

Aaron Mishkin

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Education

Current	PhD in Computer Science , Stanford University
–	<i>Optimization for Machine Learning</i>
2020	Advisor: Dr. Mert Pilanci
2020	MSc in Computer Science , University of British Columbia
–	Thesis: <i>Interpolation, Growth Conditions, and Stochastic Gradient Descent</i>
2018	Advisor: Dr. Mark Schmidt
2018	BSc in Computer Science (Honors) , University of British Columbia
–	Honors Thesis: <i>Limited Memory Methods for Variational Inference</i>
2013	Honors Advisor: Dr. David Poole

Publications

Preprints

Amrutha Varshini Ramesh*, **Aaron Mishkin***, Mark Schmidt, Yihan Zhou, Jonathan Wilder Lavington, and Jennifer She. “Analyzing and Improving Greedy 2-Coordinate Updates for Equality-Constrained Optimization via Steepest Descent in the 1-Norm.” [\[arXiv\]](#)

Emi Zeger, Yifei Wang, **Aaron Mishkin**, Tolga Ergen, Emmanuel Candès, and Mert Pilanci. “A Library of Mirrors: Deep Neural Nets in Low Dimensions are Convex Lasso Models with Reflection Features.” [\[arXiv\]](#)

Refereed Papers

Aaron Mishkin, Alberto Bietti, Robert Gower. “Level Set Teleportation: An Optimization Perspective”. Artificial Intelligence and Statistics (AISTATS), 2025 [\[arXiv\]](#)

Sungyoon Kim, **Aaron Mishkin**, Mert Pilanci. “Exploring the loss landscape of regularized neural networks via convex duality”. International Conference on Learning Representations (ICLR), 2025. [\[arXiv\]](#)

Aaron Mishkin*, Ahmed Khaled*, Yuanhao Wang, Aaron Defazio, Robert Gower. “Directional Smoothness and Gradient Methods: Convergence and Adaptivity” *Neural Information Processing Systems (NeurIPS)*, 2024. [\[arXiv\]](#)

Aaron Mishkin, Mert Pilanci. “Optimal Sets and Solution Paths of ReLU Networks” *International Conference on Machine Learning (ICML)*, 2023. [\[arXiv\]](#)

Aaron Mishkin, Arda Sahiner, Mert Pilanci. “Fast Convex Optimization for Two-Layer ReLU Networks: Equivalent Model Classes and Cone Decompositions” *International Conference on Machine Learning (ICML)*, 2022. [\[arXiv\]](#)

Sharan Vaswani, **Aaron Mishkin**, Issam Laradji, Mark Schmidt, Gauthier Gidel, and Simon Lacoste-Julien. "Painless Stochastic Gradient: Interpolation, Line-Search, and Convergence Rates." *Neural Information Processing Systems (NeurIPS)*, 2019. [\[arXiv\]](#)

Aaron Mishkin, Frederik Kunstner, Didrik Nielsen, Mark Schmidt, and Mohammad Emtiyaz Khan. "SLANG: Fast Structured Covariance Approximations for Bayesian Deep Learning with Natural-Gradient", *Neural Information Processing Systems (NeurIPS)*, 2018. [\[arXiv\]](#)

Book Chapters

Kevin P. Murphy, Frederik Kunstner, Si Yi Meng, **Aaron Mishkin**, Sharan Vaswani, and Mark Schmidt. **Chapter 8: Optimization** in *Probabilistic Machine Learning: An Introduction*. MIT press, 2022.

Workshop Papers

Aaron Mishkin*, Ahmed Khaled*, Aaron Defazio, Robert Gower. "A Novel Analysis of Gradient Descent Under Directional Smoothness" *NeurIPS OPT2023*, 2023. [\[pdf\]](#)

Aaron Mishkin, Alberto Bietti, Robert Gower. "Level Set Teleportation: the Good, the Bad, and the Ugly" *NeurIPS OPT2023*, 2023. [\[pdf\]](#)

Aaron Mishkin, Mert Pilanci. "The Solution Path of the Group Lasso" *NeurIPS OPT2022*, 2022. [\[pdf\]](#)

Amrutha Varshini Ramesh, **Aaron Mishkin**, Mark Schmidt. "Fast Convergence of Greedy 2-Coordinate Updates for Optimizing with an Equality Constraint" *NeurIPS OPT2022*, 2022. [\[pdf\]](#)

Sharan Vaswani, Reza Babanezhad, Jose Gallego, **Aaron Mishkin**, Simon Lacoste-Julien, and Nicolas Le Roux. "To Each Optimizer a Norm, to Each Norm its Generalization." *NeurIPS OPT2020*, 2020. [\[arXiv\]](#)

Aaron Mishkin. "Web ValueCharts: Analyzing Individual and Group Preferences with Interactive, Web-based Visualizations", Extended Abstract in *Review of Undergraduate Computer Science*, 2017. [\[pdf\]](#)

* Denotes equal contribution.

