Ryan M. Smith

PhD Candidate, Computer Science • University of British Columbia, InfoVis Lab
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EDUCATION

University of British Columbia, Vancouver, BC *Sep 2022 – May 2027 (expected)*
PhD Candidate, Computer Science · InfoVis Lab · Supervisor: Dr. Tamara Munzner

New York University, New York, NY *Sep 2014 – May 2016*
MA, Psychology · Focus: Cognitive & Social Psychology

Marist College, Poughkeepsie, NY *Sep 2010 – May 2014*
BA, Psychology · Dual minor in Communication & Business

RESEARCH INTERESTS

Text visualization; personal and medical data; visualizing vague and imprecise language; patient–clinician communication; visualization-as-input

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

InfoVis Lab, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, BC *Sep 2022 – Present*
Graduate Researcher · Supervisor: Dr. Tamara Munzner

- Designing and building patient-centric visualization systems (HealthTale, published at IEEE VIS 2026; SymptomTale) that transform unstructured patient narratives into structured timelines for clinical encounters.
- Collaborating with industry partner Thrive Health to connect research prototypes to real clinical workflows.

Visual Thinking Lab, Northwestern University, Evanston, IL *Feb 2020 – May 2022*
Volunteer Research Assistant · PI: Dr. Steven Franconeri

- Designed, ran, and analyzed studies on visual perception of data using R and Excel.
- Contributed to multiple studies on color saturation, graph size, shape rotation, and scatterplot area.
- Prepared study stimuli, coding sheets, and analysis scripts.

DePaul University Social Cognition Lab, Chicago, IL *Sep 2019 – May 2022*
Volunteer Research Assistant · PI: Dr. Kimberly Quinn

- Contributed to manuscript development from existing lab data.
- Conducted literature reviews and presented synthesized findings at lab meetings.

PUBLICATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

Peer-Reviewed Journal & Conference Papers

Smith, R., Chin, K. D., & Munzner, T. (2026). "HealthTale: A Patient-Centric Health Story Visualization Tool." *IEEE Transactions on Visualization and Computer Graphics (Proc. IEEE VIS 2026)*, to appear. arXiv:2605.20207.

Oddo, M. I. B., **Smith, R.**, Kobourov, S., & Munzner, T. (2026). "Visualization Tasks for Unlabeled Graphs." *IEEE Transactions on Visualization and Computer Graphics*, 32(7), 5969–5983. doi:10.1109/TVCG.2026.3676348

Peer-Reviewed Workshop Papers

Smith, R. (2026). "User Study 47B: Interactive Dashboards After Answer-First Analytics." In *VIS×SciFi Workshop, IEEE VIS 2026*.

Smith, R. (2025). "Position Paper: Potential Areas of Bias in Visualization-as-Input Systems." In *Proc. Workshop on Envisioning a Research Agenda for Input Visualization, IEEE VIS 2025*.

Conference Presentations

Smith, R., Chin, K. D., & Munzner, T. (May 2026). "HealthTale: A LLM-Assisted Health Story Visualization Tool." BC AI Research-to-Adoption Summit.

Smith, R., & Munzner, T. (May 2025). "How Do Patients Visualize Their Own Health Stories?" SeattleVis Day, Seattle, WA.

Smith, R., Bellovary, A., & Quinn, K. (February 2021). "Sense of Place and Student Wellbeing: Preliminary Evidence for Impact of Liked but Not Disliked Spaces." Society for Personality and Social Psychology Annual Convention, Virtual.

Smith, R., Krenzer, W., Quinn, K., & Gomez, P. (November 2020). "The Cheerleader Effect: Replication and Extension." Psychonomic Society Annual Meeting, Virtual.

GRANTS AND FUNDING

MITACS Accelerate Grant IT44143 *2025*
Two-year, CAD $90,000 grant for industry collaboration with Thrive Health.

MITACS Accelerate Grant IT38408 *2024*
One-year, CAD $45,000 grant for industry collaboration with Thrive Health.

AWARDS, HONORS, & CERTIFICATIONS

IEEE VIS 2026 Doctoral Colloquium *2026*
- Selected participant; presented thesis work to a panel of senior visualization researchers.

Instructional Skills Workshops for Graduate Students *2026*
- Completed the Instructional Skills Workshop (ISW), an internationally recognized, intensive 24-hour teaching certification focused on learner-centred pedagogy and instructional design

UBC Faculty of Science Excellence in Service Award *2025*
- Annual award given to two students in UBC's Faculty of Science for service and positive impact.
- Recognized for advocating an embedded counselor within the Faculty of Science, enabling graduate students to access mental-health support without navigating the central university queue.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Lecturer · COGS 303, Research Methods in Cognitive Systems, UBC *Jan 2026 – May 2026*
- Designed and delivered a full undergraduate research methods course, consisting of 38 students, including development of syllabus, instructional materials, and assessment structure.
- Implemented an active-learning, high-engagement classroom model emphasizing small-group, application-focused sessions and student-led inquiry

Teaching Assistant · CPSC 447, Introduction to Visualization, UBC *Winter 1 2023, Winter 2 2025*
- Supported course design and grading for assignments, projects, and exams on data visualization.
- Held regular office hours and Piazza discussions; provided detailed feedback on student projects.
- Maintained course website and materials.

Teaching Assistant · CPSC 103, Introduction to Systematic Program Design, UBC *Winter 2 2023*
- Graded assignments and tests; gave feedback focused on clean, efficient programming practices.
- Ran course labs covering core programming concepts and provided technical support for student projects.

Teaching Assistant · CPSC 100, Computational Thinking, UBC *Winter 1 2022*
- Led course labs introducing foundational computer-science concepts and problem solving.
- Graded assignments and exams.

SERVICE AND LEADERSHIP

President · Computer Science Graduate Student Association, UBC *May 2026 – May 2027*
- Leading the CS GSA; representing CS graduate students to the department and university.

Vice President · Computer Science Graduate Student Association, UBC *May 2024 – May 2025*
- Co-led CS GSA operations, events, and advocacy.

Councillor · Graduate Student Society, Executive Oversight Committee, UBC *Apr 2024 – Present*
- Elected councillor representing graduate students; serve on the Executive Oversight Committee.

TA Union Steward · CUPE 2278, Computer Science Department, UBC *Feb 2024 – Present*
- Department steward for the UBC teaching-assistant union; represent TAs on labor and workload issues.

Reviewer · ACM CHI 2026 *2025*
- Reviewed submissions for the ACM CHI 2026 conference.