# Ishika Ray, Ph.D.

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## SUMMARY

*Behavioral researcher with 7+ years of mixed-methods expertise across digital product development. Led multi-method research initiatives that improved user categorization accuracy from 24% to 80%, driving a $285K NSF-funded project on inclusive survey frameworks. Applied rapid experimentation and iterative testing to streamline workflows—reducing a government eligibility process from 17 steps to 7 and enhancing usability for 500+ end users. Skilled at synthesizing insights into actionable strategies that align product design with user needs and technical requirements.*

## EXPERIENCE

UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON | **Behavioral Researcher** | SEP 2018 - PRESENT, *Seattle, WA*

- Led experimental research program investigating bias in identity measurement across human categorization and AI systems – using card sorting (N=139), survey design (N=336), and factorial design (N=191); revealing systematic patterns that inform more inclusive product design.
- Redesigned demographic survey methodology that increased categorization accuracy for non-prototypical users by up to 46 percentage points; secured $285K NSF grant and established research operations framework now adopted across multiple labs.
- Directed a 13-member research team through full study cycles: problem framing, design, data synthesis, and executive storytelling – producing 3 publications and 7 conference presentations.
- Conducted institutional survey research to inform policy, advocating for award equity for international PhD researchers (20% of student body).

DELOITTE | **Business Analyst (Contract)** | APR 2024 - SEP 2024, *Denver, CO*

- Conducted contextual inquiry and user interviews with 500+ social workers to identify pain points; collaborated with engineering and product teams to redesign eligibility workflow from 17 steps to 7 through iterative prototyping and moderated usability testing.
- Revitalized a project stalled for 18 months by aligning client, engineering, and product stakeholders on a clear product roadmap, delivering 80% of feature commitments within a single 6-week sprint.

CODING IT FORWARD | **Fellow (Product Management)** | JUN 2023 - AUG 2023, *Remote*

- Selected from 2,500+ applicants to lead an IT modernization project; cleaned and standardized over 3,000 records from 15+ disparate sources to launch the county's first centralized database of 953 verified applications.
- Conducted user research, including interviews, focus groups, and user testing that diagnosed stakeholder skepticism and unblocked a stalled initiative, paving the way for a revamped service model projected to save $500k+ and reduce onboarding touchpoints by 43% (from 7 to 4).

## EDUCATION

**UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON**
*Seattle, WA*
SEP 2018- DEC 2025

- **PhD in Experimental Psychology (Data Science)**
-Bolles Dissertation Grant
-PDS Departmental Grant
-SPSP Travel Grant
- **MS in Psychology**

**ASHOKA UNIVERSITY**
*Sonipat, India*
AUG 2014- MAY 2017

- **BA in Psychology**
-Graduated cum laude with Honors
-Genpact Fellow

## SKILLS

**Methods:** In-depth interviews, focus groups, usability testing, survey design, concept testing, A/B testing, field & diary studies

**Quant and Analysis:**
Regression modeling, ANOVA, t-tests, descriptive statistics, MaxDiff, R/RStudio (tidyverse, ggplot2, glm), Python (pandas), SPSS, SQL (basic), Excel, Qualtrics, CloudResearch, Google AI Studio, Jira, GitHub

**Product Collaboration:**
User journey mapping, persona development, wireframing, product discovery research, stakeholder alignment, UX storytelling