Lei Li 李磊

Post-doctoral Research Fellow

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Research Interests

Explainable Recommendation, Recommender Systems, Travel Planning, Large Language Models

Education

Ph.D. of Computer Science — *Hong Kong Baptist University (HKBU)*
Advisor: Prof. Li Chen, Mentors: Dr. Yongfeng Zhang & Dr. Ruihai Dong — *Aug. 2017 – Jul. 2022*

- *Thesis: Natural Language Explanation for Recommendations and Beyond*
- Studied recurrent neural networks (RNN), Transformer and large language models (LLM) for recommendation explanation generation, and published 3 papers at CIKM'20, ACL'21 and TOIS
- Major research outcome integrated into a small eco-system NLG4RS for recommender systems-based natural language generation that includes benchmark datasets, evaluation metrics and representative models

B.Eng. of Computer Science & B.Sc. of Mathematics — *Shenzhen University (SZU)*
Advisor: Prof. Weike Pan — *Sep. 2013 – Jun. 2017*

- Research on recommendation algorithms, especially collaborative filtering and matrix factorization

Experiences

Hong Kong Baptist University — *Aug. 2022 – Present*
Post-doctoral Research Fellow *Advisor: Prof. Li Chen, Mentor: Dr. Yongfeng Zhang* — *Hong Kong, China*

- Supported by Hong Kong Research Grants Council (RGC) and Huawei
- Research on LLM-based recommendation and travel planning with LLM
- Published a survey at COLING'24, where how LLM would shape recommender systems from multi-stage filtering to single-stage filtering was discussed

Rutgers University — *Feb. 2023 – Jun. 2023*
Visiting Researcher *Advisor: Dr. Yongfeng Zhang* — *New Brunswick, USA*

- Published 1 paper about efficient LLM-based recommendation at CIKM'23

Inspir.ai — *Jun. 2019 – Aug. 2019*
Intern *Mentor: Dr. Peng Peng* — *Beijing, China*

- Research on explaining the decision-making process of reinforcement learning (RL) agents
- Visualization of the replay data of the computer game StarCraft II

Hong Kong Baptist University — *Mar. 2017 – Jun. 2017*
Research Exchange Student *Advisor: Prof. Li Chen* — *Hong Kong, China*

- Research on personality for recommender systems

Suishou Technology — *Aug. 2016 – Nov. 2016*
Intern *Advisor: Prof. Weike Pan* — *Shenzhen, China*

- Utilized machine learning tools (such as Liblinear and XGBoost) to mine potential customers for personalized advertising
- Increased the company's sales of financial products by 4 times during an online test

Selected Publications

- Large Language Models for Generative Recommendation: A Survey and Visionary Discussions
  Lei Li, Yongfeng Zhang, Dugang Liu, Li Chen
  COLING'24: Proceedings of the 2024 Joint International Conference on Computational Linguistics, Language Resources and Evaluation, pages 10146-10159, Turin, Italy, May 20–25, 2024

- Prompt Distillation for Efficient LLM-based Recommendation
  Lei Li, Yongfeng Zhang, Li Chen
  CIKM'23: Proceedings of the 32nd ACM International Conference on Information and Knowledge Management, pages 1348-1357, Birmingham, United Kingdom, October 21–25, 2023

- Personalized Prompt Learning for Explainable Recommendation
  Lei Li, Yongfeng Zhang, Li Chen
  TOIS: ACM Transactions on Information Systems, volume 41 (4), article 103, pages 1-26, March 2023

- On the Relationship between Explanation and Recommendation: Learning to Rank Explanations for Improved Performance
  Lei Li, Yongfeng Zhang, Li Chen
  TIST: ACM Transactions on Intelligent Systems and Technology, volume 14 (2), article 21, pages 1-24, February 2023

- Improving Personalized Explanation Generation through Visualization
  Shijie Geng, Zuohui Fu, Yingqiang Ge, **Lei Li**, Gerard de Melo, Yongfeng Zhang
  ACL'22: Proceedings of the 60th Annual Meeting of the Association for Computational Linguistics, pages 244-255, Dublin, Ireland, May 22–27, 2022

- Personalized Transformer for Explainable Recommendation
  Lei Li, Yongfeng Zhang, Li Chen
  ACL'21 (oral): Proceedings of the 59th Annual Meeting of the Association for Computational Linguistics and the 11th International Joint Conference on Natural Language Processing, pages 4947-4957, Online, Thailand, August 1–6, 2021

