# Cuneyt Gurcan Akcora

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## Research Interests

- Explainable artificial intelligence
- Data Science on complex networks, large scale graph analysis
- Nonparametric statistics, bootstrap on graphs
- Deep learning and graph mining on Blockchain networks
- Machine learning for privacy and security research on online social networks
- Topological data analysis

## Education

2010-2014 Università degli Studi dell'Insubria, Varese, Italy

⋄ Thesis: Profiling user interactions on online social networks

 $\diamond$  Ph.D. in Computer Science

♦ Advisors: Elena Ferrari and Barbara Carminati

2012 Feb-Apr University of Texas at Dallas

♦ Visiting researcher, Computer Science

♦ Advisor: Murat Kantarcioglu

2008-2010 State University of New York at Buffalo, Buffalo, NY

♦ M.Sc. in Computer Science and Engineering

♦ Thesis: Using Microblogs for Crowdsourcing and Public Opinion Mining

 $\diamond$  Advisor: Murat Demirbas

2005-2006 Gent University, Gent, Belgium

 $\diamond \ Electronics \ and \ Information \ Systems$ 

⋄ Erasmus Exchange Student

2002-2007 Karadeniz Technical University, Trabzon, Turkey

♦ B.Sc. in Electrical and Electronics Engineering

## Honors and Awards

- ♦ Fulbright Scholar to USA, 2008-2010.
- $\diamond$ Amazon Web Services Research Grant, 2013.
- ♦ NSF travel award for SAMSI at Duke University, 2017.
- ♦ IBM travel award for SIGKDD, July 2010.
- ♦ IEEE travel award for ICDM, December 2012.
- ♦ Graduated as an honor student from Karadeniz Technical University, 2007.

# Work Experience

2019 July - Current	University of Manitoba
v	♦ Assistant Professor at Computer Science and Statistics
	♦ Faculty at Data Science Nexus
2016 Oct - 2019 June	University of Texas at Dallas
	♦ Postdoctoral Fellow at Computer Science and Statistics
	♦ Joint work: Murat Kantarcioglu (CS) and Yulia Gel (Stat.)
2015 Jun - 2016 Oct	Huawei Research, Istanbul, Turkey
	♦ Research Engineer. Intelligent Search Group
2014 Feb - 2014 Aug	Qatar Computing Research Institute (QCRI), Qatar
	⋄ Research Associate. Data Analytics Group
Internships	
2012 Jun-Aug	Yahoo! Research Barcelona
	$\diamond$ Advisor: Francesco Bonchi
2005 July-Aug	University of Cairo, Cairo, Egypt
	$\diamond$ IAESTE Student Program

## Grants

#### Internal grants

• FoS 2021-2022: With Xuemiao Hao from Actuaries, A Comprehensive Analysis of Use Cases and Application Domains of Blockchain in Insurance, Interdisciplinary Research Grant of UManitoba.

#### External grants

- Research Manitoba Health Council 2021-2023: with Carson Leung and Protegra Inc. Bonafide:
   A Novel Protocol and Software Infrastructure for Improving Online Information Sharing and Control.
   Mitacs Accelerate.
- MITACS 2021-2022: with Carson Leung and Protegra Inc. Bonafide: A Novel Protocol and Software Infrastructure for Improving Online Information Sharing and Control. Mitacs Accelerate.
- NSERC 2020-2025: NSERC discovery grant with an additional supplement for early researchers.
- ♦ CANSSI 2021: With Dorcas Ofori-Boateng, Postdoctoral Research Fellowship from the Canadian Statistical Sciences Institute (2020-2021).

## Publications (Asterisks denote a Ph.D. or MS. student)

## Books

Blockchain: Fundamentals, Data Structures and Algorithms for Data Science

C. G. Akcora, Y. R. Gel, M. Kantarcioglu

Course book for Data Science on Blockchains.

To be published by Cambridge University Press (2021).

# $Under\ Submission$

- ♦ Graph Primer for Blockchain Networks (2020 Edition)
  - C. G. Akcora, Y. R. Gel, M. Kantarcioglu, pp 1—37.
- ♦ How to Not Get Caught When You Launder Money on Blockchain C. G. Akcora, Y. R. Gel, M. Kantarcioglu, pp 1—8.
- ⋄ Core Decomposition on Networks
  - \*Friedhelm Victor, C. G. Akcora, Y. R. Gel, M. Kantarcioglu, pp 1—9.

