Zara Perumal

CTO/Co-Founder of Overwatch Data

Zara Perumal is the Co-Founder and Chief Technology Officer (CTO) of Overwatch Data, an AI startup delivering real-time threat intelligence on cybercrime tactics across the deep and dark web. Since founding the company in 2022, she has led the development of the Overwatch platform, which leverages large language models, agent-based tooling, and explainable AI to help enterprises detect, contextualize, and act on emerging cyber and fraud threats.

Throughout her career, Zara has focused on the intersection of artificial intelligence (AI) and cybersecurity, with a particular emphasis on using AI to understand and counter criminal behavior online. Prior to founding Overwatch Data, she worked at Google, starting at Google Assistant, and later at the Threat Analysis Group (TAG), where she built machine learning and software systems to detect and mitigate cyber operations carried out by advanced persistent threat (APT) actors.

Recently Zara contributed to a Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Analytic Exchange Program examining the role of AI in criminal and illicit activity. In addition, she has presented widely on the application of AI in cyber threat intelligence and serves on the board of the Redirect Project, a nonprofit supporting cybersecurity education and assisting survivors of cybercrime. In 2022, she was named to the Forbes 30 Under 30 list in the Enterprise Technology category.

Zara has a Bachelor of Science in Computer Science and a Master's in Artificial Intelligence and Cybersecurity from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), where she conducted research at the Laboratory for Information and Decision Systems (LIDS) and the Computer Science and Artificial Intelligence Laboratory (CSAIL) on the use of active learning for malware detection.