Emily **Reardon**

Design for Futures That Love Us

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Artist, designer, and educator who designs, makes, and studies hybrid digital-analog works that invite participation rather than passive consumption, asking how digital technologies might deepen, rather than displace, our relationships with one another and with the worlds we inhabit. Offering public-interest alternatives to commercial tech, her work builds on her long tenure leading design and research at Sesame Street, recognized with an Emmy Award and patents in AI for learning.

CURRENT APPOINTMENTS

Fellow, Digital Futures Institute, **Columbia University**: Teachers College, 2025–present

EDUCATION

MFA, City University of New York, Hunter College: Integrated Media Arts, expected 2027

MA, New York University, Steinhardt School of Education: Education, Communication, & Technology, 2003

BA, Brown University, Double Major: Art/Semiotics; English and American Literature, with Honors, 1997

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Sesame Workshop

Director of User Experience, Digital Production, 2015–2025
Led design and collaborated on research for wide-ranging technology projects including machine learning/AI, computer vision, mixed reality, speech recognition, text-to-speech, cognitive toys, smart homes, wearables, learning and impact data, analysis, and visualization.

Director of Design Strategy, Content Innovation Lab, 2011–2015
Selected to be one of three directors in a new eight-person R&D lab focused on the intersection of emergent technologies, play, and learning to identify best practices and positively grow the impact and reach of Sesame Workshop experiences.

Director of Interaction Design and User Experience, Digital Media, 2008–2011
Led design across all Sesame Workshop sites, apps, and gaming platforms projects across all audiences, curricula, and TV show brands. Oversaw the creation of all interface and usability documents such as personas, scenarios, logic flows, wireframes, prototypes, and other deliverables that communicate project information.

Supervising Producer, 2007–2008
Proposed, designed, budgeted, scheduled, and produced digital technology projects. Managed staff and vendors.

Producer, 2002–2007
Produced two federally funded literacy interventions for underserved children and families (U.S. Dept. of Education, $2.15M combined), including a formative research report to the Corporation for Public Broadcasting: “Using Mobile Phones to Deliver Literacy Education to Parents and Children” and “Development and Evaluation of a Personalized, Handheld, Media-based Literacy Intervention.”

Technology Start Ups

Advisor, Think Human TV, 2019–present
Helped shape early product and strategic direction for the playable TV and socio-emotional learning startup.

Advisor and Equity Holder, Learning Yogi, 2015–2017
Helped shape early product and strategic direction for the adaptive learning platform; held an equity stake in the company.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Adjunct Professor, **New York University**, Graduate School of Education, 2010–2020

- Professional Applications of Educational Media & Technology (EDCT-GE-2211)
- Design Processes for Learning (EDCT-GE-2520)

- Narrative, Digital Media, & Learning (EDCT-GE-2520)
- Architecture of Learning Environments (EDCT-GE-2017)

Instructor, **School of Visual Arts**, Undergraduate Computer Art Program, 2016
- Narrative Workshop (SDD-1050)

Guest Lecturer, **Harvard University**, Graduate School of Education, Cambridge, MA, 2022, 2011, 2009
- Learning Design for All (EDU-T566), taught by Prof. Amin Marei, successor to Prof. Joe Blatt, 2022
- Informal Learning for Children (HT-123), co-taught with Prof. Joe Blatt and Sesame Workshop, 2011, 2009

AWARDS

2010 Emmy Award (named recipient), New Approaches in Children's TV, pbskids.org/electriccompany

2009 Peabody Award (team award), sesamestreet.org

2009 Emmy Award (team award), New Approaches in Children's TV, sesamestreet.org

PATENTS

Both patents developed in collaboration with IBM Watson, applying AI to learning.

Personalized Video Interjections Based on Learner Model and Learning Objective, US10506303B1, 2019 Link.

Phased Word Expansion for Vocabulary Learning, US11158203B2, 2021 Link.

PUBLICATIONS

Seibert-Nast, B., **Reardon, E.**, Foulds, K. (2022). Will UX Teach Us How to Get to Sesame Street? Investing in Child-Centred Research to Develop Sesame Street's Digital Design. Kids Included x Lego Report. Link.

Reardon, E., Kumar, V., & Revelle, G. (2022). Game Learning Analytics. Chapter in Handbook of Learning Analytics, 2nd Edition, pp. 152–162. Lang, C., Wise, A. F., Merceron, A., Gašević, D., & Siemens, G. (Eds.). SoLAR. Link.