#### ♦ Data Science for Blockchain

C. G. Akcora, Y. R. Gel, M. Kantarcioglu, pp 1—16.

♦ Topological Anomaly Detection in Dynamic Networks

\*Dorcas Ofori-Boateng, Ignacio Segovia Dominguez, C. G. Akcora, Y. Li, Y. R. Gel, M. Kantarcioglu, pp 1—12.

## Peer Reviewed Conference Papers

 BitcoinHeist: Topological Data Analysis for Ransomware Payment Detection on the Bitcoin Blockchain

C. G. Akcora, \*Y. Li, Y. R. Gel, M. Kantarcioglu

29th International Joint Conference on Artificial Intelligence (IJCAI-PRICAI 2020) Tokyo, Japan, pp 1—7 (2020).

Ethereum Token Price Anomaly Prediction with Topological Depth Curves
 \*Y. Li, \*U. D. Islambekov, C. G. Akcora, E. Smirnova, Y. R. Gel, M. Kantarcioglu

SIAM International Conference on Data Mining (SDM) pp 1—9 (2020).

♦ ChainNet: Learning on Blockchain Graphs with Topological Features

\*N. C. Abay, C. G. Akcora, \*U. D. Islambekov, Y. R. Gel, M. Kantarcioglu, B. Thuraisingham The 19th IEEE International Conference on Data Mining (ICDM) Beijing, China, pp 1—10 (2019).

♦ Attacklets: Modeling High Dimensionality in Real World Cyberattacks

C. G. Akcora, J. Bakdash, Y. R. Gel, L. Marusich, M. Kantarcioglu, B. Thuraisingham IEEE International Conference on Intelligence and Security Informatics (ISI) (34%) Florida, Miami, USA pp 1—5 (2018).

♦ Forecasting Bitcoin Price with Graph Chainlets

C. G. Akcora, \*A. K. Dey, Yulia R. Gel, M. Kantarcioglu

The 22nd Pacific-Asia Conference on Knowledge Discovery and Data Mining (PAKDD) Melbourne, Australia, pp 1—12 (2018).

♦ Temporal rules discovery for web data cleaning

Z. Abedjan, C. G. Akcora, M. Ouzzani, P. Papotti, M. Stonebraker

The 42nd Very Large Data Bases Conference (VLDB)

New Delhi, India, pp 336—347 (2015).

Discovering trust patterns in ego networks

C. G. Akcora, E. Ferrari

The 4th IEEE/ACM International Conference on Social Network Analysis and Mining (ASONAM) Beijing, China, pp 224—229 (2014).

Multi-dimensional conversation analysis across online social networks

\*W. Lucia, C. G. Akcora, E. Ferrari

The 3rd IEEE International Conference on Social Computing and its Applications (SCSM) Karlsruhe, Germany, pp 369—376 (2013).

⋄ Risks of friendships on social networks

C. G. Akcora, B. Carminati, E. Ferrari

The 12th IEEE International Conference on Data Mining (ICDM)

Brussels, Belgium, pp 810—815 (2012).

Privacy in social networks, how risky is your social graph?

C. G. Akcora, B. Carminati, E. Ferrari

The 28th IEEE International Conference on Data Engineering (ICDE)

Washington D.C, USA, pp 9—19 (2012).

Network and profile based measures for user similarities on social networks

C. G. Akcora, B. Carminati, E. Ferrari

The 12th IEEE International Conference on Information Reuse and Integration (IRI) Las Vegas, NV, USA, pp 292—298 (2011).

## Building virtual communities on top of online social networks

C. G. Akcora, B. Carminati, E. Ferrari

The 5th European Conference on Information Management and Evaluation (ECIME) Como, Italy, pp 12—23 (2011).

#### Crowd-sourced sensing and collaboration using Twitter

M. Demirbas, \*M. A. Bayir, C. G. Akcora, \*Y. S. Yilmaz, H. Ferhatosmanoglu The 11th IEEE Int. Symp. on a World of Wireless, Mobile and Multimedia Networks (WoWMoM) Montreal, Canada, pp 1—9 (2010).

