

PRITOM SAHA AKASH

📍 Siebel School of Computing and Data Science, Urbana, IL 61801

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EDUCATION

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

IL, USA

Ph.D. in Computer Science

Aug. 2020 – Present

Institute of Information Technology, University of Dhaka

Dhaka, Bangladesh

B.S and M.S. in Software Engineering

Jan. 2014 – June 2019

RESEARCH INTERESTS

NLP (i.e., understanding and using LLMs), Text Mining and Recommender Systems.

UNIVERSITY EMPLOYMENTS

Research Assistant

Aug. 2024 – Present

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

IL, USA

- **Previously:** Aug.'20 – May'22, Aug.'22 – May'23

Co-Instructor

Aug. 2024 – Present

Dept. of CS, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

IL, USA

- **Previously:** Jan.'24 – May'24
- **Courses:** CS 598: Understanding and Using LLMs

Teaching Assistant

Aug. 2023 – Dec. 2023

Dept. of CS, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

IL, USA

- **Courses:** STAT 107- Data Science Discovery

Short Course Instructor

Jan. 2018 – Sep. 2019

Institute of Information Technology, University of Dhaka

Dhaka, Bangladesh

- **Courses:** Web Programming, Web design and Office application

INDUSTRY EXPERIENCES

Applied Scientist Intern (Up-coming)

May 2025 – Aug. 2025

Amazon Prime Video & Studios CoreTech, Amazon

Seattle, WA, USA

PhD Student Researcher

Sep. 2022 – Dec. 2024

Co-op of CS@UIUC and eBay Inc.

IL, USA

- **Topic:** Recommender System

Applied Scientist Intern

May 2024 – Aug. 2024

Amazon Prime Video & Studios CoreTech, Amazon

Seattle, WA, USA

- **Topic:** LLM in Prime Video Search

Research Scientist Intern

May 2023 – Aug. 2023

Almaden Lab, IBM Research

San Jose, CA, USA

- **Topic:** Conversational AI and Long-form QA

Software Engineer

Nov. 2019 – Aug. 2020

Samsung R&D Institute Bangladesh

Dhaka, Bangladesh

- **Topic:** Samsung Wearable Application Development

Software Engineer Intern

Jan. 2017 – June 2017

Datasoft System Bangladesh Limited

Dhaka, Bangladesh

- **Topic:** Website Development

PUBLICATIONS

Google Scholar: scholar.google.com/citations?user=mBDDbmEAAAAJ (*equal contribution, ✉ corresponding author)

14. **Pritom Saha Akash**, Kevin Chen-Chuan Chang. Enhancing Short-Text Topic Modeling with LLM-Driven Context Expansion and Prefix-Tuned VAEs. Findings of the 2024 Conference on Empirical Methods in Natural Language Processing (**EMNLP Findings**). 2024.
13. Kashob Kumar Roy, **Pritom Saha Akash**, Lucian Popa, and Kevin Chen-Chuan Chang. ConTReGen: Context-driven Tree-structured Retrieval for Open-domain Long-form Text Generation. Findings of the 2024 Conference on Empirical Methods in Natural Language Processing (**EMNLP Findings**). 2024.
12. Lam Do, **Pritom Saha Akash**, Kevin Chen-Chuan Chang. Unsupervised Open-domain Keyphrase Generation. The 61st Annual Meeting of the Association for Computational Linguistics (**ACL**). 2023.
11. **Pritom Saha Akash**, Jie Huang, Kevin Chen-Chuan Chang. Coordinated Topic Modeling. The 2022 Conference on Empirical Methods in Natural Language Processing (**EMNLP**). 2022
10. **Pritom Saha Akash**, Jie Huang, Kevin Chen-Chuan Chang, Yunyao Li, Lucian Popa, ChengXiang Zhai. Domain Representative Keywords Selection: A Probabilistic Approach. Findings of the 60th Annual Meeting of the Association for Computational Linguistics (**ACL Findings**). 2022.
9. Md. Eusha Kadir, **Pritom Saha Akash**, Sadia Sharmin, Amin Ahsan Ali, and Mohammad Shoyaib. A Proximity Weighted Evidential k Nearest Neighbor Classifier for Imbalanced Data. In Pacific-Asia Conference on Knowledge Discovery and Data Mining, (**PAKDD**) pp. 71-83. Springer, Cham, 2020.
8. Tarek, M. H., Kadir, M. E., Mahbub, M., **Pritom Saha Akash**, Ali, A. A., & Shoyaib, M. (2020, August). Mutual Information based feature selection for nurse care activity recognition. In 2020 Joint 9th International Conference on Informatics, Electronics & Vision (ICIEV) and 2020 4th International Conference on Imaging, Vision & Pattern Recognition (icIVPR) (pp. 1-6). IEEE.
7. Md. Eusha Kadir*, **Pritom Saha Akash***, Sadia Sharmin, Amin Ahsan Ali, and Mohammad Shoyaib. Can a Simple Approach Identify Complex Nurse Care Activity? In Adjunct Proceedings of the 2019 ACM International Joint Conference on Pervasive and Ubiquitous Computing and the 2019 International Symposium on Wearable Computers (**UbiComp/ISWC Adjunct**). 2019
6. **Pritom Saha Akash**, Md. Eusha Kadir, Amin Ahsan Ali and Mohammad Shoyaib. Inter-node Hellinger distance based Decision Tree, In Proceedings of the Twenty-Eighth International Joint Conference on Artificial Intelligence, (**IJCAI**). 2019.
5. **Pritom Saha Akash**, Md. Eusha Kadir, Amin Ahsan Ali, Md. Nurul Ahad Tawhid and Mohammad Shoyaib. Introducing Confidence as a Weight in Random Forest. 2019 International Conference on Robotics, Electrical and Signal Processing Techniques (ICREST).[Best Presenter Award]
4. **Pritom Saha Akash**, Ali Zafar Sadiq and Ahmedul Kabir. An Approach of Extracting God Class Exploiting Both Structural and Semantic Similarity. 14th International Conference on Evaluation of Novel Approaches to Software Engineering (**ENASE**). 2019
3. Jeba, Tahmim, Tarek Mahmud, **Pritom Saha Akash**, and Nadia Nahar. God Class Refactoring Recommendation and Extraction Using Context based Grouping. 2019.
2. Md. Eusha Kadir, **Pritom Saha Akash**, Amin Ahsan Ali, Mohammad Shoyaib and Zerina Begum. Evidential SVM for binary classification. ICASERT-2019: 1st International Conference on Advances in Science, Engineering and Robotics Technology. 2019.
1. Ali Zafar Sadiq, Ahmedul Kabir, **Pritom Saha Akash** and Md. Jubair Ibna Mostafa. Analyzing Corrective Maintenance using Change Coupled Clusters at Fix-inducing Changes. 2019 International Conference on Electrical, Computer and Communication Engineering (ECCE). 2019.

