Henry W. Leung Ph.D.

AI x Astrophysics Scientist

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SUMMARY

Recent PhD graduate and former Data Science Institute doctoral fellow, applying **GenAI** methods to build **multi-modal foundation models for science**. I have 6+ years experience to adapt machine learning techniques to solve real world science problems with multi-terabytes datasets and 9+ year of Python programming and software development experience.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

University of Toronto

Sept 2019 - Oct 2024

Graduate Researcher & Data Science Institute Doctoral Fellow

- Developed prototypes of multi-modal foundation models for astronomical data with **Transformers** architecture and **denoising diffusion** probabilistic models. Presented as spotlight talks and posters at **NeurIPS** and **ICML**.
- Trained self-supervised Transformers models implemented in PyTorch with large multi-terabytes datasets consists billions of stellar objects, leveraging tools such as Docker and PostgreSQL trained on national GPU clusters. Created an online natural language interface using LLMs hosted on a home computer with flask.
- Developed an encoder-decoder model in Tensorflow for unsupervised learning to address a cross-domain, data-rich yet label-scarce problem, by reducing data dimensionality by three orders of magnitude through physical knowledge-guided techniques and label regression in the latent space.
- Curated catalogues of millions of stellar parameters and associated uncertainties derived with data-driven models, with more than 10% improvement on stellar parameters accuracy and a few orders of magnitude faster to **low signal-to-noise data** compared to traditional physics-driven pipeline.
- Collaborated with the community to curate a 100 TB astronomical dataset for training large model in the future. Developed and maintained well-documented and thoroughly tested open-source software mainly written in Python, C and SQL, contributing both to personal projects and to the wider scientific community.

EDUCATION

Ph.D., Astronomy & Astrophysics, University of Toronto	2020 - 2024
Dissertation: "Exploring the Milky Way with Deep Learning" with Prof. Jo Bovy	
M.Sc., Astronomy & Astrophysics, University of Toronto	2019 - 2020
H.B.Sc., Physics & Astronomy, University of Toronto	2014 - 2019

PUBLICATION OVERVIEW

I am the first/second author on **9 refereed papers** that have **570+** citations. In total, I am an author on **16 refereed papers** that have **2760+** citations (h-index=11). My research has been presented at international conferences and workshops. Here are some of the highlights (first-author unless noted as part of a collaboration):

NeurIPS (2023, 2024)

- Talk on "Towards an Astronomical Foundation Model for Stars"
- Collaboration poster on "The Multimodal Universe: Enabling Large-Scale Machine Learning with 100TBs of Astronomical Scientific Data"

ICML (2024)

- Poster on "Estimating Probability Densities with Transformer and Denoising Diffusion"

Artificial Intelligence for Astronomy (2019)

- Talk on "Mapping the Milky Way Galaxy with Deep Learning"

SOFTWARE OVERVIEW

I am proficient in Python and C programming and familiar with tools around high-performance computing and SQL databases. I am learning Rust and C++ by taking initiatives to implement wishlist features in other open-source projects. Most of my research are open-sourced including codes for publications are hosted on my GitHub. This includes a few software packages used by the community that are well tested using continuous integration with GitHub Actions and well documented with docstrings and user guides, for example:

- Galaxy10 🜎 A CIFAR10-like galaxy image dataset for educational and research purposes
- MyGaiaDB 😯 A data management package to setup local serverless multi-terabytes astronomical databases using SQLite and run query locally with Python