#### Journal Publications

- ⋄ On the Role of Local Blockchain Network Features in Cryptocurrency Price Formation \*A. K. Dey, C. G. Akcora, Y. R. Gel, M. Kantarcioglu Canadian Journal of Statistics, pp 1—33 (2020).
- ♦ GraphBoot: Quantifying Uncertainty in Node Feature Learning on Large Networks C. G. Akcora, Y. R. Gel, M. Kantarcioglu, V. Lyubchich, B. Thuraisingham, IEEE Transactions on Knowledge and Data Engineering, pp 1—16 (2019).
- ♦ Blockchain Analytics for Intraday Financial Risk Modeling Matthew Dixon, C. G. Akcora, Yulia R. Gel, M. Kantarcioglu, Springer's Digital Finance, pp 1—25 (2019).
- ♦ Invited paper: Blockchain Data Analytics
  - C. G. Akcora, Matthew Dixon, Yulia R. Gel, M. Kantarcioglu, IEEE Bulletin of Intelligent Informatics, pp 1—8 (2018).
- ♦ Bitcoin Risk Modeling with Blockchain Graphs
  - C. G. Akcora, Matthew Dixon, Yulia R. Gel, M. Kantarcioglu, Economics Letters, pp 1—5 (2018).
- ♦ Blockchain: A graph primer (2017 Edition)

C. G. Akcora, Y. R. Gel, M. Kantarcioglu arXiv:1708.08749, pp 1—16 (2017).

Detecting anomalies in social network data consumption

C. G. Akcora, B. Carminati, E. Ferrari, M. Kantarcioglu Springer Social Network Analysis and Mining, Vol. 4, pp 231—245 (2014).

- ♦ User similarities on social networks
  - C. G. Akcora, B. Carminati, E. Ferrari

Springer Social Network Analysis and Mining, Vol. 3, pp 475—495 (2013).

♦ Trend sensing via Twitter

Y. S. Yilmaz, \*M. F. Bulut, C. G. Akcora, \*M. A. Bayir, M. Demirbas Inderscience Ad Hoc and Ubiquitous Computing, Vol. 14, 16—26 (2013).

#### Workshops

## ♦ Identifying breakpoints in public opinion

C. G. Akcora, \*M. A. Bayir, M. Demirbas, H. Ferhatosmanoglu The 1st Workshop on Social Media Analytics (KDD'10 SOMA) Washington D.C, USA, pp 62—66 (2010).

#### Book Chapters

## ♦ Using Deep Learning to Generate Relational HoneyData

N. C. Abay, C. G. Akcora, Y. Zhou, M. Kantarcioglu, B. Thuraisingham Springer, Automated Cyber Deception, pp 1—16 (2019).

 $Encyclopedia\ Entries$ 

#### User Similarities on Social Networks

C. G. Akcora, E. Ferrari

Springer Encyclopedia of Social Network Analysis and Mining (ESNAM), pp 1734—1743 (2014).

#### ⋄ Graphical User Interfaces for Privacy Settings

C. G. Akcora, E. Ferrari

Springer Encyclopedia of Social Network Analysis and Mining (ESNAM), pp 1—8 (2014).

#### **Translation**

♦ English-Turkish, Fundamentals of Information Systems Security

David Kim and Michael G. Solomon, ISBN: 978-605-033-000-7

Chapter 3: Malicious Attacks, Threats, and Vulnerabilities, pp 70—110

Publisher: NOBEL Akademik Yayıncılık, Edited by Ozgu Can (2019).

## Other Publications

♦ Twitter: Roots, Influence and Applications

C. G. Akcora, M. Demirbas

Technical Report, Department of Computer Science and Engineering

University at Buffalo, NY, pp 1—24 (2010).

## Presentations

#### Conference Tutorials

- ♦ Data Science on Blockchains, with Yulia R. Gel and Murat Kantarcioglu. SIAM International Conference on Data Mining (SDM), (May 7 9, 2021).
- ⋄ [Online due to Covid-19] Data Science on Blockchains, with Yulia R. Gel and Murat Kantarcioglu. The IEEE Conference on Data Engineering (ICDE), Dallas, U.S., (April 20-24, 2020).
- ♦ Blockchain Data Analytics, with Yulia R. Gel and Murat Kantarcioglu. The Pacific-Asia Conference on Knowledge Discovery and Data Mining (PaKDD), Macau, China, (Spring 2019).
- ♦ Blockchain Data Analytics, with Yulia R. Gel and Murat Kantarcioglu. The IEEE International Conference on Data Mining (ICDM), Singapore, (17 November 2018).

