CS 8803/4803 Sociotechnical Security

Semester Project Final Report & Presentation

Georgia Tech, Fall 2026

Overview

Congrats! You've made it to the end of the semester :) This document will guide you in tying together everything you have done on your projects the last couple of months to demonstrate your understanding of sociotechnical harms and human-centered methods.

Reminder: You should use either the USENIX Security Overleaf template (Overleaf v.2023) or the Word template (Word v.2022). This is the same template you used for the project proposal and midpoint report, so feel free to continue editing your previous submissions.

This report outlines what you should include in your final report and project presentation, as well as how these will be graded.

Final Report

Your final report must include the following:

1. Introduction
2. Related Work
3. Methods
4. Findings
5. Discussion
6. AI Disclosure
7. Open Science

Final reports must be at least 6 pages and no more than 10, not including references and appendices.

Please upload your final report to Gradescope by 11:59pm on December 11

Continue reading for details on each of the sections (mostly copied over from the midpoint report instructions). Each of the papers we have read and discussed in class are also great examples.

Note on how to read my suggestions: When I indicate things you should include in each section, these do not have to be separate, marked sections. They are just recommendations for what you might choose to include in the **prose** of your report.

Introduction

The introduction should set the stage for your project and communicate **why** it matters. Readers of your report should understand your research motivation within a few paragraphs. Things you might include:

- **Problem Statement:** Clearly describe the problem that your project addresses. You can use both academic and mainstream media articles to highlight the point.
- **Motivation and Significance:** Explain why this issue is important in the broader landscape of sociotechnical security; it's not enough to say that there's an issue, you need to try to get people to care about the issue. Consider answering questions like: (a) what specific user group(s) are most affected? (b) how does this problem intersect with security, privacy, or well-being? (c) Why is this problem understudied, misunderstood, or technically challenging to address? (d) what is at stake if we do not examine this problem?
- **Approach:** How do you propose solving the problem you articulate in your problem statement?

- **Scope and Project:** Tightly define the boundaries of your study. By this, you should clarify what you are measuring, designing, or evaluating. You should clearly state what is out of scope as well. For example, *"We focus on user-to-user harassment reports on mid-sized platforms"* or *"Our prototype targets recovery from financial control abuse, not detection"*.
- **Project Outcomes:** End with a short sneakpeak of what you aim to contribute (e.g., a measurement framework, prototype, typology, or set of policy recommendations). Typically the final paragraph of an introduction describes what you did and what you found.

Related work

The Related Work section positions your project within the existing scholarly and industry landscape; some of which we may have covered in the lectures. It should demonstrate your awareness of what has been done already by existing scholars, and where your work contributes something new. Good related work sections are selective, analytical, and integrative; not just summaries of prior papers. I am not looking for whether you have cited every possible source, but rather that you seem to have a good grasp of the areas of prior work (e.g., subsection headings in academic papers) that your project relates to. Things you might include:

- **Core Sources**: Cite at least 3–5 relevant (academic or gray literature) works, ideally mixing peer-reviewed papers, industry reports, or credible white papers (e.g., from platforms, non-governmental organizations, or research institutes). This is exploring if you've done your reading beforehand and have some sensitivity to who is already conducting research in this area. For each source, briefly explain what it contributes (is it a method you'd like to copy, empirical data you want to build on?) and how it informs the direction of your own project. For example: *"Thomas et al. (2021) categorize hate and harassment typologies, but our project intends to apply this framework to understand scams on moderated livestream platforms"*
- **Identify Gaps:** To identify a "gap", you should state how your project builds upon, extends, or contradicts others who have done work in this space. For instance, you might be testing an assumption (e.g., how safe are child safety features on Meta?), or highlighting that there are gaps in existing datasets in relation to hate and harassment. See if you can bridge this approach with a short paragraph which connects this literature to the methods you've chosen to use. For example: *"These studies emphasize individual harms, but our project focuses on relational ones between families."*

Methods

This section should include how you approached your research question (qualitative, quantitative, mixed-methods approach), alongside any ethical or logistical challenges you encountered. You should also include a brief discussion of the limitations of your approach.

Findings

This section presents what you have learned so far from your work as a group and will probably take up the most amount of space in your document. It should be substantial and tightly anchored to your research questions, not a loose collection of observations. Strong Findings sections are structured, selective,and honest: findings help to highlight the most important patterns in your data that you have collected, acknowledge uncertainty or gaps, and avoid exaggerating what the evidence can support. Things you might include:

- **Reconnection to Research Questions or Objectives:** Begin by briefly restating the 2—3 guiding research questions or goals that your findings speak to. Then, make explicit which findings address which questions. For example: *"How do users recognize and respond to algorithmic harassment?"*" or *"How can an interface redesign improve user comprehension of recovery options after they have been compromised?"*"

- **Data Overview and Scope of Analysis:** Provide a concise description of your data that explains your findings and grounds what your claims are based on. For instance, this may include the number and type of participants, the amount of collected data (e.g., interview hours, survey responses, log entries), or the breadth of artifacts analyzed (e.g., platform policies, interface screenshots, prototype test sessions).
- **Key Themes, Patterns, or Results:** Present the main findings in a structured way. If you've used a qualitative approach, this might mean organizing your section into around 2–4 thematic subsections that describe recurring patterns, user strategies, pain points, or breakdowns, each linked back to your research questions. If you've used a quantitative or mixed-methods approach, this might involve reporting descriptive statistics, significant relationships, or notable trends. In both cases, prioritize clarity over too much detail; the goal is to convince the reader what is most important in your data and why.
- **Illustrative Evidence (Quotes, Screenshots, Figures, or Tables):** Support your claims with concrete evidence drawn directly from your data. This might include short interview excerpts, anonymized user quotes, screenshots of relevant interfaces, simplified system diagrams, or tables and charts summarizing key metrics. Make sure each piece of evidence is clearly labeled and interpreted in the text; do not assume that someone will be able to get to your conclusion without your explanation; ask yourself if someone would be able to understand what this means.

