AMANDA CERCAS CURRY

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EXPERIENCE

PhD Studentship in Computer Science: Heriot-Watt University (Edinburgh, UK), ongoing: My main areas of research are abuse detection and mitigation and ethical considerations in social dialogue systems. My project supervisors are Prof. Verena Rieser, Dr Arash Eshghi and Prof. Ruth Aylett.

ETHICAL INTELLIGENCE SUMMER PROGRAMME: Ethical Intelligence (Edinburgh, UK), June-July 2019: Part of a small student think tank advising Franklin and Templeton on ethical issues relating to data collection and investment risk assessment.

TEACHING ASSISTANT: Heriot-Watt University (Edinburgh, UK), September 2016 – ongoing Assisted teaching in Software Development and Conversational Agents courses.

RESEARCH ASSISTANT: Heriot-Watt University (Edinburgh, UK), May 2015 – August 2015

Developed an online game to evaluate how best to present uncertain information, such as weather reports, to the general public. Participated in Explorathon 2015, a public engagement event at the Edinburgh Zoo.

RESEARCH INTERN: Heriot-Watt University (Edinburgh, UK), 2014

I worked with Verena Rieser to conduct a corpus study to investigate how humans give directions. Results were presented at SemDial'14.

LEADERSHIP AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Team Leader Amazon Alexa Prize 2018: Coordinated liaison between Amazon's support and the student team. Implemented several neural abuse detection models using AllenNLP and RasaNLU. The models were trained on manually-annotated data from the 2017 Prize. Implemented a Lucene-based retrieval bot that uses certain subreddits containing interesting fact and thoughts as a source of information.

Student Committee Member of SigGen: Ongoing. Involved in the everyday functioning of the group.

Cofounder and committee member of InterconnectHW: (2015-2016) A network for female students in STEM subjects in Scotland.

President of Heriot-Watt Computing Society: (June 2014 - June 2015) Organised events and fundraisers for society activities. Arranged sponsorships for events.

PRIZES AND AWARDS

Amazon Alexa Challenge Finalist 2018 $50,000

Amazon Alexa Challenge Finalist 2017 $50,000

James Watt PhD Scholarship Heriot-Watt University

8th BCSWomen Lovelace Colloquium: First prize for final year undergraduate research.

Dean's List and Outstanding Student Scholarship Hunter College, $500

EDUCATION

BSc Hons COMPUTER SCIENCE: Heriot-Watt University (Edinburgh, UK), June 2015

<u>Achieved:</u> 1st Class

<u>Dissertation:</u> Generating and Evaluating Context-Dependent Route Instructions in Virtual Environments.

<u>Courses</u>: Software Development 1, 2 and 3, Web design, Database management systems, Software Design, Software Engineering, Operating Systems and Concurrencies, Programming Languages, Language processors, Formal Specification, Foundations of computing (1 and 2), Artificial Intelligence, Data Mining and Machine learning, Biologically Inspired Computing, Data Visualisation and Analysis, Advanced Interaction Design, Intelligent Robotics.

BA LIBERAL ARTS: CUNY Hunter College (New York, USA), 2010-2011, GPA 4.0

BILINGUAL INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE DIPLOMA: United Nations International School (New York, US), 2010

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

Amanda Cercas Curry, Ioannis Papaioannou, Alessandro Suglia, Shubham Agarwal, Igor Shalyminov, Xinnuo Xu, Ondrej Dusek, Arash Eshghi, Ioannis Konstas, Verena Rieser and Oliver Lemon, 2018. Alana v2: Entertaining and Informative Open-Domain Social Dialogue using Ontologies and Entity Linking. In proceedings: Amazon Alexa Prize 2018. Las Vegas, NV, USA.

Amanda Cercas Curry and Verena Rieser, 2018. #Me Too: How Conversational Agents Respond to Sexual Harassment. In proceedings: NAACL 2018 Second Workshop on Ethics in NLP. New Orleans, LA, USA.

Ioannis Papaioannou, **Amanda Cercas Curry,** Jose L. Part Igor Shalyminov, Xinnuo Xu, Yanchao Yu, Ondrej Dušek, Verena Rieser, Oliver Lemon, 2017. Alana: Social Dialogue using an Ensemble Model with a Ranker trained on User Feedback. In proceedings: Amazon Alexa Prize 2017. Las Vegas, NV, USA.

Ioannis Papaioannou, **Amanda Cercas Curry**, Jose L. Part, Igor Shalyminov, Xinnuo Xu, Yanchao Yu, Ondrej Dusek, Verena Rieser and Oliver Lemon, 2017. An Ensemble Model with Ranking for Social Dialogue. In proceedings: NIPS 2017 Workshop on Conversational AI. Long Beach, CA, USA.

Amanda Cercas Curry, Helen Hastie and Verena Rieser, 2017. A Review of Automatic Evaluation Metrics for Social Dialogue Systems. In proceedings: ICMI 2017 workshop on Investigating Interactions with Social Agents. Glasgow, UK.

Jekaterina Novikova, Ondřej Dušek, **Amanda Cercas Curry** and Verena Rieser, 2017. Why we need new evaluation metrics for NLG. In proceedings: EMNLP 2017, Copenhagen, Denmark.

SKILLS

TECHNICAL:

<u>Prefered languages:</u> Python, Java

<u>Known technologies:</u> Allen NLP, Pandas, Scikit-learn, IBM SPSS

LANGUAGES: English and Spanish (fluent), German and French (advanced)