Julia Balla

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EDUCATION

Massachusetts Institute of Technology Sep 2023 – Present
Ph.D. in Electrical Engineering and Computer Science
Advisors: Tess Smidt and Tommi Jaakkola
Robert M. (1941) and Jacqueline M. Fano Fellowship

University of Oxford, Exeter College Oct 2022 – Sep 2023
M.S. in Advanced Computer Science
Advisor: Michael Bronstein
Thesis: Graph-Informed Symbolic Regression
DeepMind Scholarship

Massachusetts Institute of Technology Sep 2018 – May 2022
B.S. in Mathematics with Computer Science, Minor in Economics

PUBLICATIONS & PREPRINTS

Balla, J., Huang, S., Dugan, O., Dangovksi, R., Soljacic, M. (2023). AI-Assisted Discovery of Quantitative and Formal Models in Social Science. *arXiv:2210.0056. In review.*

Vepakomma, P., **Balla, J.**, Raskar, R. (2022). PrivateMail: Supervised Manifold Learning of Deep Features with Privacy for Image Retrieval. *Proceedings of the AAAI Conference on Artificial Intelligence*, 36(8), 8503-8511.
Oral presentation at AAAI-22

Vepakomma, P., **Balla, J.**, Raskar, R. (2020). Splintering with distributions: A stochastic decoy scheme for private computation. *arXiv:2007.02719*

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Harvard Medical School Jun 2022 – Sep 2022
Supervisor: Marinka Zitnik
Combining symbolic regression with graph neural networks for the discovery of fundamental drug interaction laws.

Institute for AI and Fundamental Interactions, MIT Jun 2021 – Aug 2022
Supervisor: Marin Soljačić
Designed a neural symbolic regression system for the discovery of universal laws in social science and dynamical systems.

London Geometry and Machine Learning Summer School Jul 2022
Supervisor: Francesco di Giovanni
Surveyed techniques for graph-rewiring in graph neural networks from a geometric perspective.

MIT Computer Science and Artificial Intelligence Lab Feb 2021 – May 2021
Supervisors: Octavian Ganea and Tommi Jaakkola
Explored computationally tractable methods to learn Riemannian manifolds as geometric priors for graph representation learning.

MIT Media Lab Feb 2020 – May 2021
Supervisors: Praneeth Vepakomma and Ramesh Raskar
Developed algorithms for privacy-preserving machine learning with applications in distributed learning and private image retrieval.

INDUSTRY EXPERIENCE

Wellington Management Jun 2021 – Aug 2021
Data Science Intern Boston, MA
Designed a text classification algorithm to identify job postings indicating company growth.

Meta Jun 2020 – Aug 2020
Data Engineering Intern New York, NY
Created a data pipeline and dashboard for sentiment analysis of Messenger app reviews using Presto and HiveQL.

Predata Jun 2019 – Aug 2019
Data Visualization Intern New York, NY
Developed a web app using ReactJS and Django for predicting geopolitical risk by visualizing page activity for geotagged Wikipedia pages on a 3D map.

R3 Jan 2019 – Feb 2019
Research and Education Intern New York, NY
Analyzed challenges within the automotive, aerospace, and agriculture industries caused by Brexit and mapped them to potential blockchain solutions.

OUTREACH

MIT High School Studies Program Jul 2022 – Aug 2022
Instructor Cambridge, MA
Designed and taught a weekly lecture series on "The Mathematics of Multi-Agent Systems" to more than 80 high schoolers.

MIT Undergraduate Society of Women in Math Feb 2022 – May 2022
Mentor Cambridge, MA
Offered guidance regarding careers, academics, and personal development to undergraduate women studying mathematics.

MIT Splash Nov 2020
Instructor Cambridge, MA
Created and taught a class on "Minecraft Fires, Social Networks, and Quantum Complexity" to more than 50 high schoolers for a weekend-long educational program.

SKILLS

Software: Python (PyTorch), R, Julia, SQL (Postgres)
Miscellaneous: Fluent in Russian