RUI (ASH) FENG

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RESEARCH INTERESTS

Designing and testing media-system interventions against polarization. Current work targets perceived polarization, the misreading of what the other side actually thinks, deriving intervention modules from documented mechanisms of out-group misperception and implementing them as feed and interface conditions in a platform-independent experimental simulator. The next step is controlled online tests of their causal effects; conversational AI is a parallel arena for the same logic.

EDUCATION

Kansai University – Osaka, Japan 2020–2022
M.A. in Sociology (Mass Communication), highest grade in all graded coursework
Thesis (in Japanese): The Role of the People's Daily WeChat Account in Political Propaganda — With a Focus on Patriotic Propaganda

Shanghai Polytechnic University – Shanghai, China 2014–2018
B.A. in English Language and Literature

University of Missouri–Kansas City, Kansas City, MO 2016
Exchange Student

MANUSCRIPTS

Feng, R. Lichtung: Turning Perceived-Polarization Mechanisms into Three Auditable Feed Interventions. Submitted to the Posters & Demos track, 32nd ACM Conference on Intelligent User Interfaces (IUI '27).

Feng, R. Constructing the National Community in Times of Crisis: Direction, External Relations, and Internal Representation in *People's Daily* WeChat Patriotic Propaganda during the COVID-19 Outbreak. *Working paper, 2026.*

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Lichtung – Feed-Based Experimental Platform for Perceived Polarization 2026–Present
Independent research project, sole researcher and developer – lichtung.ashfeng.com – github.com/rfb4c/Lichtung – video walkthrough

- Designed and built a platform-independent social feed simulator for research on perceived polarization, demonstrating the interventions as interactive feed- and interface-level modules and running without access to commercial-platform APIs, hence without dependence on platform cooperation.
- Derived three intervention modules from documented mechanisms of out-group misperception and implemented each: reranking that surfaces counter-stereotypical out-party content, a distribution-overlay UI that surfaces the moderate majority obscured by extreme voices, drawing on authoritative poll distributions, and an identity layer that displays shared non-political attributes.
- Built the offline LLM annotation pipeline behind the interventions: two judges from different model vendors score each item against criteria frozen before the run and merge under a fixed rule, with raw verdicts and inter-judge agreement inspectable in the interface.
- Extending it for online experiments, adding randomized condition assignment, behavioral telemetry (exposure sequence, dwell time, scroll depth, interactions), and pre/post survey linkage.

R-Selected – Cross-Perspective News Aggregator 2024–2025
Prior independent research project, sole developer – ashfeng.com/research

- Built and deployed a news aggregator that collected coverage of the same event from outlets across the political spectrum, premised on the assumption that breaking filter bubbles would reduce polarization.
- Shut it down after a systematic literature review found the filter-bubble account weakly evidenced (Bruns, 2019; Arguedas et al., 2022) and cross-cutting exposure capable of backfiring (Bail et al., 2018), moving the research target from *what users see* to *how they interpret it*; led directly to Lichtung.

Constructing the National Community in Times of Crisis: Direction, External Relations, and Internal Representation in *People's Daily* WeChat Patriotic Propaganda during the COVID-19 Outbreak 2026

Independent research project, sole researcher – original 2020 corpus recoded and reanalyzed in 2026 under a newly developed coding scheme; extends the M.A. thesis (Kansai University, 2022).

- Hand-coded every headline the *People's Daily* WeChat account published January–April 2020 (N = 2,318; 761 coded as patriotic propaganda) under an original two-level scheme separating narrative direction (inward vs. outward) from construction mechanism.
- Construction of the national community stayed inward-facing across all four crisis periods, splitting the standard in-group/out-group script: positive self-positioning and antagonistic othering rarely co-occurred. The dominant mechanism was horizontal affective solidarity, running on a reusable heroization template of formulaic title patterns and narrative paths.

JOURNALISM

The Cover (封面新闻, Sichuan Daily Press Group) – Beijing, China July–November 2022

Journalist

Reported on government, science and technology, and general news.

- **Investigation into employment discrimination against people who had recovered from COVID-19.** Prompted a policy response from the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security.
- **National infrastructure feature series.** Member of the feature team; the series received the China News Award, China's national journalism award.

The Paper (澎湃新闻, Shanghai United Media Group) – Shanghai, China February 2021–January 2022

Intern Journalist

Covered cultural affairs in writing, photography, and documentary video.

- **Documentary on Chinese students in Japan during the COVID-19 pandemic.** Independently reported, shot, and edited.
- **Photography desk and interactive VR dispatches.** Profiles of documentary photographers and exhibition criticism; photo essays and VR reports on pandemic-era Shanghai and urban redevelopment.

INDUSTRY EXPERIENCE

Accenture Japan (via acquisition of Neutral Co., Ltd., July 2025) – Nagoya, Japan 2023–Present

AI Engineer / Consultant July 2025–Present

- **Retrieval architecture over system documentation and code, major energy utility** (August 2026–Present). Proposal team member; running the client requirements sessions and drafting the technical approach: hybrid retrieval across the system's full artifact chain – requirements, design documents, source code – combining a vector store with a knowledge graph of the traceability relations between them.
- **Content-generation AI agent for a municipal government's international public relations division** (April–June 2026). Developer, then recovery lead; team of 10. Architecture and implementation in Python and Strands Agents: prompt design and generation pipeline.
- **AI-driven development workflow for a major energy utility** (August 2025–July 2026). Development lead, team of 5. Designed the AI workflow architecture and MCP integration for automated generation of Java error-handling code in a large-scale customer information system.

Software Engineer, Neutral Co., Ltd. 2023–July 2025

Full-stack agile development of a vehicle design support system for a major automotive manufacturer: detailed design through implementation, unit test, and system test in Java, TypeScript, and Oracle.

AWARDS AND HONORS

2025, Internal MVP Award, ITXO GenAI Center, Accenture Japan (generative-AI engagement for a major energy utility)

2023, China News Award (中国新闻奖) — the national journalism award of China (All-China Journalists Association); team award, national infrastructure feature series, The Cover

SKILLS

Research	Quantitative content analysis and qualitative close reading; coding scheme development and intercoder reliability.
Programming	Python, TypeScript, Java, SQL; React, Vue, pandas; Docker, AWS.
AI Systems	LLM agent development (Strands Agents, MCP); RAG with vector and graph databases; prompt and context engineering; production AI workflow design.

CERTIFICATIONS AND LANGUAGES

2026, Google Cloud Generative AI Leader
2025, AWS Certified Cloud Practitioner
2019, Japanese Language Proficiency Test, N1
Chinese (native); English (fluent); Japanese (fluent)