



Internet Meme Researcher



Sam Ayele Research Portfolio



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ABOUT ME



My name is Sam Ayele. I was born in Ethiopia, raised in California, and currently living and working in Italy. I am a cognitive scientist who grew up curious on the internet and got lucky enough to try finding the answers to my questions. .





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CREATIVITY

I show resourcefulness and passion in all areas of my life



AUTHENTICITY

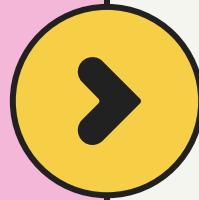
I am not afraid to be myself and encourage others to do the same



CURIOSITY

I have a curious mind that is always looking for grand questions to answer

**CORE
VALUES**





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SCHOOL
FOR ADVANCED
STUDIES
LUCCA

I am a PhD student at IMT Lucca in Lucca, Italy. I study cognitive, computational, and social neuroscience

I am a member of the Social and Affective Neuroscience group lead by Professor Luca Cecchetti.



WHAT I DO



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2019-2020

**UCSC
Psychology**

Undergrad RA

Summer 2020

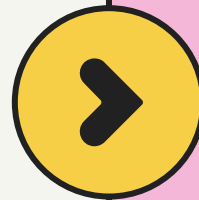
Social Innovation Lab

User Experience
Intern

2020-2024

IMT Lucca

PhD Researcher



**RESEARCH
EXPERIENCE**



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MY WORK: Recent projects





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Project 1

Categorizing Internet Memes

What is the definition of an “internet meme”? Is there such a thing? This project explores how internet users categorize digital media as “a meme”. We find that the use of the word “meme” depends on the linguistic community using it

UC Santa Cruz 2020



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Project 2

Recipe for a Good Meme

What are the ingredients that make a good meme? Is it humor? Incongruity? We use an online survey test aesthetic evaluation of memes, the features of the meme, and the emotions elicited.

IMT Lucca 2021-2022



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Project 3

Psychobiology of Internet Memes

What happens in our bodies when we understand a meme? And what happens when we don't? In two experiments, we use facial electromyography and skin conductance response to find the biological markers of meme fluency.

IMT Lucca 2023-2024

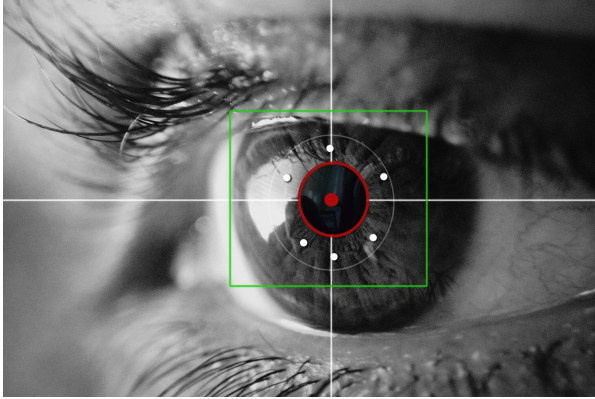


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Project 4

All Eyes on Memes

Do people look at memes in the same way? Do we tend to look more in the images or text for clues? Using eye-tracking technology, I investigated how gaze patterns predict understanding and liking of memes

University of Oslo 2024



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AWARDS AND HONORS

**Chancellor's
Undergraduate
Research Award**

**Dean's
Undergraduate
Research Award**

**21st Century
Da Vinci Award**

**UCEAP Global
Scholarship**

**College Nine
Travel Fellowship**

**Norway Fulbright
Alternate**





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THANKS

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