

# El Hajj Chehade, Saïd

BC 266, EPFL CH-1014 Lausanne, Switzerland

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## Education

### EPFL

Lausanne, Switzerland

PhD in Computer Science

Sept. 2023 - Present

- Security and Privacy Field. Specializing in Web and Browser Privacy and Security.
- EDIC Fellowship Recipient.
- **Advisor:** Prof. Carmela Troncoso.

**Relevant Courses:** Advanced Machine Learning and Advanced Topics in Privacy Preserving Technologies.

### American University of Beirut

Beirut, Lebanon

B.E. in Computer and Communication Engineering

Aug. 2019 - June. 2023

- Minor in applied mathematics.
- Graduated With High-Distinction. Cumulative GPA **4.23**.
- **Relevant Courses:** Database Design, Advanced data-structures, Algorithms, Statistics, Cryptography, Machine Learning, Networking, Network Security, GPU programming, Deep Neural Networks, Information Theory.

**Awards:** Dean's Honor List (All semesters), Merit Scholarship (I ranked **3rd** in the Lebanese national secondary education exams)

### College Universel

Chemini, Lebanon

High School

Apr 2016 - May 2019

- Passed with High Distinction: 19.03/20 nationally and 3rd rank in Official Exams.
- Awarded scholarship from the Lebanese Prime Minister.

## Experience

### Research Intern

London, United Kingdom

Brave Browser and Imperial College London

June. 2025 - August. 2025

- Worked with Prof. Hamed Haddadi and the Brave research team on creating optimized page representations for text-based web agents to be used in large-scale security and privacy web measurements.
- Produced a middle layer between DOM and Accessibility tree that preserves the semantic meaning in the page.
- Generated proposal and validated findings during internship, and continuing with an upcoming academic submission.

### Visiting Researcher

St. Ingbert, Germany

Secure Web Application Group - CISPA

Jul. 2024 - Sept. 2024

- Worked with Prof. Ben Stock on unsafe parameters and authorization issues in HTTP requests for authenticated sessions.
- Developed a mirrored browser setup for synchronized requests from two controlled user accounts.
- Managed a group of 5 volunteers for large-scale semi-manual experiments.

### Research Assistant

Lausanne, Switzerland

SPRING Lab - EPFL

Sept. 2023 - Present.

Working on the intersection between web-measurement, web-privacy and browsers.

### Lead Developer (Full Stack)

Beirut, Lebanon

Test Prep Institute

May. 2022 - Sept. 2023

- Managed team of 3 to build an online educational platform. Helped company implement automated tests and decrease student processing time by 70%.
- Helped design an architecture spanning a secure student assessment environment, adaptive questions based on performance, classroom database system, user access control and live tracking exam statistics. These features allowed the CEO to expand to a larger market of institutions in Lebanon.
- Managed *Git* repository and Deployment on *Heroku* for *Django* Build with embedded *React* frontend through *Webpack*. This helped get 98% up-time on the server.
- Lead strategy development by setting task priorities, and timelines. This helped deploy the initial version in one month.
- Got offer to stay for equity to create the IT department.

### Undergraduate Research Assistant

Beirut, Lebanon

American University of Beirut

Sept. 2022 - Jan. 2023

- Worked alongside Prof. Ibrahim Issa on the problem of "Fairness in Machine Learning".
- Formulated the problem statement and the direction of the project.
- Compiled literature review to have an understanding of the research domain standing.
- Prepared a report detailing the taxonomy, directions, and a new definition for Fairness.

