Songze Li

The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (Guangzhou) No.1 Duxue Road, Nansha, Guangzhou, China

Web: https://songzli.github.io/

Google Scholar: https://scholar.google.com/citations?hl=en&user=zX8LAXkAAAAJ Github: https://github.com/songzLi

e-mail: songzeli88240gmail.com cell phone: +86 13218046696

RESEARCH INTERESTS

- Distributed/federated computing and machine learning
 - Techniques to improve security and privacy, computation and communication efficiency, and learning accuracy of federated machine/deep learning tasks
 - Adversarial attacks in federated learning systems
- Blockchain security and scalability
 - High throughput and low latency blockchain protocols for permissioned and permissionless settings
 - Efficient and privacy-preserving layer-2 rollups

EDUCATION

University of Southern California (USC), Los Angeles, California, USA

- PhD, Electrical Engineering, Aug. 2011 Aug. 2018
- Advisor: Prof. Salman Avestimehr
- GPA: 3.9/4

University of Southern California (USC), Los Angeles, California, USA

- MSc, Electrical Engineering, Aug. 2011 May 2013
- Advisor: Prof. Urbashi Mitra
- GPA: 3.9/4

Polytechnic Institute of New York University (NYU-Poly), Brooklyn, New York

- BSc, Electrical Engineering, Jan. 2008 May 2011
- Advisor: Prof. Elza Erkip
- GPA: 3.91/4

APPOINTMENTS

- Affiliate Assistant Professor, CSE Department, School of Engineering, HKUST (Aug. 2021 – present).
- Visiting Assistant Professor, ECE Department, School of Engineering, HKUST (Dec. 2020 Nov. 2021).
- Assistant Professor, IoT Thrust, Information Hub, HKUST(GZ) (Dec. 2020 present).
- Research scientist at Stanford University (Jan. 2020 Aug. 2020), Hosting professor: Prof. David Tse.
 - Manage a multi-university effort to develop a smart contract public blockchain testnet based on the Prism consensus protocol.

- Design and implement database and state recovery mechanism when new nodes join the network.
- Design and implement peer discovery mechanism.
- Research scientist and blockchain developer at Trifecta Blockchain Inc. (July 2019 Dec. 2019).
 - Designed and developed communication-efficient mechanism to verify data availability for Trifecta sharding protocol.
 - Invented Coded Merkle Tree, which is a novel cryptographic accumulator that encodes a block using LDPC codes. The commitment of a Coded Merkle Tree allows a light client to verify data availability of a block with *constant* sampling cost, and to detect incorrectly coded blocks from a *constant-size* fraud proof. Filed two patents.
- Research scientist at Applied Protocol Research (Jan. 2019 June 2019).
 - Invented PolyShard, which is a novel information-theoretic approach to simultaneously scale the security and throughput performance of a blockchain sharding system with the number of nodes in the network.
 - Designed and developed *Proof-of-Stake* version of the Prism consensus protocol.
- Postdoctoral Researcher, Communication Sciences Institute, USC (Sept. 2018 Dec. 2018), Advisor: Prof. Salman Avestimehr.
 - Scaling blockchain systems: proposed and developed Coded State Machine to simultaneously scale the computation, storage, and security of transaction processing of blockchain systems.
 - Coding for distributed ML systems: invented Lagrange Coded Computing for distributed computing systems, which simultaneously achieve optimal resiliency to stragglers, security to adversaries, and data privacy to colluding eavesdroppers. Filed one patent.
- Research Assistant, Communication Sciences Institute, USC (Aug. 2014

 Aug. 2018), Advisor: Prof. Salman Avestimehr.
 - 1. Coding for distributed computing systems
 - Introduced a general distributed computing framework motivated by MapReduce. Characterized the optimal tradeoff between computations of the Map functions and the communication to exchange intermediate results.
 - Invented coded distributed computing (CDC), to substantially reduce the communication load to move intermediate data of distributed computing applications, which takes advantage of redundant task executions.
 - Developed and implemented a coded distributed sorting algorithm CodedTeraSort, which improves the run-time performance of the sorting benchmark TeraSort by a factor of $1.97 \sim 3.39 \times$ on Amazon EC2 clusters
 - Characterized a tradeoff between computation latency and communication load in distributed computing environments with straggling servers.
 - Extended the principles of CDC into wireless distributed computing platforms, achieving a scalable design that can accommodate an unlimited number of mobile users.
 - Developed a communication-aware mobile edge computing framework, in

