

ROBERT SIMON FONG

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RESEARCH INTERESTS

- Differential Geometry, Information Geometry: theory and applications in Manifold Optimization
- Machine Learning and Dynamical Systems: Reservoir Computing
- Black-box Optimization: Bayesian Optimization, Zeroth-order Optimization.

EDUCATION

University of Birmingham

Sept. 2015 - July 2020

Ph.D., Computer Science

Thesis: Stochastic Optimization on Riemannian Manifolds

Supervisors: Prof. Peter Tiño, Prof. Joshua Knowles

University of Waterloo

Sept. 2013 - Aug. 2014

Master of Mathematics, Computational Mathematics

Thesis: Optimization with Function Values Only

Supervisor: Prof. Thomas Coleman

University of Waterloo

Sept. 2007 - Apr. 2012

Bachelor of Mathematics, Pure Mathematics (Honours)

INDUSTRY EXPERIENCE

Senior Researcher, Theory Lab, Huawei

Aug. 2022 - Mar. 2024

- Quantum-Inspired Optimization – theory of Hamiltonian-based solver and its applications:
 - Boolean Satisfiability Problem, Electronic Design Automation (EDA), Hardware Verification, Graph partitioning, and MIMO Decoding.
- Reservoir Computing-based Time Series Forecasting
- Hardware Placement and Routing modelling in Integrated Circuits

Researcher, Noah's Ark Lab, Huawei

Aug. 2020 - Aug. 2021

- Theory of Deep Neural Nets: convexity, modelling, and optimization
- Application and implementation of Deep Neural Nets and Bayesian Optimization:
 - 5G+ High Frequency Surface antenna design and Integrated Circuit Partition.

Research Analyst, Cayuga Research Associates

Jan. 2013 - Aug. 2015

- Optimization and Simulation of Container Port control system.

Consultant, Hong Kong International Terminals Limited

Apr. 2012 - Jan. 2013

- Integer Programming Modelling and Abstraction of ISO container placement

ACADEMIC POSITIONS

Research Fellow, University of Birmingham

Feb. 2021 - present

- Reservoir Computing: Universality and applications on time series forecasting.

- Funded by Alan Turing Institute; Prof. Peter Tiño's Alan Turing Institute Fellowship
Machine Learning in the Space of State-Space Dynamic Models

Ph.D. Candidate, University of Birmingham

Sept. 2015 - Jul. 2020

- Manifold Optimization using Differential Geometry, Information Geometry and Simplicial Geometry.

Master Student, University of Waterloo

Sept. 2013 - Aug. 2014

- Derivative-free optimization: Simulated Annealing and Derivative-Free Zeroth-Order surrogate directional search methods. (with Prof. Thomas Coleman)
- Computational Algebra: Solving multivariate polynomials using diagonal subgroup of linear group action. (with Prof. George Labahn)

Undergraduate Research Assistant, University of Waterloo

Jan. 2012 - Apr. 2012

- Integer Programming and applications on Quay Crane Scheduling problem (special case of Traveling Salesman problem)

Undergraduate Research Assistant, Penn State University

Jan. 2009 - Mar. 2009

- Optimization of Gravitational Wave Detectors in Laser Interferometer Gravitational-Wave Observatory(LIGO).

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Teaching Assistant, University of Birmingham

Sept. 2021 - Jan. 2022

- **Courses:** Mathematical Foundations of Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning (MSc) [06 32250], Algorithms for Data Science (MSc) [06 32258]

Teaching Assistant, Lab Demonstrator, University of Birmingham

Sept. 2015 - Jan. 2019

- **Courses:** MSc/ICY Software Workshop (Java) (1,2), Mathematical Foundations of Computer Science

Graduate Teaching Assistant, University of Waterloo

Sept. 2013 - Dec. 2013

- **Course:** Math 106 Linear Algebra for Arts (Co-organized).

BOOKS AND MONOGRAPHS

- **Robert Simon Fong** and Peter Tiño. *Population-Based Optimization on Riemannian Manifolds*, volume 1046 of *Studies in Computational Intelligence (SCI)*. Springer, 2022. ISBN: 978-3-031-04292-8 (eBook ISBN: 978-3-031-04293-5)

SELECTED JOURNAL ARTICLES

- Robert Simon Fong, Yanming Song, and Alexander Yosifov. Efficient digital quadratic unconstrained binary optimization solvers for sat problems. *New Journal of Physics*, 27(1):013027, Jan 2025
- Boyu Li, **Robert Simon Fong**, and Peter Tiño. Simple Cycle Reservoirs are Universal. *Journal of Machine Learning Research*, 25(158):1–28, 2024
- **Robert Simon Fong**, Boyu Li, and Peter Tino. Linear simple cycle reservoirs at the edge of stability perform fourier decomposition of the input driving signals. *arXiv preprint arXiv:2412.00295*, 2024

- Robert Simon Fong. *Stochastic optimization on Riemannian manifolds*. PhD thesis, University of Birmingham, 2020

SELECTED CONFERENCE PAPERS

- **Robert Simon Fong**, Boyu Li, and Peter Tiño. Universality of Real Minimal Complexity Reservoir. In *2025 AAAI Conference on Artificial Intelligence (AAAI)*, pages 1–9, 2025
- Peter Tiño, **Robert Simon Fong**, and Roberto Fabio Leonarduzzi. Predictive Modeling in the Reservoir Kernel Motif Space. In *2024 International Joint Conference on Neural Networks (IJCNN)*, pages 1–8, 2024
- **Robert Simon Fong** and Peter Tiño. Extended stochastic derivative-free optimization on riemannian manifolds. In *Proceedings of the Genetic and Evolutionary Computation Conference Companion*, GECCO '19, pages 257–258, New York, NY, USA, 2019. ACM
- **Simon Fong** and Peter Tiño. Induced dualistic geometry of finitely parametrized probability densities on manifolds, 2018
- David Tsang, Andrew Lundgren, Ruxandra Bondarescu, **Simon Fong**, and Mihai Bondarescu. Optimizing finite mirrors for advanced gravitational wave detectors. In *APS April Meeting Abstracts*, 2009

AWARDS AND SCHOLARSHIPS

Honorary Research Fellowship , University of Birmingham	<i>2021 - 2026</i>
President's Scholarship , University of Waterloo	<i>2008</i>
AP Scholar with Distinction , The College Board	<i>2007</i>
Second Honour , Third Pan Pearl Delta plus Chinese Elite Schools Physics Olympiad	<i>2007</i>
Third Honour , Hong Kong Physics Olympiad	<i>2007</i>
Third Honour , Hong Kong Physics Olympiad	<i>2006</i>

INVITED TALKS

Drexel University , Philadelphia, PA, USA	<i>28. Feb. 2025</i>
<i>Universality of Simple Cycle Reservoirs and Dilation Theory</i>	
Seminar Talk with Boyu Li	
Southern University of Science and Technology , Shenzhen, China	<i>23. Aug. 2024</i>
<i>Universality of Simple Cycle Reservoirs</i>	
Invited Talk	

SKILLS

Programming Languages and Frameworks

MATLAB, Python, R, Java, L^AT_EX, Microsoft Office

Languages

English (native), Chinese Mandarin (fluent), Chinese Cantonese (native)

REVIEW SERVICES

- SIAM Journal on Optimization
- ACM/SIGEVO Conference on Foundations of Genetic Algorithms (FOGA)