Experience

July - Dec 2024	Visiting PhD Student , SIERRA Team, Inria Advisor: Dr. Francis Bach Studying the role of depth in global optimization of non-convex neural networks.
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June - Aug 2023	Predoctoral Researcher , CCM, Flatiron Institute Advisors: Dr. Robert Gower and Dr. Alberto Bietti Proved new convergence bounds for gradient descent under a novel directional smoothness condition and developed practical algorithms for level set teleportation.
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May - Aug	Applied Science Intern , Amazon Development Center Germany GmbH
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2019	Advisors: Dr. Cédric Archambeau and Dr. Matthias Seeger Investigated meta-learning approaches to cold-start active learning. Implemented foMAML, prototypical networks, and conditional neural adaptive processes (CNAPS).
Jan - Jun 2018	Research Intern, RIKEN Center for Advanced Intelligence Project (AIP) Advisor: Dr. Emtiyaz Khan Worked with a diverse team on SLANG, an approximate natural gradient method for Gaussian variational inference in neural networks (published at NeurIPS 2018).
May - Aug 2016/17	Undergraduate Research Assistant, UBC Advisors: Dr. David Poole and Dr. Giuseppe Carenini Received two undergraduate research awards from NSERC to investigate information visualizations for preference elicitation. Developed Web ValueCharts .
May - Dec 2015	Software Engineering Co-op Student, MacDonald, Dettwiler and Associates Acted as a full member of a small team to develop a client for ordering satellite imagery. Implemented the map interface for the RADARSAT Constellation Mission.

Teaching

Apr - Jun 2022-2024	TA, EE 364B: Convex Optimization II (Stanford University) Prepared homework and exam questions, held weekly office hours, and supervised assignment graders for a graduate-level class on convex optimization algorithms.
Jun 2018	TA, Data Science Summer School (DS3) 2018 Prepared and delivered exercises on stochastic variational inference for graduate students attending a two day tutorial on approximate Bayesian inference.
Sep - Dec 2017	TA, CPSC 340: Machine Learning (UBC) Gave tutorials on diverse topics in machine learning, including regularization, convexity, and MAP estimation. Held weekly office hours for students, marked assignments and invigilated exams.
Jan - May 2015	TA, CPSC 210: Software Construction (UBC) Supervised laboratories for a software engineering course on object-oriented programming and design in the Java programming language.
Sep - Dec 2014	TA, CPSC 110: Computation, Programs and Programming (UBC) Taught the fundamental concepts of functional programming in a Lisp-family language during weekly labs.

Awards

PhD

2024	Visiting Student Research Fellowship France-Stanford Center for Interdisciplinary Studies Awarded to support research visit to SIERRA team, Inria.
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| 2020 | Graduate Research Fellowship (GRF)
National Sciences Foundation (NSF)
Five-year fellowship for PhD students in STEM disciplines. | |
| 2020 | NSERC Postgraduate Scholarships-Doctoral Program (PGS D)
Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada
Three-year fellowship for PhD students studying in Canada or abroad. | |
| 2020 | Canada Graduate Scholarships-Doctoral Program (CGS D)
Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada
Three-year fellowship for PhD students studying in Canada. | (Declined) |

MSc

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| 2019 | Huawei Graduate Scholarship
Huawei and Department of Computer Science, UBC
Competitive scholarship for MSc students entering their second year. |
| 2018 | Computer Science Merit Scholarship
Department of Computer Science, UBC
Merit-based scholarship for incoming international and domestic students. |
| 2018 | Canada Graduate Scholarships-Master's Program (CGSM)
Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada
National fellowship awarded to up to 2,500 students annually. |

BSc

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| 2018 | Academic Award of Excellence (Honors)
Department of Computer Science, UBC
Awarded to the graduating student with the highest standing in the BSc (Honors) in Computer Science. |
| 2018 | Markus Meister Memorial Prize
Department of Computer Science, UBC
Awarded to the graduating student with the highest standing in the final year of the BSc in Computer Science. |
| 2017 | D. F. MacKenzie Scholarship
UBC |
| 2016, 2017 | Undergraduate Student Research Award (USRA)
Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada |
| 2016, 2017 | Computer Science Scholarship
Department of Computer Science, UBC |
| 2016, 2017 | Trek Excellence Scholarship for Continuing Students
UBC
Awarded yearly to students in the top 5% of their undergraduate year, faculty, and school. |
| 2016 | J Fred Muir Memorial Scholarship
UBC |

General

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| 2018 | Travel Award for NeurIPS 2018
Neural Information Processing Systems (NeurIPS) Foundation |
| 2017 | Best Demo
UBC HCI Designing for People Year-end Event
For: Web ValueCharts |

Academic Service

I review for ICML, NeurIPS, AISTATS, ICLR, and TMLR as well as JMLR, SIMODS, and several other journals. I was a top reviewer for ICML 2024, NeurIPS 2023, ICLR 2022, NeurIPS 2022, ICML 2021, and NeurIPS 2020. I was an expert reviewer for ICML 2021 and am an expert reviewer for TMLR.

I volunteer for the Stanford student application support program (SASP), and am a mentor for the [Stanford CS undergraduate mentorship program](#) and [CERIO](#).