM Transactions on Management Information Systems (TMIS)*, ACM, 13(2), pp. 1-21.
- Wen B., Hu P., Ebrahimi R., Chen, H., 2021, "Key Factors Affecting User Adoption of Open-Access Data Repositories in Intelligence and Security Informatics: An Affordance Perspective," *ACM Transactions on Management Information Systems (TMIS)*, 13(1), pp. 1-24.
- Ebrahimi R., Nunamaker J., Chen, H., 2020, "Semi-Supervised Cyber Threat Identification in Dark Net Markets: A Transductive and Deep Learning Approach," *Journal of Management Information Systems (JMIS)*, 37(3), pp. 694-722.
- Ebrahimi R., Martinez J., 2019, "Involuntary Embarrassing Exposures in Online Social Networks: A Replication Study," *AIS Transactions on Replication Research (AIS TRR)*, 5(1), pp. 1-20.
- Ebrahimi R., Suen C.Y., Ormandjieva O., 2016, "Detecting Predatory Conversations in Social Media by Deep Convolutional Neural Networks," *Digital Investigation*, Elsevier, 18, pp. 33-49.
- Keyvanpour M., Ebrahimi R., Javideh M., 2012, "Designing Efficient ANN Classifiers for Matching Burglaries from Dwelling Houses," *Applied Artificial Intelligence*, Taylor and Francis, 26 (8), pp. 787-807.

PRESENTED REFEREED CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS & WORKSHOPS

- Behnia R., Birrell J., Raisi A., Ebrahimi R., Dutta K., Hoang T., 2025, Trustworthy Federated Learning with Local Differential Privacy, WITS, (<https://arxiv.org/abs/2510.12908>) (**Best Paper Award**).
- Arzanipour A, Behnia R., Ebrahimi, R., Dutta, K., 2025, "RAG Security and Privacy: Formalizing the Threat Model and Attack Surface," IEEE ICDM Workshop on Machine Learning for Cybersecurity.

- Ahmadi K., Behnia R., Ebrahimi R., Kermani M., Birrell J., Pacheco J., Yavuz A., 2025 “An Interactive Framework for Implementing Privacy-Preserving Federated Learning: Experiments on Large Language Models,” IEEE Security & Privacy Workshop on Human-Machine Intelligence for Security Analytics (**Best Paper Award**).
- Zhang Y., Behnia R., Yavuz A., Ebrahimi R. Bertino E., 2024. “Uncovering Attacks and Defenses in Secure Aggregation for Federated Deep Learning,” IEEE ICDM Workshop on Machine Learning for Cybersecurity.
- Hossain S., Ebrahimi R., Padmanabhan B., El Naqa I., Kuo P.C., Beard A. Merkel S., 2023, “Robust AI-enabled Simulation of Treatment Paths with Markov Decision Process for Breast Cancer Patients,” IEEE Conference on Artificial Intelligence (CAI), pp. 105-108.
- Etter B., Hu J., Ebrahimi R., Li W., Li X., and Chen H., 2023, “Evading Deep Learning-Based Malware Detectors via Obfuscation: A Deep Reinforcement Learning Approach,” IEEE ICDM Workshop on Machine Learning for Cybersecurity (MLC), pp. 1313-1321.
- Behnia R., Ebrahimi R. and Pacheco J., 2022. “EW-Tune: A Framework for Privately Fine-Tuning Large Language Models with Differential Privacy,” IEEE ICDM Workshop on Machine Learning for Cybersecurity (MLC), pp. 560-566.
- Hu J., Ebrahimi R., Li W., Li X. and Chen H., 2022, “Multi-view Representation Learning from Malware to Defend Against Adversarial Variants,” IEEE ICDM Workshop on Multi-view Representation Learning (MRL), pp. 1-8.
- Ebrahimi R., Li W., Chai Y., Pacheco J., and Chen H., 2022, “An Adversarial Wargame Framework for Developing Robust Machine Learning-based Malware Detectors,” IEEE ICDM Workshop on Machine Learning for Cybersecurity (MLC), pp. 567-576.
- Ebrahimi R., Pacheco, J., Li, W., Hu, J., Chen, H., 2021, “Binary Black-Box Attacks Against Static Malware Detectors with Reinforcement Learning in Discrete Action Spaces,” IEEE Symposium on Security and Privacy Workshop (S&PW) on Deep Learning and Security, pp. 85-91.
- Liu Y., Lin F.Y., Ebrahimi R., Li W., Chen H., 2021, “Automated PII Extraction from Social Media for Raising Privacy Awareness: A Deep Transfer Learning Approach,” IEEE International Conference on Intelligence and Security Informatics (ISI), pp. 1-6 (**Best Paper Award**).
- Ebrahimi R., Zhang, N., Hu, J., Raza M.T., Chen H, 2021, “Binary Black-box Evasion Attacks Against Deep Learning-based Static Malware Detectors with Adversarial Byte-Level Language Model,” AAAI Workshop on Robust, Secure, and Efficient Machine Learning (RSEML).
- Hu J., Ebrahimi R., Chen H., 2021, “Single-Shot Black-Box Adversarial Attacks Against Malware Detectors: A Causal Language Model Approach.” IEEE International Conference on Intelligence and Security Informatics (ISI), pp. 1-6.
- Ebrahimi R., Samtani S., Chai Y., Chen H., 2020, “Detecting Cyber Threats in Non-English Hacker Forums: An Adversarial Cross-Lingual Knowledge Transfer Approach,” IEEE Symposium on Security and Privacy Workshop (S&PW) on Deep Learning and Security, pp. 20-26.
- Ebrahimi R., Surdeanu M., Samtani S., Chen H., 2018, “Detecting Cyber Threats in Non-English