**Academic areas:** Differential privacy, statistics & machine learning, linear algebra, optimization.

### Research Intern

Lausanne, Switzerland

SPRING Lab EPFL

Jun. 2022 - Aug. 2022

- Presented a differential DOM tree comparison algorithm and redefined web-breakage problem definition that paved the way for a promising paper endorsed by the lab advisor Prof. Carmela Troncoso.
- Built a pipeline to classify web-page breakages to increase the usability of Ad-blockers: Feature selection, and random-forests.
- Designed crawl experiments and evaluated model. I achieved comparable accuracy to state-of-the-art techniques.
- Published a USENIX Artifact for WebGraph: Smart Ad classifier under supervision of Dr. Sandra Siby.
- Published the first online Ad-block enabled web crawling tool that was recognized by my supervisor.  
*GitHub: Saïd2001/OpenWPM.*
- Created GitHub Crawlers to automate the ad-lock history tracking in Python.
- **Technical skills:** python, OpenWPM, sklearn, multiprocessing, sqlite, linux, Git.
- **Academic areas:** Web-crawling, machine learning, networking.

## Block-chain Developer Part-time

NiftyCraft

Remote, UAE

Jan. 2022 - Aug. 2022

- Published a smart-contract for NFT tokens for in-game usage.
- Researched and Integrated NFT authentication for exclusive content serving for token holders. Deployed and running in production.
- **Technical skills:** Solidity, reactJs, Git.
- **Academic areas:** cryptography

## Research Assistant

American University of Beirut

Beirut, Lebanon

Sep. 2020 - Dec. 2021

- Led a Human Centered Design (HCD) research project with Prof. Hazem Hajj to solve students' social needs in online education.
- Developed a full virtual campus platform on ElectronJS/Flask in the span of 1 year.
- Created a mesh topography conference interface using WEBRTC for up to 6 users.
- Scraped University website for courses information using Python.
- **Technical skills:** WebRTC, ReactJs, javascript, flask, python, docker, Git.
- **Academic areas:** human-centered design, communication, psychology

## Publications

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Saiid El Hajj Chehade, Florian Hantke, and Ben Stock. 403 Forbidden? Ethically Evaluating Broken Access Control in the Wild. *IEEE Security & Privacy*, 2025a [github.com/Saiid2001/vsf](https://github.com/Saiid2001/vsf)

Saiid El Hajj Chehade, Ben Stock, and Carmela Troncoso. Double-edged shield: On the fingerprintability of customized ad blockers. *USENIX Security*, 2025b [github.com/spring-epfl/flfp](https://github.com/spring-epfl/flfp)

Saiid El Hajj Chehade, Sandra Siby, and Carmela Troncoso. Sinbad: Saliency-informed detection of breakage caused by ad blocking. *IEEE Security & Privacy*, 2024 [github.com/spring-epfl/sinbad](https://github.com/spring-epfl/sinbad)

## Work in Progress / Submitted

## Projects and Competitions

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### Test Prep Institute EduTech Platform

Test Prep Institute

Beirut, Lebanon

August. 2022

[www.testprepinstitute.com](http://www.testprepinstitute.com)

### Final Year Project: Decentralized Private Polling Application in Lebanon for Sensitive Political and Societal Applications

American University of Beirut

Beirut, Lebanon

May. 2023

- Leading a team of 4 to create a deployment-ready system for Lebanese population.
- Using Threshold Homomorphic-encryption for tallying the polls.
- Designing and implementing an expandable semi-centralized structure of server nodes to share authority.
- Using touch-biometric for continuous passive user authenticity and uniqueness: it will help maintain a no-login non-intrusive design.
- Designing and implementing a donation blockchain system to reward poll participants (through a lottery) to increase incentive

### Course Projects

American University of Beirut

Beirut, Lebanon

- DeepDeepBlogger: T5 Pipeline to transform Academic Papers in Deep Learning to Informal Blogs May. 2023
- NMAP attack classifier. (*Bash, Python, sci-kit learn, tensorflow*) Dec. 2022
- GPU Sparse-matrix Sparse-matrix multiplication (*CUDA, C*) Dec. 2022
- sEMG to Hand movement MIMO System Identification (A+) May. 2022
- Relational Database to connect students with alumni for internships (A+) May. 2022
- Clustering Students Based on Joint Course Selection Behavior (A) Dec. 2021
- AES Encryption educational tool (A+) Dec. 2021

### IEEE Robotics Club Hackathon

American University of Beirut

Beirut, Lebanon

Nov. 2018

- Implemented a garbage collection robot using a raspberry Pi, Pi cam, python OpenCV, Arduino servo and motor control.