- which coded computations are designed at the edge nodes to simultaneously minimize the computation load and maximize the spectral efficiency to communicate to mobile users.
- Developed a coded distributed computing scheme for linear computation tasks, named "compressed coded distributed computing" (compressed CDC). Compressed CDC utilizes both the combining technique to compress intermediate values for the same computation, and the coded multicast technique to combine intermediate values from different computations.
- Designed the Batched Coupon's Collector (BCC) scheme to optimally place data batches on multiple learners, minimizing the overall computation latency for running distributed gradient descent algorithms.
- Minimized the computation latency for a class of distributed least-squares regression problems, by designing coded storage at each worker node.

2. Speeding up decentralized deep learning systems

- Designed and implemented PCA-based gradient compressor GradiVeQ to reduce the communication time in a decentralized deep learning system using ring all-reduce communication.
- Designed a pipelined training algorithm Pipe-SGD on a decentralized system using ring all-reduce communication, where the computation and communication of consecutive iterations are parallelized to minimize the wall-clock training time.

3. Scalable blockchain systems

Proposed PolyShard for blockchain systems, which designs coded storage/computation for blockchain sharding to simultaneously achieve efficiency and security scalability.

4. Topological Interference Management

- Designed and optimized the communication schemes from the rovers on the surface of Mars to Mars-orbiting satellites (orbiters). The particular scheme exploits the time-varying characteristic of the topology of the roverto-orbiter communication network by optimally coding across topologies.
- Designed pre-coding matrices for partially connected interference networks with multiple receive antennas when no channel state information at transmitters (CSIT) is available.
- Interim Engineering Intern at Qualcomm Technologies, Inc. (May 2014 Aug. 2014).

Project: Latency Improvements on UMTS/HSPA.

- Research Assistant, Communication Sciences Institute, USC (Aug. 2011 May 2014), Advisor: Prof. Urbashi Mitra.
 - Proposed transmitter cooperation schemes and derived the achievable rate region (capacity region) for Gaussian multiple access channel, and optimized power allocation.
 - Designed new spectrum sharing scheme for hierarchical networks enabling mutual cooperation.
- Research Assistant, Integrated Information Systems Laboratory, NYU-poly, Brooklyn, NY (May 2009 May 2011), Advisor, Prof. Elza Erkip
 - Analyzed interference mitigation methods for the Z interference channel.

Teaching

• IoT Thrust, HKUST(GZ).

- o IOTA 5101: Fog/Edge/Cloud Computing for IoT (Spring 2021, Fall 2021, Fall 2022).
 - Graduate level course
 - Comprehensive introduction of Fog/Edge/Cloud computing paradigms and systems, technical challenges in current systems and their solutions;
 Exploration of technological frontiers and state-of-the-art research problems
- IOTA 6910A: Security in IoT Systems: Theory and Applications (Spring 2022).
 - Graduate level course
 - Fundamentals of modern cryptography and cryptographic primitives. Security vulnerabilities of practical IoT systems, and recent advancements in technologies to protect IoT security
- IOTA 6101/6102: Internet of Things Seminar I/II (Fall 2021, Spring 2022, Fall 2022).
 - Graduate level seminar course
 - Invited external speakers on IoT related research
 - Reading and presentation on selected IoT related research papers
- INFH 5000: Information Science and Technology: Essentials and Trends (Fall 2021, Fall 2022).
 - Introduction on IoT industry and IoT research advancements
 - Discussion with invited industry speaker on challenges and opportunities in IoT industry

• Teaching Assistant, Department of Electrical Engineering, USC.

- EE 441: Applied Linear Algebra for Engineering (Fall 2013).
 - Graduate level course
 - Responsibilities: prepared materials, led discussion sessions, provided assistance on coursework.
- EE 562a: Random Process in Engineering (Spring 2014).
 - Graduate level course
 - Responsibilities: prepared materials, led discussion sessions, provided assistance on coursework.