Reardon, E., Brooks, M. (2016). Sesame Street, Letter Blocks, and Augmented Reality: Increasing Engagement and Learning. User Experience Magazine, 16(2). Link.

Revelle, G., Fisher, C. E., Kotler, J., App, C., Golub, N., Fenwick-Naditch, A., **Reardon, E.**, & Green, M. M. (2008). The Development and Evaluation of a Targeted, Assessment-Based Multimedia Literacy Intervention for Young Children At Risk: Formative Research Report. Report to the Corporation for Public Broadcasting.

REFEREED ARTICLES

Gray, J., **Reardon, E.**, & Kotler, J. (2017). Designing for Parasocial Relationships and Learning: Linear Video, Interactive Media, and Artificial Intelligence. In Proceedings of the 2017 Conference on Interaction Design and Children (IDC '17). ACM, New York, NY, 227–237. Link.

Revelle, G., **Reardon, E.**, Cook, K., Takeuchi, L., Ballagas, R., Mori, K., Horii, H., Raffle, H., Sandberg, M., & Spasojevic, M. (2014). Electric Agents: Combining Collaborative Mobile Augmented Reality and Web-Based Video to Reinvent Interactive Television. Computers in Entertainment, 12(3), Article 1, 21 pages. Link.

Ballagas, R., Dugan, T. E., Revelle, G., Mori, K., Sandberg, M., Go, J., **Reardon, E.**, & Spasojevic, M. (2013). Electric Agents: Fostering Sibling Joint Media Engagement through Interactive Television and Augmented Reality. In Proceedings of CSCW '13. ACM, New York, NY, 225–236. Link.

Raffle, H., Ballagas, R., Revelle, G., Horii, H., Follmer, S., Go, J., **Reardon, E.**, Mori, K., Kaye, J., & Spasojevic, M. (2010). Family Story Play: Reading With Young Children (and Elmo) Over a Distance. In Proceedings of CHI '10. ACM, New York, NY, 1583–1592. Link.

Revelle, G., **Reardon, E.**, Mays Green, M., Betancourt, J., & Kotler, J. (2007). The Use of Mobile Phones to Support Children's Literacy Learning. In Proceedings of Persuasive '07. Springer-Verlag, Berlin, Heidelberg, 253–258. Link.

REFEREED CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

Ballagas, R., Revelle, G., Buza, K., Horii, H., Mori, K., Raffle, H., Spasojevic, M., Go, J., Cook, K., **Reardon, E.**, Tsai, Y., & Paretti, C. (2011). Electric Agents: Combining Television and Mobile Phones for an Educational Game. In Proceedings of IDC '11. ACM, New York, NY, 227–230. Link.

Revelle, G. & **Reardon, E.** (2009). Designing and Testing Mobile Interfaces for Children. In Proceedings of IDC '09. ACM, New York, NY, 329–332. Link.

Revelle, G., Fisher, C., & **Reardon, E.** (2009). From Sticky Fingers on the Mouse to Fingerprints on the Screen: Research-based Interface Redesign when Children's Computer Games Move to Touch-Screen Mobile Devices. Workshop on Mobile User Experience Research, CHI '09. Boston, MA.

Revelle, G., Lawson, T., Mays-Green, M., & **Reardon, E.** (2008). Social Mobile Media for Young Children's Learning: Panwapa World Mobile. Stanford University Social Mobile Media Workshop, Palo Alto, CA.

EXHIBITIONS

Artist-Researcher Collective, Digital Futures Institute, Teachers College, Columbia University
Founded by Reardon.

"Research for Humans," International Society of the Learning Sciences (ISLS) Annual Meeting. Juried gallery show. Led, designed, and programmed by Reardon, uses Claude Code for coding, corpus architecture, and model integration, features OLMo, an open-source, open-weight, attributed, local-only, non-profit AI system built with Chris Moffett, and an automaton fabricated by Lucius Von Joo. University of California, Irvine, CA. June 16–19, 2026.

"Rethreaded," Screening Scholarship Media Festival (SSMF) hosted by the Collective for Advancing of Multimodal Research Arts. Juried gallery show. A performance piece led by OreOluwa Badaki, featuring sound design by Reardon and oil-based light projections by Lucius Von Joo and Chris Moffett. University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA. March 28, 2026.

SELECT INVITED TALKS AND PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS

Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) Trustees Meeting. Panel discussion. "The Kids Are Going to Be Alright (If We Act Now)." Moderated by Nisa Mackie, Deputy Director of Learning and Engagement, The Edward John Noble Foundation; with Alexa Arnold, Executive Director, The Anxious Generation Campaign. New York, NY. April 2026.