## Teaching

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COM-301 **Fall '23, '24, '25**, Teacher Assistant for Introduction to Computer Security

EPFL, Switzerland

CS-523 **Spring '25**, Teacher Assistant for Advanced Topics in Privacy Enhancing Technologies

EPFL, Switzerland

## Supervised Students

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Fall '25	<b>Master Semester Project</b> , Alexandre Dunoyer de Segonzac, Deep Advertisement Scanning and Clustering	<i>EPFL, Switzerland</i>
Spring '24	<b>Master Semester Project</b> , Julien Mettler, Systematic evaluation of logged-in cookie sensitivity	<i>EPFL, Switzerland</i>
Spring '24	<b>Master Semester Project</b> , Jonas Gloning, Evaluating the privacy impact of Chrome V3 on web extensions	<i>EPFL, Switzerland</i>
Fall '24	<b>Master Semester Project</b> , Pierre-Louis Bravais, Automated agents for web measurements	<i>EPFL, Switzerland</i>
Fall '24	<b>Master Semester Project</b> , Siim Markus Marvet, Investigating Server-side Google Tag Manager	<i>EPFL, Switzerland</i>

## Skills

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<b>Programming</b>	Python (Pandas, Tensorflow, NumPy, Scikit-learn, Spacy, etc.), C/C++, HTML/CSS, JavaScript, SQL, Java, Matlab, Cuda, Django
<b>Miscellaneous</b>	Linux, Shell (Bash), $\LaTeX$ (Overleaf/R Markdown), React, Unity, Figma, Docker, Git.
<b>Soft Skills</b>	Hands-on learning, Resourcefulness, Academic writing, Creative mindset, Timeline management, concise presentation.

## Certificates

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<b>Datacamp</b>	Image Processing with Keras in Python   Supervised Learning with Scikit-Learn   Unsupervised Learning in Python   Machine Learning with Tree-based Models
<b>Coursera</b>	Neural Networks and Deep learning   Introduction to TensorFlow for ML

## Languages

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<b>English</b>	Professional proficiency	IELTS 8.5
<b>French</b>	Bilingual Proficiency	Delf-B2
<b>Arabic</b>	Native Proficiency	

## Achievements

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2023	<b>Travel Grant</b> , Privacy-Enhancing Technologies Symposium (PETS)	<i>Switzerland</i>
2023	<b>Fellowship</b> , Summer Research Institute	<i>Switzerland</i>
2023	<b>EDIC Fellowship</b> , School of Computer Science, EPFL	<i>Switzerland</i>
2019-2023	<b>7x Dean's Honor List</b> , American University of Beirut	<i>Lebanon</i>

## Outreach

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<b>RAMP Program</b>		<i>Lausanne, Switzerland</i>
EPFL		<i>Present</i>
Volunteer as Mentor for PhD applicants at EPFL. Responsible for reviewing and giving feedback on CVs and Statement of Purpose letters.		
<b>Linux Workshop</b>		<i>Beirut, Lebanon</i>
Robotics Club, American University of Beirut		<i>Nov. 2022</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Volunteered with the Robotics Club at AUB to deliver an introductory Linux workshop. Presented in front of 50 students. They demanded a second one to be given soon.</li> </ul>		
<b>Kids Robotics Workshop</b>		<i>Chehim, Lebanon</i>
Independent Initiative		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Organized local robotics training course for 20 children. I motivated student interest for robotics and computer related fields of study. Prepared curriculum, book, and presentations for the course.</li> </ul>		
<b>First-Aid training</b>		<i>Chehim, Lebanon</i>
"Popular Rescue" local organization		<i>Jul. 2018</i>