DISTINCTIONS & AWARDS

- Best Paper Award at NeurIPS-20 Workshop on Scalability, Privacy, and Security in Federated Learning, 2020.
- Graduation Day Talk at ITA, 2018.
- Qualcomm Innovation Fellowship Finalists, 2017.
- Graduation Day Poster at ITA, 2017.
- USC Viterbi School of Engineering Doctoral Fellowship, 2011.
- Poster presentation at the 2010 NYU-Poly convocation.
- Polytechnic Institute of NYU Promise Scholarship, 2008.

Publications Monographs

M 1. S. Li and S. Avestimehr, "Coded Computing", Foundations and Trends in Communications and Information Theory: Vol. 17: No. 1, pp 1-148. Aug. 2020.

Journal Articles

- J 9. T. Jahani-Nezhad, M. A. Maddah-Ali, **S. Li**, and G. Caire. "SwiftAgg+: Achieving Asymptotically Optimal Communication Load in Secure Aggregation for Federated Learning," IEEE Journal on Selected Areas in Communications, 2022.
- J 8. J. Zhu, and **S. Li**, "A Systematic Approach towards Efficient Private Matrix Multiplication," IEEE Journal on Selected Areas in Information Theory, vol. 3, no. 2, pp. 257-274, Apr. 2022.
- J 7. J. Zhu, Q. Yan, X. Tang, and S. Li, "Symmetric Private Polynomial Computation From Lagrange Encoding," IEEE Transactions on Information Theory, vol. 68, no. 4, pp. 2704-2718, Apr. 2022.
- J 6. A. R. Elkordy, S. Li, M. A. Maddah-Ali, and A. S. Avestimehr, "Compressed Coded Distributed Computing," IEEE Transactions on Communications, vol. 69, no. 5, pp. 2773-2783, May 2021.
- J 5. S. Li, M. Yu, C. Yang, A. S. Avestimehr, S. Kanna, and P. Viswanath, "PolyShard: Coded Sharding Achieves Linearly Scaling Efficiency and Security Simultaneously," IEEE Transactions on Information Forensics & Security, vol. 16, pp. 249-261, July, 2020.
- J 4. S. Li, M. A. Maddah-Ali, and A. S. Avestimehr, "Coding for distributed Fog computing," IEEE Communications Magazine, vol. 55, no. 4, pp. 34-40, Apr. 2017.
- J 3. S. Li, Q. Yu, M. A. Maddah-Ali, and A. S. Avestimehr, "A Scalable Framework for Wireless Distributed Computing," IEEE/ACM Transactions on Networking, vol. 25, no. 5, pp. 2643-2654, Oct. 2017.
- J 2. S. Li, Q. Yu, M. A. Maddah-Ali, and A. S. Avestimehr, "A Fundamental Tradeoff between Computation and Communication in Distributed Computing," IEEE Transactions on Information Theory, vol. 64, no. 1, pp. 109-128, Jan. 2018.
- J 1. S. Li, D. Kao, and A. S. Avestimehr, "Rover-to-Orbiter Communication in Mars: Taking Advantage of the Varying Topology," IEEE Transactions on Communications, Vol. 64, No. 2, Feb. 2016.

Conference Articles

- C 32. J. Shao, Y. Sun, S. Li, J. Zhang, "DReS-FL: Dropout-Resilient Secure Federated Learning for Non-IID Clients via Secret Data Sharing," Neural Information Processing Systems (NeurIPS 2022), Dec. 2022.
- C 31. J. So, C. He, C. Yang, **S. Li**, Q. Yu, and S. Avestimehr, "LightSecAgg: A Lightweight and Versatile Design for Secure Aggregation in Federated Learning," Fifth Conference on Machine Learning and Systems, Aug. 2022.

