Ashwin Balakrishna

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BACKGROUND

I am excited about algorithms for data-driven decision making. I am currently a Research Scientist at Google Deepmind working on building foundation models for general purpose robotic manipulation. I am particularly interested in bridging vision and language foundation models with decision-making algorithms which can actively interact with users and improve based on experience.

WORK EXPERIENCE

Google DeepMind, Senior Research Scientist	2024 - Present
Toyota Research Institute, Research Scientist	2023 - 2024
Nuro, Research Scientist	2022 - 2023
Toyota Research Institute, Research Intern	2021
SpaceX, Software Engineering Intern (Avionics)	2017

EDUCATION

UC Berkeley, Berkeley, CA — Aug 2018 - May 2022
Ph.D. in Computer Science — GPA: 3.97/4.00
Thesis: Scalable Supervision for Safe and Efficient Online Robot Learning

California Institute of Technology, Pasadena, CA — Sep 2014 - Jun 2018
Bachelor of Science in Electrical Engineering — GPA: 3.97/4.00

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

Moo Jin Kim*, Karl Pertsch*, Siddharth Karamcheti*, Ted Xiao, **Ashwin Balakrishna**, Suraj Nair et al. OpenVLA: An Open-Source Vision-Language-Action Model. *Preprint* 2024.

Alexander Khazatsky*, Karl Pertsch*, Suraj Nair, **Ashwin Balakrishna**, et al. DROID: A Large-Scale In-The-Wild Robot Manipulation Dataset. *Preprint* 2024.

Siddharth Karamcheti, Suraj Nair, **Ashwin Balakrishna**, Percy Liang, Thomas Kollar, and Dorsa Sadigh. Prismatic VLMs: Investigating the Design Space of Visually-Conditioned Language Models. *Preprint* 2024.

Albert Wilcox, **Ashwin Balakrishna**, Jules Dedieu, Wyame Benslimane, et al. Monte Carlo Augmented Actor-Critic for Sparse Reward Deep Reinforcement Learning from Suboptimal Demonstrations. *Conference on Neural Information Processing Systems (NeurIPS)* 2022.

Brijen Thananjeyan*, **Ashwin Balakrishna***, Suraj Nair, Michael Luo, Krishnan Srinivasan, et al. Recovery RL: Safe Reinforcement Learning with Learned Recovery Zones. *Robotics and Automation Letters (RA-L) and International Conference on Robotics and Automation (ICRA)* 2021.

* = equal contribution

AWARDS & HONORS

Qualcomm Innovation Fellowship Finalist	2021
Timothy B. Campbell Innovation Award (Berkeley EECS)	2020-2021
Apple AI/ML PhD Fellowship Nomination (Berkeley EECS)	2020
National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship	2018-2021