Abstract:
In recent years, location-sharing systems have become widely available (e.g. Foursquare, Glympse, Google Latitude). Sharing one’s location can serve many purposes, such as safety, coordination or staying connected. Nonetheless, people have been slow to adopt location-sharing social networks, despite the prevalence of smart phones. Researchers (and the media) blame this on a host of privacy concerns including informational, psychological, interactional and physical safety concerns. Our research looks at users and non-adopters of location-sharing social networks to understand whether privacy concerns really impact usage. We discovered that many location-sharing privacy concerns are actually just symptoms stemming from higher-level motivations to preserve or enhance relationship boundaries. While the lower-level concerns do not predict adoption (cf. a widely recognized “privacy paradox” where behaviors do not reflect stated concerns for privacy in online technologies), these higher-level motivations do predict usage. In turn, motivation to preserve or enhance boundaries can be largely explained by a communication style trait the FYI communication style. This communication style fully mediates the effect of predictors such as the Big-Five personality traits on location-sharing social network adoption. In this talk, I present our validated model of location-sharing adoption. I also present findings from our latest study, which investigates how to design location-sharing systems that also appeal to people who are not FYI-style communicators. Our ongoing work explores the role of communication style and relationship boundary perceptions in other social media use.

Bio:
Xinru is an Assistant Professor in Computer Information Systems at Bentley University. She holds a Ph.D. in Information and Computer Science with concentration in Informatics from University of California, Irvine, and B.S. and M.S. in Computer Science, specialization in Human-Computer Interaction, from Stanford University. At UC Irvine, she was awarded a 4-year Dean’s fellowship and her research has been funded by Disney Research, Samsung and the Yahoo! Best Dissertation Fellowship Award. Xinru’s dissertation also received the 2015 iSchools Doctoral Dissertation Award as it was “judged the best completed during the preceding academic year by any member institution of the iSchools organization.” She has also spent several years working in the information risk industry, leading interaction design and managing the product lifecycle as a product manager. Utah’s Women Tech Council chose Xinru as a finalist for their Rising Star Tech award which recognizes women “driving innovation, leading technology companies, and [who] are key contributors to the community.” Her work explores psychological and social factors that influence attitudes towards use (or non use) of social media such as location-sharing apps. Her latest work focuses on Privacy, Technology Non Use, Individual, Group and Psychosocial Developmental Differences connected to social media use. Xinru has published her work in leading conferences in her field and enjoys volunteering in various community programs working with youth.