Brett Pennington

Software Engineering Manager – Robotics/AV – Planning/Prediction

+1 (857) 600-8681
justinbrettpennington@gmail.com
www.linkedin.com/in/brett-pennington

EXPERIENCE

Manager, Planning and Prediction

Rivian, Palo Alto, CA — Jan 2021 - Present

- Grew a team of 7 from 0 in half a year
- Lead the team to write a planning stack for next generation features
- Finished the first version of the planning stack 1 year ahead of schedule
- Collaborated across the 13,000 person organization to reduce duplicate work, define team objectives, and identify opportunities for future
- Co-lead the safety critical design of the ADAS application logic for a next-gen architecture
- Architected prediction, behavior planning, motion planning, and trajectory optimization from the ground up
- Design and wrote a framework for extending application logic to improve development times and reduce bugs
- Constructed several prediction and planning libraries ranging from learned systems to classical planners

Staff Planning Engineer

Rivian, Palo Alto, CA — Jul 2020 - Dec 2020

- Wrote an offline, non-convex solver for optimal paths on off-road terrain
- Designed a path toolbox to store the optimal paths and load them in a dense, space-efficient representation in Matlab, Python, and C
- Implemented online algorithms in C for fast multi-dimensional KNN lookups
- Introduced TDD and modular software practices (again)

Advanced Controls Engineer

Boston Dynamics, Boston, MA — Jul 2018 - Jun 2020

- Applied optimal control techniques for multi-objective and multi-bodied systems
- Implemented MPC/Planning for linear/non-linear systems
- Designed proprioceptive sensing algorithms for workspace compliance and improved balancing of floating base robots
- Introduced TDD and modular software practices for dynamic systems

Software Engineer – Motion Planning, Robotics & Controls

Automata Tech, London, UK — Apr 2017 - Jul 2018

- Built custom kinematics, controls & motion planning libraries in C and modern C++
- Designed collision detection systems in embedded MISRA compliant C with low bandwidth constrictions
- Introduced Agile practices: Grew a team from 5 individuals into 3 cross-functional teams with 15 members in 9 months

Software Engineer

Cubic Transportation Systems, London, UK Apr 2016 - Apr 2017

- Maintained code running the London Transit (Oyster Card) environment along other global metropolitan transit systems (SF Clipper, new NYC Metrocard, Sydney Opal)
- Correlated high-speed, time-sensitive data streams in critical systems handling payments for +6 million users daily in less than 0.3 seconds each
- Delivered client-focused results quickly while adhering to sound development practices and refactoring a large and historic database along the way

Controls Research Engineer

University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa, AL Jan 2011 - Dec 2015

- Designed and synchronized embedded systems to enhance our testing ecosystem
- Programmed and modeled safety-critical high performance systems
- Built adaptive and dependable systems in critical testing environments
- Researched diesel engine controls to advance sustainability and performance

ENGINEERING SKILLS

Software Languages

- *Dream in:* Modern C++
- *No problem writing:* C and Python
- *Once upon a time I wrote:* C++98, SQL, MATLAB, SIMULINK, Go
- *Could stack-overflow my way through:* JS, JSX, R, Ruby
- *Maybe one day:* Haskell, Rust

Planning

- Classical Behavior Planning (FSMs, PDDL-based, and hierarchical FSMs)
- Classical Motion Planning Techniques (graphs, trees, and gradients)
- Learned Planners (DQN and model-based)
- Trajectory Optimization (shooting and collocation based for online/offline work)

Work Style

- Self-starter - *never stop learning*
- Enjoy mentorship and leading
- Open and collaborative - *the faster we iterate, the more honest we are, and the more collaborative we are, the better the end result will be*
- Test-driven development and SOLID principles to build strong software foundations

EDUCATION

Ph.D. Mechanical Engineering, University of Alabama

Jan 2011 - Dec 2015

Advanced Controls Systems, Optimal Control, and Computational Analysis

B.S. Mechanical Engineering, University of Alabama

Aug 2006 - Dec 2010

Thermodynamics, Physics, and Mechanical Systems

References available upon request