Digital Futures Institute Speaker Series, Teachers College, Columbia University. Invited public lecture. "New Public Systems: Designing Digital Futures That Love Us." New York, NY. March 2026.

Media and Social Change Lab, Teachers College, Columbia University. Invited talk. "Design: A Love Letter to Why." New York, NY. October 2025.

Pop and Play Podcast, Digital Futures Institute, Teachers College, Columbia University. Podcast guest interview. "How Children's Media Is Changing." New York, NY. April 2025.

EdTech Week. Invited talk followed by panel. "Designing EdTech for Impact: Sesame Street Case Study." New York, NY. October 2024.

Association of Science and Technology Centers Annual Conference. Juried talk followed by workshop. "Human-Centered AI: Developing Programs for Fostering Agency, Creativity, and Connection." Supported by National Science Foundation Grant No. 2230850. Chicago, IL. September 2024.

Well-Being by Design Fellowship, Joan Ganz Cooney Center. Invited talk. "Designing Sesame Street Play Experiences for Well-Being." New York, NY. 2024.

Human-Centered AI Literacy in Informal Learning Conference, New York Hall of Science. "Sesame Street and AI." New York, NY. October 2023.

FabLearn & Constructionism Conference. Invited talk. "How Sesame Workshop Develops Digital Products." New York, NY. October 2023.

Northeastern University. Guest lecture, Youth & Communication Technology course. "Sesame Street: Kids, Media, & Technologies." December 2020.

Digital Promise Fellowship. Invited talk. "Sesame Street: Supporting Caregivers to Support Kids' Learning." Virtual. October 2020.

MassArt Communication Design Lecture Series. Invited talk. “Sesame Street: Design with Purpose.” Boston, MA. April 2020.

Erasmus Co-Creating EdTech for Impact Conference. Keynote. “Lessons from Sesame Street.” Oulu, Finland. February 2020.

Fordham University. Guest lecture, Digital Research Methods course. “How Sesame Workshop Designs and Evaluates Interactive Experiences.” October 2019.

SXSW EDU. Juried short talk followed by panel. “Sesame Street: The Power of Storytelling.” March 2019.

Pratt Institute. Guest lecture, Growing Up Digital course. “Sesame Street: Art, Learning, and Technologies.” 2019.

IEEE Computer Society. Invited talk. “Mixed Reality: New Ways to Play & Learn.” Greenville, SC. 2016.

Women in Tech Speaker Series, New York Hall of Science. Invited talk followed by panel. “Sesame Street Family Play.” Panel moderated by Manoush Zomorodi, with Sherry Turkle. 2011.

Games for Change Conference. Invited talk. “Playing to Learn Global Citizenry: Panwapa World.” 2008.

Temple University. Guest lecture. “Designing Sesame Street for Interactive Play.” Philadelphia, PA. April 2005, 2006.

SERVICE

Grant Advising

- Grant Advisor, Humanistic Approaches to Artificial Intelligence Literacy Through Informal Learning (National Science Foundation Award #2230850). New York Hall of Science. 2023. Link.
- Grant Advisor, How Narrative Elements Can Deepen Engagement, Ideation, and Iteration for Girls and All Visitors During Museum-Based Engineering Design and Making Tasks (National Science Foundation Award #1712803). New York Hall of Science. 2017. Link.

Advisory Boards

- Advisory Board Member, Brooklyn S.T.E.A.M. Center, NYC Department of Education, Brooklyn Navy Yard. 2017–2021.

Conference Leadership

- Conference Co-Chair, International Conference on Interaction Design and Children (IDC). 2013.
- Publicity & Student Demos Chair, International Conference on Interaction Design and Children (IDC). 2015.

Peer Review

- Reviewer, International Conference on Interaction Design and Children (IDC). 2010–2020.
- Reviewer, Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems (CHI). 2012–2020.

Professional Judging

- Judge, National STEM Video Game Challenge. 2010–2017.
- Judge, Technology & Engineering Emmy Awards, Academy of Television Arts & Sciences. 2007.

Community Engagement

- Weekly First Grade Reading Partner, Brooklyn Prospect Charter School. Brooklyn, NY. 2015–2020.
- Weekly Soup Kitchen Helper, All Souls Unitarian Church, New York, NY. 2005–2008.

INTERESTS

Public-Interest and Ethical AI · Human-AI Interaction · Feminist and Alternative Tech Futures · Participatory and Civic Design · Play and Narrative-Based Learning · Universal and Inclusive Design · Printmaking as Social Practice · Gardening · Swimming