A note on the appendix: If you run out of space, additional figures and tables can go into the appendix and linked to them from the main body of the report. However, your report needs to stand on its own without the appendix. This means that if a reader chooses to not look at the content in the appendix, they should still be able to understand the project's core contributions.

Discussion

This section interprets your findings, explains why they matter, and situates your project within existing work and practice. It should move beyond repeating results, instead offering a clear, reasoned account of what your work contributes and what its limits are; in simple terms, why does what you found matter?

- **Interpretation and Contribution:** Explain what your main findings mean in relation to your original research questions, connecting them explicitly to relevant literature, theories, or frameworks you drew on in your Introduction and Related Work. What do your findings add or contest? Clarify how your results extend, challenge, or refine prior work, and spell out any specific implications for design, policy, practice, or future systems. For example: *"how interfaces, protocols, or organizational processes could be altered in light of your evidence"*.
- **Limitations:** Reflect on the scope of your study, including methodological constraints (e.g., sample size, recruitment biases, setting, or measures), and what these imply for how far your conclusions can reasonably be extended. Be explicit about which claims you can make with confidence, which remain tentative, and which questions your study could not answer.
- **Future Work and Unresolved Questions:** Identify the most important open questions or new lines of inquiry that your project has revealed, and outline concrete next steps that a future study team, or practitioner could take. This might include deeper analyses you were unable to complete, additional populations or contexts that should be studied, or follow-up evaluations of proposed designs or interventions.

AI Disclosure statement

Some of you may have used generative AI tools for various parts of your project and report (e.g., for light editing of text, to help find related work, as a second coder for qualitative coding, etc). Please disclose any AI use here along with how responses were vetted.

Open science statment

An important component of any research project is reproducibility. For that reason, many top CS conferences are now requiring open science statements in addition to research artifacts that could help other researchers reproduce your study's results. For example: *https://www.usenix.org/conference/usenixsecurity26/call-for-papers*, search "open science". In this spirit, you will be submitting artifacts for your projects. You can either do this by uploading your materials to GitHub or OSF and including a link at the end of your report in a section titled "Open Science".

As for what to include, this will vary by project. You should ask yourself, what would someone need to be able to run my study/experiments on their own dataset? Some examples:

- Qualitative work: You might include your codebook and interview protocol/survey questions
- Content analysis of social media data: You might include a list of data sources (e.g., subreddits you analyzed), along with a codebook
- System project: implementation of your system with instructions in a README file for how to set it up.

IMPORTANT: Raw data from human participants (e.g., from surveys or interviews) should never be shared, especially if your GitHub or OSF file is public. Make sure that whatever you share does not contain any participant identifiers!

If you have any questions for what to include here or want to double check that you are including the right things, ask Veronica.

Project Presentation

You will have 10 minutes to present your work, followed by 5 minutes for questions from the audience (and Veronica). Because we are squeezing in a lot of presentations, time will be kept and you will be cut off if your presentation goes long. Veronica will warn you when there are 3 minutes remaining, 1 minute remaining, and when time is up. You will have a 1 minute grace period to wrap up after time is called.

Please upload your slides to Gradescope by 2pm on the day you are presenting

Your talk should briefly introduce the problem you are addressing, clearly state your research questions, briefly describe what others have done (e.g., the 1-2 most closely related sources), explain your methodology (including how you collected your data), and then present your main results and their implications. You might not have time to discuss all of your results. In that case, you are welcomed to select the most interesting results to include in your presentation. Think of the presentation as a 10-minute teaser for your paper; present the work in such a way that someone would want to go read the full paper to learn more. If you have multiple team members, all team members are expected to speak for roughly an equal amount of time.

If you would like feedback on your slides before you present, you are welcome to share them with Veronica in advance for comments on clarity, structure, and content.

Grading

The final report will be graded based on:

- timeliness (is it turned in on time)
- completeness (does it have all the required sections)
- clarity (can I understand it)
- Results (Do results follow from the methods? Do the results address the problem statement?)
- Methodological soundness (did you use the methods appropriately)
- Comprehensiveness of related work (do you seem to have an understanding of the related work areas surrounding your project)

The presentation will be graded based on:

- Timeliness (is it turned in on time)
- Adhering to time limit
- Inclusion of required items (problem, RQs, brief related work, methodology, results, implications for digital safety)
- Clarity of the talk (are your slides understandable, are you speaking confidently and clearly)
- Ability to answer Q&A questions (can you answer questions about your work)
- Attendance (are you present in class on both days, barring exceptional circumstances)