#### Invited Short Courses

♦ Blockchain Data Analytics, School of Statistics, University of Minnesota, Minnesota, USA (November 2018).

## Invited Talks

♦ **E-crime detection on Blockchains**, New York University, Center for Data Science, online (March 2021).

Topological Data Analysis for Ransomware Detection on the Bitcoin Blockchain, Data Science Nexus Invited Talk, online, Canada (December 2020).

- ♦ Topological Data Analysis for Ransomware Detection on the Bitcoin Blockchain, The Smart Cybersecurity Network (Serene-Risc) Annual Workshop, online, Canada (October 2020).
- ♦ Topological Data Analysis on Networks Applications and Scalability issues, University of Montana, Department of Mathematical Science, USA (September 2020).
- ♦ Topological Data Analysis on Networks Applications and Scalability issues, Virginia Commonwealth University, Department of Biostatistics, USA (September 2020).
- ♦ Data Science on Blockchains, Joint Statistical Meetings, online (August 2020).
- ♦ Explainable Artificial Intelligence, Sightline Innovation Inc., Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada (February 2020).
- ♦ Learning on Blockchain Graphs with Topological Features, SAMSI Workshop on Foundations of Blockchain Data Analytics, Durham, NC, USA (October 2019).

- ♦ Blockchain Data Analytics: A New Frontier in Data Science, The 36th Annual Quality and Productivity Research Conference, Washington D.C., USA (June 2019).
- ♦ Multi-Layer Analysis of Biological Networks, International Chinese Statistical Association, the ICSA China Conference, Tianjin, China (July 2019).
- ♦ Blockchain Data Privacy and Security, Annual Computer Security Applications Conference (AC-SAC), Puerto Rico (December 2018).
- ♦ Understanding Cryptocurrency Price Formation from Time Series of Local Blockchain Graph Features, the Joint Statistical Meetings (JSM), Vancouver, Canada (August 2018).
- A Time Series Approach in Blockchain Data Analytics, Michigan State Symposium on Mathematical Statistics and Applications in Honor of Hira L. Koul's Scientific Legacy, East Lansing, Michigan, USA (September 2018).

#### Guest lectures

- Ransomware Detection in Cryptocurrencies, TCSL 550: Network and Internet Security, University of Washington Tacoma, Computer Science, WA, USA. May 2020.
- ♦ A Holistic View of the Blockchain Ecosystem, UT Dallas, School of Management, Dallas, Texas, USA. April 2020.

#### Seminars

- Topological Data Analysis for Blockchain Networks, Applied Algebraic Topology Group, University of Minnesota. October 2020.
- ♦ Blockchain Data Analytics, Operations Research, City University of Hong Kong, China. November 2018.
- ♦ Rochester Institute of Technology, Statistics, Rochester, NY, USA. May 2018.
- ♦ University of Texas at Dallas, Computer Science, Dallas, Texas, USA. April 2018.
- ♦ Southern Methodist University, Statistics, Dallas, Texas, USA. March 2018.
- ♦ Instituto Tecnológico Autónomo de México, Computer Science, Mexico City, Mexico. October 2017.
- ♦ Ege University, Computer Science, Izmir, Turkey. August 2016.
- ♦ Marmara University, Computer Science, Istanbul, Turkey. June 2016.
- ♦ Bogazici University, Computer Science, Istanbul, Turkey. May 2016.