PREPRINTS AND UNDER REVIEW

8. Duy A. Nguyen, Rishi Kesav Mohan, Van Yang, **Pritom Saha Akash**, and Kevin Chen-Chuan Chang. RL-based Query Rewriting with Distilled LLM for online E-Commerce Systems. arXiv preprint arXiv:2501.18056 (2025).

7. Youan Cong, Cheng Wang, **Pritom Saha Akash**, and Kevin Chen-Chuan Chang. Query Optimization for Parametric Knowledge Refinement in Retrieval-Augmented Large Language Models. arXiv preprint arXiv:2411.07820 (2024).
6. Qihao Wang*, **Pritom Saha Akash***, Varvara Kollia, Biwei Jiang, Vadim Von Brzeski, Kevin Chen-Chuan Chang. On Category Recommendation: A Cascading Approach. [On Review]
5. **Pritom Saha Akash**, Jie Huang, and Kevin Chen-Chuan Chang. Let the Pretrained Language Models “Imagine” for Short Texts Topic Modeling. arXiv preprint arXiv:2310.15420 (2023).
4. **Pritom Saha Akash***, Kashob Kumar Roy*, Lucian Popa, and Kevin Chen-Chuan Chang. Long-form Question Answering: An Iterative Planning-Retrieval-Generation Approach. arXiv preprint arXiv:2311.09383 (2023).
3. **Pritom Saha Akash***, Trisha Das*, and Kevin Chen-Chuan Chang. TopicAdapt-An Inter-Corpora Topics Adaptation Approach. arXiv preprint arXiv:2310.04978 (2023).
2. **Pritom Saha Akash**, and Kevin Chen-Chuan Chang. Extract Class Refactoring Recommendations using Variational Graph Auto-Encoders. arXiv preprint arXiv:2203.08787 (2023).
1. **Pritom Saha Akash**, Wei-Cheng Lai, and Po-Wen Lin. Online aggregation based approximate query processing: A literature survey. arXiv preprint arXiv:2204.07125 (2022).

MASTER’S THESIS

- **Pritom Saha Akash**, An Evidential Inter-node Hellinger Distance based Tree Classifier, *Institute of Information Technology, University of Dhaka, 2019.*

SENIOR PROJECT

Context Sensitive Bengali Spell Checker

Jul. 2017 - Nov. 2017

- A Bengali Spell Checker for detecting and recommending corrections of typographic and contextual errors
- Developed using Python 3.5 and Django 1.11.2

AWARDS & GRANTS

1. IIT Academic Excellence Gold Medal Award, 2019
2. 2019 IEEE Computer Society Bangladesh Chapter’s Award for Academic & Research Excellence in recognition of Outstanding Research Accomplishments
3. Winner in a Human activity recognition challenge called *NURSE CARE ACTIVITY RECOGNITION CHALLENGE* as a part of HASCA workshop at Ubicomp 2019
4. Awarded for *IJCAI-AIJ 2019 TRAVEL and ACCESSIBILITY GRANT*
5. Awarded as the best presenter in an international conference, ICREST 2019
6. Awarded as an ICT fellow (2018-19) under ICT Division Bangladesh

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Reviewer: EMNLP’23,24; ACL’23,24; EACL’24, ARR Oct.’23,Dec.’24

Co-Reviewer: KDD’21,22,23,24; SIGIR’21,22,23,24; CIKIM’21; ICDM’21; WSDM’21

Technical Skills

Programming: Python, Java, Matlab, C/C++, MySQL, JavaScript, R

Software and Tools: PyTorch, scikit-learn, Git, LaTeX, IntelliJ, Eclipse, Android Studio