- C 30. J. Zhu, and S. Li, "Generalized Lagrange Coded Computing: A Flexible Computation-Communication Tradeoff," IEEE International Symposium on Information Theory (ISIT 2022), June 2022.
- C 29. T. Jahani-Nezhad, M. A. Maddah-Ali, S. Li, and G. Caire, "Swiftagg: Communication-efficient and dropout-resistant secure aggregation for federated learning with worst-case security guarantees," IEEE International Symposium on Information Theory (ISIT 2022), June 2022.
- C 28. Y. Sun, J. Shao, S. Li, Y. Mao, and J. Zhang, "Stochastic Coded Federated Learning with Convergence and Privacy Guarantees," IEEE International Symposium on Information Theory (ISIT 2022), June 2022.
- C 27. C. Yang, J. So, C. He, S. Li, Q. Yu, and S. Avestimehr, "LightSecAgg: Rethinking Secure Aggregation in Federated Learning," IEEE Information Theory Workshop (ITW 2021), Oct. 2021.
- C 26. J. Liang, W. Jiang, and S. Li, "OmniLytics: A Blockchain-based Secure Data Market for Decentralized Machine Learning," ICML International Workshop on Federated Learning for User Privacy and Data Confidentiality (FL-ICML), July 2021.
- C 25. C. He, S. Li, J. So, M. Zhang, X. Zeng, H. Wang, X. Wang, P. Vepakomma, A. Singh, H. Qiu, L. Shen, P. Zhao, Y. Kang, Y. Liu, R. Raskar, Q. Yang, M. Annavaram and A. S. Avestimehr, "FedML: A Research Library and Benchmark for Federated Machine Learning," NeurIPS Workshop on Scalability, Privacy, and Security in Federated Learning (SpicyFL), Dec. 2020. (Best Paper Award)
- C 24. **S. Li**, M. Yu, C. Yang, A. S. Avestimehr, S. Kanna, and P. Viswanath, "PolyShard: Coded Sharding Achieves Linearly Scaling Efficiency and Security Simultaneously," IEEE International Symposium on Information Theory (ISIT 2020), June 2020.
- C 23. M. Yu, S. Sahraei, **S. Li**, A. S. Avestimehr, S. Kanna, and P. Viswanath, "Coded Merkle Tree: Solving Data Availability Attacks in Blockchains," Financial Cryptography and Data Security, Feb. 2020.
- C 22. **S. Li**, S. Sahraei, M. Yu, A. S. Avestimehr, S. Kanna, and P. Viswanath, "Coded State Machine Scaling State Machine Execution under Byzantine Faults," ACM Symposium on Principles of Distributed Computing (PODC 2019), July 2019.
- C 21. Q. Yu, **S. Li**, N. Raviv, M. Mousavi Kalan, M. Soltanolkotabi, and A. S. Avestimehr, "Lagrange Coded Computing: Optimal Design for Resiliency, Security, and Privacy," International Conference on Artificial Intelligence and Statistics (AISTATS 2019), Apr. 2019.
- C 20. Q. Yu, N. Raviv, S. Li, M. Mousavi Kalan, M. Soltanolkotabi, and A. S. Avestimehr, "Lagrange Coded Computing: Optimal Design for Resiliency, Security, and Privacy," NeurIPS MLSys workshop, Dec. 2018.
- C 19. Y. Li, M. Yu, **S. Li**, A. S. Avestimehr, NS Kim, and A. Schwing, "Pipe-SGD: A Decentralized Pipelined SGD Framework for Distributed Deep Net Training," Neural Information Processing Systems (NeurIPS 2018), Dec. 2018.

- C 18. M. Yu, Z. Lin, H. V. Narra, S. Li, Y. Li, NS Kim, A. Schwing, M. Annavaram, and A. S. Avestimehr, "GradiVeQ: Vector Quantization for Bandwidth-Efficient Gradient Aggregation in Distributed CNN Training," Neural Information Processing Systems (NeurIPS 2018), Dec. 2018.
- C 17. **S. Li**, M. A. Maddah-Ali, and A. S. Avestimehr, "Compressed Coded Distributed Computing," IEEE International Symposium on Information Theory (ISIT 2018), June 2018.
- C 16. **S. Li**, M. Mousavi Kalan, A. S. Avestimehr, and M. Soltanolkotabi, "Near-Optimal Straggler Mitigation for Distributed Gradient Methods," the 7th International Workshop on Parallel and Distributed Computing for Large Scale Machine Learning and Big Data Analytics, May 2018.
- C 15. **S. