


Sergia VOLODIN (Sergei)

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Birth date: 3rd of October 1994 (28 years), Russian 




ABSTRACT

\$ **Sergia**: artsy recently graduated software engineer and young scientist with interests in open-source democratic and consensual technology with experience in research and development in industry, academia and startups. Looking for an inclusive and diverse team where we all share and discuss what is in our heart, to create something honest, awesome, and balanced to give people what they need.



EDUCATION

EPFL Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Lausanne (EPFL)  Master's
Lausanne, Switzerland Sep 2017 – Apr 2021

- Master's degree in **Computer Science**, minor in Computational **Neurosciences**, GPA: 5.67/6
- Research Assistant position (2017–2019)
- Thesis  "CauseOccam: Learning Interpretable Abstract Representations in Reinforcement Learning Environments via Model Sparsity"

 **Moscow Institute of Physics and Technology**  Bachelor's
Moscow, Russia June 2017

Bachelor's degree in **Applied Mathematics**, GPA: 4.84/5

SKILLS

Scientific programming: **Keras**, **TensorFlow**, **PyTorch**, ray/tune/rllib, tf-agents, scikit-learn, Brian 2, MATLAB, Mathematica, R





Programming languages: **Python**, **C/C++**, TypeScript, Java, Scala, nasm, C#, AVR C++

Frameworks: Qt/QML, Django, Android Studio, OpenGL/GLSL, Unity 3D, Blender, React.js

Environment: **Git**, **LaTeX**, **Bash**, **Debian/Ubuntu Linux**



Scientific skills: **experimental** sections of research papers, working on **theoretical** problems, scientific presentation, data analysis





Software development: **agile** software development (Scrum), CI/CD, debugging, design patterns, concurrent and distributed systems, TCP/IP networking, AVR microcontrollers, Arduino platform, team and project management in **small startups**



Languages:  English:  TOEFL iBT 113/120,  French: A1,  Russian: native

WORK AND RESEARCH EXPERIENCE



 **Fave For Fans**  Software Engineer
Platform dedicated to passionate fans, Zürich, Switzerland  Sep 2021 – May 2022

- **Responsible** for the backend development with microservices on Cloudflare Workers with TypeScript, an ArangoDB-based database, automatic data schema validation, and CI/CD with integration tests. First full-time engineer at the company.
- **Proposing** and discussing ways to create  more **ethical and democratic social media** sharing mechanisms, organizing voting in the team to discuss proposals ("mini  Stakeholder Capitalism")
- **Research** into ways of obtaining data from third-party services with privacy guarantees
- **Conducted** analysis of the database to create better ranking results


  **Center for Human-Compatible AI (CHAI), Berkeley**  Summer Intern
Berkeley, CA, United States (remote due to COVID-19, from Zurich, Switzerland ) June 2020 – Sep 2020

- Designed  better **defenses against adversarial policies** in Multi-Agent Reinforcement Learning via alternating training of opponents using **Python 3**, **Tensorflow**, **ray**, **rllib**.
- Ran hyperparameter sweeps on multiple machines with ray and rllib
- Converted legacy code using stable baselines and Tensorflow 1.0 to rllib and Tensorflow 2.0
- Results published as a blog post  "Defending against Adversarial Policies in Reinforcement Learning with Alternating Training" on the Effective Altruism forum



 **Tournesol**  Co-founder&ML engineer
Non-profit designing better recommender systems, Lausanne, Switzerland  May 2020 – May 2021

- Co-founded a startup working on contributor-driven collaborative recommender systems
- Responsible for  back-end engineering using **Django**, and Machine Learning engineering with **TensorFlow**, the API server
- Responsible as well for system administration (Debian), (partially) front-end development with **React.js** and parts of algorithm design
- Co-authored  the paper with our results


Google Research  Software Engineering Intern
Mountain View, CA, United States Nov 2019 – Feb 2020

- Designed an algorithm to uncover a linear **Causal Model** of a **Reinforcement Learning** environment using interventions with **Python 3**, **Tensorflow**, **tf-agents**, and analyzed the effect of interventions on the quality of exploration
- Used TensorFlow and tf-agents to conduct the experiments with large hyperparameter sweeps
- Results  published as an ICLR CLDM workshop paper

EPFL, Computer-Human Interaction in Learning and Instruction laboratory  Research Assistant
Lausanne, Switzerland Sep 2017 – Aug 2018




- Created  a **library** QML-AR for seamless **augmented reality** using **OpenCV**, **Qt/C++** and **Qt/QML** with competitive performance on Android and small visual negative impact
- Designed an  activity for kids for learning math using AR, tested the application in a classroom setting, analyzed the obtained data


 **EscapeControl**  Founder&Backend engineer
Own b2b startup for escape rooms, Moscow, Russia  Jul 2015 – Feb 2016


- Created a startup selling software and hardware for  real-world escape room games which allows to speed up the construction and reduce maintenance costs
- Responsible for back-end software engineering with **C++/Python**, servers administration, sales and customer support
- Managed a team of two web developers until a successful launch of the web interface
- Sold more than forty solutions which are currently running in different countries across the globe and provided remote support

PUBLICATIONS

Lê-Nguyên Hoang, Louis Faucon, Aidan Jungo, **Sergei Volodin**, Dalia Papuc, Orfeas Liossatos, Ben Crulis, Mariame Tighanimine, Isabela Constantin, Anastasiia Kucherenko, Alexandre Maurer, Felix Grimberg, Vlad Nitu, Chris Vossen, Sébastien Rouault, El-Mahdi El-Mhamdi.  Tournesol: A quest for a large, secure and trustworthy database of reliable human judgments, 2021. Code for the platform (backend, ML, frontend), experiments, part of data analysis, writing

 **Sergei Volodin**, Nevan Wichers, Jeremy Nixon.  Resolving Spurious Correlations in Causal Models of Environments via Interventions, 2020. Topic choice, experiments, theory, writing.  ICLR CLDM workshop 2020.




El-M. El-Mhamdi, R. Guerraoui, A. Kucharavy, **S. Volodin**.  The Probabilistic Fault Tolerance of Neural Networks in the Continuous Limit, 2019. Experiments, theory, writing.

A. Dymarsky, E. Gryazina, **S. Volodin**, B. Polyak.  Geometry of quadratic maps via convex relaxation, 2018. Exp-s, theory, writing.

A. Petrov, **S. Volodin**  Janibekov's effect and the laws of mechanics. Doklady Akademii Nauk, 2013. Graphics for the article, experiments, first year of my BSc










MASTER'S THESIS

EPFL, Laboratory for Computational Neuroscience  Master's Thesis student
Lausanne, Switzerland Oct 2020 – Apr 2021








- Designed  an algorithm with **Python 3**, **Pytorch** and **ray** based on the  "Consciousness Prior" proposal that finds a simple causal model of an RL environment in the general case from pixels. The project is a continuation of my Google Research internship (see below)
- The algorithm works on benchmarks, see  my thesis for more details
- The work includes **theoretical results on abstraction learning as well as a code base with tests and documentation**
- The thesis defended on the 21st of April 2021 with Adam Gleave (Berkeley/DeepMind) as an external expert

EXTRAS

EXTRA EXPERIENCE

-  **Swisscom Digital Lab**  Thesis student
Lausanne, Switzerland Sep 2020 – Nov 2020
- Developed a prediction model of customer churn based on time series data with neural networks implemented in PyTorch
 - Responsible for obtaining the data into Apache Spark and presenting the results
- EPFL, Distributed Computing Laboratory**  Research Assistant
Lausanne, Switzerland Sep 2018 – Oct 2019
- Investigated **fault tolerance** of a neural network using **Taylor approximation**
 - Introduced the *continuous limit* to  bound the error, and compared to the Neural Tangent Kernel limit case
 - Conducted  experiments to test the theory using **Keras** including the **implementation** of custom layers and regularizers
- Skolkovo Institute of Science and Technology, Center for Energy Systems**  Research Intern
Moscow, Russia Sep 2016 – Jul 2017
- Characterized using **numerical optimization** and **theoretically** the structure of the set of boundary non-convexities of an image of a quadratic map in case the number of non-convexities is infinite
 - Designed and implemented  the Convexity Analysis of Quadratic Maps **library** using **MATLAB** which gives approximate solutions to a number of problems involving quadratic maps
- ITBrat**  Software Engineer
Algorithmic trading startup, Moscow, Russia  Jul 2015 – Feb 2016
- **Developed** algorithmic trading application from initial discussion with the team to deployment and supporting in **C++**
 - Added low-level user-space networking to the project which allowed to decrease latency and increase profit
 - **Responsible** for the performance of the code