## Faculty Service

- ♦ Neuroscience Department Council University of Manitoba (2021).
- $\diamond$  FoS 2021: Faculty consultant in AI and Machine Learning Solutions program of UManitoba.
- ♦ Graduate Awards Committee University of Manitoba (2020).
- ♦ Indigenous Faculty Search Committee University of Manitoba (2021).
- ♦ Graduate Student Admissions Committee University of Manitoba (2021)

# Professional Service

- ⋄ Demo chair for IEEE International Conference on Data Engineering (ICDE 2020).
- ♦ Track chair for IEEE International Conference on Cyberspace Data and Intelligence (Cyber DI 2019).
- ⋄ Associate editor for
  - Frontiers in Physics, Social Physics
- ⋄ Co-editor for

- the special issue of Big Data and Cognitive Computing: Blockchain Data Analytics and Graph Mining.
- ⋄ Review Editor to the Editorial Board of Cybersecurity and Privacy for Frontiers in Big Data.
- ⋄ Program Committee for Cyber 2021, CCCIS 2021, ECML/PKDD 2021, IFCA Workshop on Decentralized Finance, AAAI 2021, CODASPY 2021, CyberDI 2020, UYMS 2020, NSysS 2020, ECML-PKDD 2020, MIDAS 2020, CCCIS 2020, CODASPY 2020, CODASPY 2019, the 1st International Symposium on Artificial Intelligence for ASEAN Development (ASEAN-AI 2018).

## ⋄ Referee for

- Nature Scientific Reports.
- IEEE Internet Computing, Communications Magazine.
- IEEE Transactions on Emerging Topics in Computing, Systems, Man and Cybernetics, Industrial Electronics, Mobile Computing, Services Computing, Dependable and Secure Computing, Industrial Informatics.
- Elsevier Journals of Digital Communications and Networks, Computational Statistics and Data Analysis (CSDA).
- Springer Journals of Classification, Financial Innovation, Grid Computing, Social Network Analysis and Mining, Data Science and Engineering.
- The Information Security (IET-IS).
- PeerJ Computer Science.
- The VLDB Journal.
- ACM Computing Surveys, Transactions on Data Science
- Canadian Journal of Statistics.
- Oxford Academic Journal of Complex Networks
- Conference reviewer for ICML 2021, IEEE SSCI 2020, CODASPY 2019, VLDB 2018, KDD 2018, PaKDD 2018, KDD 2017, SDM 2017, SIGMOD 2017, ICDE 2014, ASONAM 2014, ICWSM 2014, ICDM 2013, SCA 2013, CODASPY 2012, IRI 2011, WWW 2011.
- ♦ Proposal reviewer for Mitacs Accelerate, Canada.

## Organization of Technical Meetings

- Organizer, Session on Blockchain Networks, Networks 2021: A Joint Sunbelt and NetSci Conference, Washington D.C. (July 6-11, 2021).
- ♦ Organizer, Workshop on AI and Blockchains, IJCAI-PRICAI, Tokyo, Japan (2020).
- Organizer, Workshop on Blockchain Data Analytics, Canadian Statistical Sciences Institute, BIRS, Alberta (March 2020).
- ♦ Organizer, Workshop on **Blockchain Data Analytics**, 19th International Conference on Data Mining (IEEE ICDM), Beijing, China (2019).
- Organizer, Workshop on Foundations of Blockchain Data Analytics, The Statistical and Applied Mathematical Sciences Institute (SAMSI), North Carolina, U.S. (2019).
- Chair, Session on Behavioral Data Mining, The 23rd Pacific-Asia Conference on Knowledge Discovery and Data Mining (PAKDD), Macau, China (2019).
- Organizer, Session on Future of Blockchain from a Big Data Perspective, 4th International Conference on Big Data and Information Analytics (BigDia), Houston, USA (2018).

#### Panels

Panelist, Blockchain Security and Privacy, The 9th ACM conference on Data and Application Security and Privacy (CODASPY), Dallas, USA (2019).

## CoinWorks: Graph Analysis for the Blockchain Technology

One of the first groups to analyze Blockchain graphs, at UT Dallas we introduced a novel concept of k-chainlets on Bitcoin that expands the ideas of motifs and graphlets to Blockchain graphs. Chainlet analysis provides a deeper insight into local topological properties of the Blockchain and the role of those local higher-order topologies in the Bitcoin price formation. In the entire history of the Bitcoin graph, we have found that certain types of chainlets have a high predictive utility for Bitcoin prices. So far, this ongoing project has resulted in three concluded publications. Further works are actively being developed.