Dark Net Markets: A Cross-Lingual Transfer Learning Approach," IEEE International Conference on Intelligence and Security Informatics (ISI), Miami, FL, 8-10 November, pp. 85-90 (**Best Paper Award Runner-up**).

- Ebrahimi R., Suen C.Y., Ormandjieva O., Krzyzak A., 2016, "Recognizing Predatory Chat Documents using Semi-supervised Anomaly Detection," 23rd Document Recognition Retrieval conference (DRR), pp. 1-9(9).
- Du P., Ebrahimi R., Zhang N., Chen H., Brown R.A., Samtani, S., 2019, "Identifying High-Impact Opioid Products and Key Sellers in Dark Net Marketplaces: An Interpretable Text Analytics Approach," IEEE International Conference on Intelligence and Security Informatics (ISI), pp. 110-115.
- Arnold N., Ebrahimi R., Zhang N., Lazarine B., Patton M., Chen H., Samtani S., 2019, "Dark-Net Ecosystem Cyber-Threat Intelligence (CTI) Tool," IEEE International Conference on Intelligence and Security Informatics (ISI), pp. 92-97.
- Du P., Zhang N., Ebrahimi R., Samtani S., Lazarine B., Arnold N., Dunn R. et al. 2018, "Identifying, Collecting, and Presenting Hacker Community Data: Forums, IRC, Carding Shops, and DNM," IEEE International Conference on Intelligence and Security Informatics (ISI), pp. 70-75.
- Keyvanpour M., Javideh M., Ebrahimi R., 2011, "Detecting and Investigating Crime by Means of Data Mining: A General Crime Matching Framework," World Conference on Information Technology, Procedia Computer Science, Volume 3, Edited by AdemKarahoca, Sezer, pp. 872-880.

GRANTS & REPORT WRITING SKILLS

• Awarded Grants at USF

- Mechatronics Integrated into STEM Teaching: AI Meets Mechatronics Workshop (2026), NSF, \$25,000, Senior Personnel
- Dean's Research Fund (2026), \$2,500, PI
- AI for Business Intelligence in TSMC (2025), \$30,000, Co-PI

• Awarded Grants During PhD (Proposal Writer or Report Writer)

- **D-ISN** (Disrupting Operations of Illicit Supply Networks), **Title:** Disrupting Illicit Trafficking by Dissecting Geometry of Darkweb and Cryptocurrency Transactions, **Source:** National Science Foundation (NSF), **Grant Period:** 2020-2023, **Status:** Under review, **Amount:** \$349,896, **Role:** Assisting Grant writer.
- **SaTC** (Secure & trustworthy Cyberspace), **Title:** Cybersecurity Big Data Research for Hacker Communities: A Topic and Language Modeling Approach, **Source:** National Science Foundation (NSF), **Grant Period:** 2019-2022, **Grant No.:** 1936370, **Status:** Funded, **Funded Amount:** \$510,624, **Role:** Assisting Grant writer.
- **SaTC-DGE** (Secure & trustworthy Cyberspace - Division of graduate Education), **Title:** Cybersecurity Big Data and Analytics Sharing Platform, **Source:** National Science Foundation (NSF), **Reporting Year:** 2019, **Grant No.:** 1719477, **Status:** Funded, **Funded Amount:** \$180,000, **Role:** Assisting Report writer.

PROFESSIONAL SERVICES (REVIEWED JOURNALS & CONFERENCES)

Workshop Chair

- ICIS Associate Editor, 2026
- IEEE Security and Privacy (S&P) Workshop on Human-Machine Intelligence for Security Analytics (HMI-SA), 2025
- IEEE ICDM Workshop on Machine Learning and Cybersecurity (MLC) 2022, 2023, 2024, 2025

Program Committee

- IEEE Security and Privacy (S&P) Workshop on Deep Learning and Security 2022, 2023, 2024
- IEEE ICDM workshop on Deep Learning for Cyber Threat Intelligence (DL-CTI); 2020
- Informs Data Science Workshop; 2021

Journal Reviewer

- MIS Quarterly, 4 times
- Journal of Management Information Systems (JMIS), 11 times
- IEEE Transactions on Dependable and Secure Computing (TDSC), 2 times
- IEEE Transactions on Information Forensics and Security (TIFS)
- ACM Transactions on Management Information Systems (TMIS)
- International Journal of Electronic Commerce (IJEC)
- Information Systems Frontiers , 2 times

AWARDS & HONORS

- Best Paper Award in WITS 2025
- Best Paper Award in IEEE S&PW 2024
- Invited Panelist in AMCIS 2024
- IEEE Senior Member, 2024
- Best Reviewer Award in INFORMS Workshop on Data Science, 2021
- Best Paper Award in IEEE ISI, November 2021
- Best Reviewer Award, Informs Data Science Workshop, 2021
- LaSalle Teaching Excellence Award, 2021
- Selected for Doctoral Consortium of International Conference on Information Systems (ICIS), 2020
- Paul S. and Shirley Goodman Award, 2020
- IEEE S&P Student Travel and Registration Award for Deep Learning and Security Workshop, 2020
- Best Paper Award Runner-up in IEEE ISI, 2018
- Concordia University 25th Anniversary Fellowship – Engineering and Computer Science Department, January 2015 (Awarded based on academic excellence to a few students each year)
- Power Corporation of Canada Graduate Fellowship, 2015 (Awarded based on academic excellence to 5 students each year)
- Graduate Conference and Exposition Award, 2015
- Ranked 1st in RoboCup Iran Open International Competitions 2007, Middle Size Robots
- Ranked 1st university student in Fall 2007 and Spring 2008 with GPAs of 18.43/20.00 and 19.50/20.00, respectively

WORK EXPERIENCE

SAP Canada (Internship)

2015

- **Role:** Data & Software Engineer (Users behavior analysis for order management systems)
- **Address:** 999 Boulevard de Maisonneuve West Montreal, Quebec H3A 3L4 Canada.