- EXTRA: Explanation Ranking Datasets for Explainable Recommendation
  Lei Li, Yongfeng Zhang, Li Chen
  SIGIR'21: Proceedings of the 44th International ACM SIGIR Conference on Research and Development in Information Retrieval, pages 2463-2469, Virtual Event, Canada, July 11–15, 2021

- Generate Neural Template Explanations for Recommendation
  Lei Li, Yongfeng Zhang, Li Chen
  CIKM'20: Proceedings of the 29th ACM International Conference on Information & Knowledge Management, pages 755-764, Virtual Event, Ireland, October 19–23, 2020

- Towards Controllable Explanation Generation for Recommender Systems via Neural Template
  Lei Li, Li Chen, Yongfeng Zhang
  WWW'20 Demo: Companion Proceedings of the Web Conference 2020, pages 198-202, Taipei, Taiwan, April 20–24, 2020

Grants

Huawei Gift Fund *Oct. 2024 – Sep. 2025*
Incremental Learning of Large Language Models for Recommendation *HK$330K*

RGC Postdoctoral Fellowship Scheme (PDFS) *Aug. 2022 – Present*
Causal Inference for Natural Language Processing in Recommender Systems

Talks

Recent Trends in Recommender Systems Community (RecSys 2024) *Nov. 2024*
Professors' Insights Gained from Top Conferences *Huawei (Online)*

Conversational Recommender Systems and Recent Trends Driven by LLMs *Oct. 2024*
Summer School at RecSys'24 *Bari*

Large Language Models for Generative Recommendation *Apr. 2024*
ConsumerBG AI Workshop Hong Kong *Huawei Hong Kong Research Center*

Large Language Models for Generative Recommendation *Apr. 2024*
Huawei Computing Youth Forum *Hangzhou*

Large Language Models for Recommendation *Sep. 2023*
Tutorial at RecSys'23 *Singapore*

Attracted hundreds of audience

Generating Recommendation Explanations with Transformer and Pre-trained Model *Mar. 2023*
Data Science Lab *Korea Advanced Institute of Science & Technology (Online)*

Improving Personalized Explanation Generation through Visualization *Dec. 2022*
Department of Computer Science *University of Luxembourg (Online)*

How to Come up with Ideas and Do Research: Experience Sharing *Oct. 2021*
COMP7160 Research Methods in Computer Science *Hong Kong Baptist University*

Academic Services

- **Guest Editor**: ACM Transactions on Recommender Systems (TORS) special issue on "Large Language Models for Recommender Systems", 2023
- **Workshop Organizer**: "EARL: Workshop on Evaluating and Applying Recommendation Systems with Large Language Models". RecSys'24
- **Session Chair**: CIKM'23 (Recommendation 9), WWW'23 (Multi-behavior Recommendation & Self-supervised Learning)
- **Program Committee Member**: RecSys'24, WWW'23, RecSys'22
- **Invited Reviewer**:
  - IEEE Transactions on Knowledge and Data Engineering (TKDE), 2023, 2024
  - ACM Transactions on Information Systems (TOIS), 2020, 2022, 2024
  - ACM Transactions on Recommender Systems (TORS), 2023, 2024
  - IEEE Transactions on Big Data (TBD), 2022
  - International Journal of Human-Computer Studies (IJHCS), 2024
  - ACM Transactions on Interactive Intelligent Systems (TiiS), 2021
  - Neurocomputing (NEUCOM), 2018, 2024
  - Knowledge-based Systems (KNOSYS), 2018
  - Journal of Intelligent Information Systems (JIIS), 2021
- **External Reviewer**: CIKM'24, SIGIR'21, WWW'21, WWW'19
- **Student Volunteer**: EMNLP'19

Awards & Honors

RPg Performance Award	HKBU	*Sep. 2021*
Research Postgraduate Studentship	HKBU	*Aug. 2017 – Aug. 2021*
Student Travel Grant (Virtual)	SIGIR'21	*Jul. 2021*
Research Excellence Award	PG Day, HKBU	*Jun. 2021*
Student Travel Grant (Virtual)	CIKM'20	*Oct. 2020*
Best Presentation Award	PG Day, HKBU	*Jun. 2020*
Excellent Teaching Assistant Performance Award	HKBU	*Jun. 2018, 2019, 2020*
Teaching Assistant Performance Award	HKBU	*Feb. 2020*
Outstanding Graduate	SZU	*Jun. 2017*

Technical Skills

Programming Language	Python, Java, Matlab, C++ (ordered by proficiency)
Platform and Tool	PyTorch, TensorFlow, Scikit-learn, MongoDB, Django, XGBoost, Liblinear

Languages

Mandarin	Native
English	Working proficiency
Cantonese	Elementary

Last update: November 12, 2024