PROJECTS

- Safe Proximal Policy Optimization**
EPFL EE-618 course project, advised by Dr. Kamalaruban Parameswaran and Prof. Volkan Cevher, Lausanne, Switzerland  2019
-  Added a projection step to the **Proximal Policy Optimization** algorithm to comply with requirements of **Constrained Markov Decision Processes**
 -  Implemented code in Tensorflow and tested it in simple environments
 - Presented the project at the RLSS 2019 summer school (Lille, France)
- Quadcopter drone from scratch project**
Russia  2012 – 2014
- Developed  an algorithm in C++ for stabilization of a quadcopter drone from scratch using AVR microcontrollers, IMU sensors and PID regulators
 - **Co-managed** the project consisting of 2-5 developers
 - Conducted the analysis of launches to improve  flying quality
 - Results were **published** as a  popular science article (*in Russian*)






RELEVANT COURSES

Machine Learning, Software Engineering, Unsupervised and Reinforcement Learning, Convex Optimization, Distributed Algorithms, Algorithms, Random graph theory, Functional Programming, Set Theory, Random Processes, Functional Analysis, Biological modeling of neural networks, Complexity theory, Learning theory, Neuroscience: behavior and cognition, Neuroprosthetics, Theory and methods for Reinforcement Learning, Optimization for Machine Learning, Computer Vision

CONFERENCES AND SUMMER SCHOOLS

-   Machine Learning Summer School, 2020 (virtual due to COVID-19), *poster presenter*
-   Reinforcement Learning Summer School, 2019 (Lille, France), *poster presenter, selected to receive financial help*
-   Data science summer school, 2019 (Paris, France), *poster presenter*
-   QtDay 2019 (Firenze, Italy), *speaker, one hour session on qml-ar*
-   P.A.I.S.S. AI Summer School, INRIA Grenoble, 2018, *participant in tutorials given by top experts;  selected to receive financial aid*
-   Information Technologies and Systems (Saint-Petersburg, Repino, 2016), *speaker, poster presenter*

COMPETITIONS

-   Google HashCode Qualification round coding contest, *top 6%* (team EPFL-Noobs), managed the team, developed algorithms and did the coding, 2019
-   DeepHack.RL hackathon on Deep Reinforcement Learning for Atari games, managed the team and developed an  evolutionary algorithm with an autoencoder, MIPT, Moscow, Russia, 2017

VOLUNTEERING

- Better Russia** 2022
 *Community of pro-democracy Russians, Zurich, Switzerland* 
Making posters for the demonstrations, organizing voting on important decisions among members, brainstorming on the situation to find a way forward
- Artificial Intelligence Governance Forum** 2019, 2020
 *AI governance conference, Geneva, Switzerland (2019), virtual due to COVID-19 (2020)* 
Time-keeping, technical support, small tutorial on neural networks
- Effective Altruism Lausanne** 2019
Local  EA community, Lausanne, Switzerland 
Co-founding the group,  introduction workshop speaker, running a  discussion group on AI safety and theory, newsletter management and writing, Facebook events announcements, managing open discussions
- Applied Machine Learning Days** 2019
Machine learning  conference, Lausanne, Switzerland 
Technical help for presenters, badge check
- Anti-corruption foundation (A. Navalny)** 2017
A  non-profit aimed at investigating corruption, Moscow, Russia 
Conveyed the results of the investigations by talking to people on the streets as a volunteer


INTERESTS

Music, Dancing, Running (1/2 marathon 2018), Snowboarding, Swimming, Philosophy, DIY, Activism

RESEARCH INTERESTS

Artificial Intelligence Safety/Ethics, Artificial Intelligence, Machine Learning, Causal Reasoning, Neuroscience, Adversarial policies, Mathematical Optimization, Robotics, Consciousness research

SCHOLARSHIPS

-  Research Scholars, a paid *Research Assistant* position, Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Lausanne (EPFL), 2017 – 2019
-  Abramov Fund's scholarship for excellent *grades*, 2014