

Summary

- Research Interests** Machine Learning (Recommendation Systems, Learning to Rank, Algorithm Design, etc.), Differential Privacy, Computational Social Choice, and Quantum Computation
- Experience** 1+ years of industry experience in machine learning (personalized recommendation)
 Hands-on experience in recommendation systems, LLM, and theoretical computer science
- Academia** Published more than 20 papers and received more than 250 citations to date.
 Reviewed 50+ papers for top AI conferences or journals.

Education

- 01/2018 – 05/2023 **Ph.D. in Computer Science**, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (RPI) Troy, NY
 Thesis: *Group Decision Makings from Partial Preferences* [\[Link\]](#)
- 08/2015 – 05/2018 **M.Eng. in Material Physics**, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (RPI) Troy, NY
- 08/2010 – 05/2014 **B.S. in Mathematics and Physics**, Tsinghua University Beijing, China
 Minor in Computer Technology, and in Academic Talent Program

Experience

- 07/2023 – Present **Software Engineer at Google Core ML** Mountain View, CA
 Design and Research More Efficient Transformers for Recommendation Systems
- 05/2022 – 08/2022 **Research Intern at Google Core ML** Mountain View, CA
 Project: A More Accurate Position Bias Estimator for Unbiased Learning to Rank
- Significant accuracy improvement ($\sim 8\%$) *v.s.* state-of-the-art without extra computational resources.
 - Proposed a more accurate model for position bias in recommendation systems. (*user-modeling*)
 - Designed a new machine learning framework based on the proposed position bias model and two-tower model. (*algorithm design, statistics*)
 - Implemented a data pipeline to extract the required features from data. (*C/C++*)
 - Implemented the machine learning framework, tested on Yahoo! dataset and integrated it into Google codebase. (*Python, TensorFlow, GoogleTest*)
- 08/2018 – 12/2018 **Visiting Scholar at MIT-IBM Watson AI Lab** Cambridge, MA
 and
 Project: Certifiably Robust Interpretation via Rényi Differential Privacy
- 05/2019 – 08/2019 ○ Significant robustness improvement ($\sim 12\%$) plus accuracy improvement *v.s.* state-of-the-art.
 - Yes! We improved both robustness and accuracy at the same time! Note that accuracy and robustness are trade-offs in machine learning.
 - Theoretically connected Rényi differential privacy and interpretation robustness.
 - Designed a new robust algorithm to interpret neural networks for image classifications.
 - Implemented the proposed robust algorithm and tested it on VOC2007 dataset for various properties, including robustness, accuracy, and computational efficiency. (*PyTorch, TorchRay, TensorFlow*)
- Delivered one academic paper (on top AI journal) and two patents.

Skills

- Implementation** Programming languages: *Python, C/C++, MATLAB*
 Tools and platforms: *TensorFlow, PyTorch, TorchRay, L^AT_EX, GoogleTest*
- Design/ Theory** *Algorithm design, Statistics, Time/Sample-complexity analysis, User-modeling, Markov chain Mount-Carlo (MCMC), Differential privacy analysis, Robustness analysis, Model identifiability.*

Review Services

- Journal** Information Sciences, TMLR, ACM ToIS, Sankhya B
- Conference** NeurIPS (20,21,22&23), ICML (22,23&24), ICLR (23&24), AAI (21&22), IJCAI-22

Selected Publications

- TMLR* **Smoothed Differential Privacy** [\[PDF\]](#)
Ao Liu, Yu-Xiang Wang, and Lirong Xia
- UAI-23* **Accelerating Voting by Quantum Computation** [\[PDF\]](#)
Ao Liu, Qishen Han, Lirong Xia, and Nengkun Yu
- AIJ* **Certifiably Robust Interpretation via Rényi Differential Privacy** [\[Link\]](#) [\[ArXiv\]](#)
Ao Liu, Xiaoyu Chen, Sijia Liu, Lirong Xia, and Chuang Gan
Also in proceedings of AAAI-23 Journal Track (oral presentation)
- AAAI-23* (oral) **Differentially Private Condorcet Voting** [\[PDF\]](#)
Zhechen Li, *Ao Liu*, Lirong Xia, Yongzhi Cao, and Hanpin Wang
- AAAI-22* **The Semi-Random Likelihood of Doctrinal Paradoxes** [\[PDF\]](#)
Ao Liu, and Lirong Xia
- IJCAI-22* (oral) **Learning Mixtures of Random Utility Models with Features from Incomplete Preferences** [\[PDF\]](#)
Zhibing Zhao, *Ao Liu*, and Lirong Xia
- JAIR* **Learning to Design Fair and Private Voting Rules** [\[PDF\]](#)
Farhad Mohsin, *Ao Liu*, Pin-Yu Chen, Francesca Rossi, and Lirong Xia
- UAI-20* (oral) **How Private Are Commonly-Used Voting Rules?** [\[PDF\]](#)
Farhad Mohsin, *Ao Liu*, Pin-Yu Chen, Francesca Rossi, and Lirong Xia
- ETRA-20 Adjunct* **Let It Snow: Adding Pixel Noise to Protect the Users Identity** [\[Link\]](#)
Brendan John, *Ao Liu*, Lirong Xia, Sanjeev Koppal, and Eakta Jain
- AAAI-19* (oral) **Near-Neighbor Methods in Random Preference Completion** [\[PDF\]](#)
Ao Liu, Qiong Wu, Zhenming Liu, and Lirong Xia
- AAAI-19* (oral) **Learning Plackett-Luce Mixture from Partial Preferences** [\[PDF\]](#)
Ao Liu, Zhibing Zhao, Chao Liao, Pinyan Lu, and Lirong Xia
- ETRA-19* (oral) **Differential Privacy for Eye-Tracking Data** [\[PDF\]](#)
Ao Liu, L. Xia, A. Duchowski, R. Bailey, K. Holmqvist, and E. Jain
- US Patent **Certifiably Robust Interpretation** [\[PDF\]](#)
Ao Liu, Sijia Liu, Bo Wu, Lirong Xia, Qi Cheng Li, and Chuang Gan
- US Patent **Interpretation Maps with Guaranteed Robustness** [\[PDF\]](#)
Ao Liu, Sijia Liu, Abhishek Bhandwaldar, Chuang Gan, Lirong Xia, and Qi Cheng Li

Awards and Teaching

- 09/2019 – 05/2022 **RPI-IBM AI Horizon Scholarship**
3-year scholarship supported by Rensselaer-IBM Artificial Intelligence Research Collaboration
- 09/2016 – 05/2017 **RPI Presidential Graduate Research Fellowship**
A One-Year Fellowship for Outstanding Graduate Students [\[Certificate\]](#)
- Spring 2023 **Teaching Assistant of CSCI 4150: Introduction to AI**
Instructor: Lirong Xia
- 04/2021 **Guest Lecture at CSCI 4967/6967: Economics and Computation**
Topic: The Semi-Random Likelihood of Doctrinal Paradoxes
- Spring 2023 **Teaching Assistant of MATH 1020: Calculus II**
Instructor: David A. Schmidt