#### Aetas: Temporal Rules Discovery for Web Data Cleaning

In a collaboration with MIT CSAIL, at the Qatar Computing Research Institute we developed Aetas, a system for the discovery of approximate temporal functional dependencies. We used the data provided by RecordedFuture.com, which crawls the Internet and extracts knowledge with an event oriented approach. At the core of the system are two modules that exploit machine learning techniques to identify approximate dependencies and their duration from noisy web data. Our results appeared in the VLDB 2015 conference.

#### Sight: Personalized privacy for social networks

To protect personal data in Online Social Networks (OSNs) against well-known privacy problems, several relationship-based access control mechanisms have been proposed, as well as, more expressive privacy settings have been adopted by commercial OSNs, like Facebook. Unfortunately, these efforts can be unproductive, because users are reluctant to set complex privacy preferences. To overcome this problem, we proposed a new model for privacy preference settings based on a risk concept. Our findings were presented at the IRI 2011, ICDE 2012 and ICDM 2012.

#### Taoss: Trend Analysis on Open Source Software

Started as a Turkish Research Council project at Huawei Research, Taoss aimed at modeling the open source landscape by analyzing software repositories (e.g., Github), Q&A sites (e.g., StackOverflow), online forums (e.g., HackerNews) and other web sources. Taoss is internally deployed by Huawei as an analysis tool in planning software projects.

## Crowd-Sourced Sensing and Collaboration Using Twitter

We designed and implemented crowd-sourced sensing over Twitter, and showcased our system with two applications: a crowd-sourced weather radar, and a participatory noise-mapping application. In the project, we proposed a SensorML based classification for future detection of sensors on Twitter. Findings of this project were published in WOWMOM, 2010.

#### Upinion: Identifying Breaking Points in Public Opinion

While polls are traditionally used for observing public opinion, they provide a point snapshot, not a continuum. We considered the problem of identifying breakpoints in public opinion, and proposed using microblogging sites to capture trends in public opinion. This, to the best of our knowledge, is the first paper to employ an emotion corpus to classify emotion changes. We used a combination of vector space and set space models to represent and analyze tweets from Twitter about public opinion on two breaking news stories.

#### **Teaching**

◇ COMP 4190, Advanced Artificial Intelligence, Winter 2021.
 Core course for undergraduate students (40+ students).
 Computer Science, University of Manitoba.

- COMP 2140, Data Structures and Algorithms, Winter 2020, Winter 2021.
   Core course for undergraduate students (90+ students).
   Computer Science, University of Manitoba.
- COMP 7570, Blockchain Data Analytics, Fall 2019, Fall 2020.
   Elective course for graduate students (24 students).
   Computer Science, University of Manitoba.
- CS 6313, Statistical Methods for Data Science, Fall 2018, Spring 2019.
   Core course for Data Science specialization (+150 students).
   Computer Science and Engineering, University of Texas at Dallas.
- Data Analysis with R, Spring 2013.
   Master's level course (13 students).
   Computer Science, Università degli Studi dell'Insubria.
- Privacy and Security of Data, Spring 2012.
   Master's level course (11 students).
   Computer Science, Università degli Studi dell'Insubria.

## Public Datasets

- ⋄ BitcoinHeist Ransomware: Ransomware address features on the Bitcoin Blockchain http://archive.ics.uci.edu/ml/datasets/BitcoinHeistRansomwareAddressDataset https://www.kaggle.com/sapereO/bitcoinheist-ransomware-dataset https://www.openml.org/d/42553.
- ♦ Bitcoin Transaction Dataset: Bitcoin heterogeneous network data from 2009-2017 (https://www.kaggle.com/sapere0/bitcoin-dataset).

# Software Packages

- $\diamond$  Github/GraphBoot: A Bootstrapped Sampling framework in Scala/Apache Spark.
- ♦ Github/Coinworks: Bitcoin Chain Analysis platform in R/Java/Scala.

## Computer Skills

- $\diamond$  Languages: Scala, Java, R, PHP, SQL, XHTML, Python, JavaScript,  $\LaTeX$ .
- $\diamond \ OS/Tools/Libraries: \ OpenMPI, \ Twitter 4J, \ jQuery, \ Jung.$
- ♦ Open Source Projects: Apache Storm, Apache Spark.

## Language Skills

- ⋄ Turkish: Native.⋄ English: Advanced.
- $\diamond$  Italian: Upper-intermediate.
- ◇ Chinese: 汉语水平考试四(HSK 4).