How Privacy Operates When Family Life is Datafied
Priya Kumar, University of Maryland

Abstract:
For most of us, social media and mobile apps are embedded into the fabric of everyday life. But journalists, policymakers, and researchers warn—with good reason—that such technologies pose privacy concerns. Some even wonder if privacy is a thing of the past. My research changes the terms of this debate. Instead of asking whether privacy exists, I examine how privacy operates when everyday life is datafied. In other words, how do people and technologies collectively enact privacy when sociotechnical systems mediate such family activities as a woman managing her pregnancy or a child playing games? In this talk, I'll explore how privacy works in two contexts: digital parenting and children's digital practices. My digital parenting research studies how experts judge parents for posting pictures of their children online and shifts questions of privacy toward concerns of political economy. My work with children reframes privacy and security not as things adults need to protect for children, but as skills that adults can help children strengthen. Through these projects, I argue that networked understandings of privacy are key for imagining more just and equitable relationships between people and technology.

Bio:
Priya Kumar is a PhD Candidate in the College of Information Studies at the University of Maryland, College Park, where she studies how privacy operates when everyday life is datafied. Her dissertation examines privacy issues related to parents posting pictures of children online. With collaborators across the U.S. and the Netherlands, she has conducted research on how young children conceptualize privacy online, how low-income families navigate digital privacy and security challenges, and how people approach privacy when using such mobile technologies as fitness trackers and intelligent personal assistants. She has authored or co-authored 27 peer-reviewed journal articles, conference proceedings, conference papers, and book chapters across the fields of human-computer interaction, media and communication studies, and information science. Priya has also written about her work for such media outlets as *Slate*, *Time*, *Pacific Standard*, and *Fast Company*, discussed it on public radio programs across the U.S., and been quoted in *NPR*, *Wired*, *Buzzfeed*, *Consumer Reports*, and the *Washington Post*. For more information visit https://priyakumar.org.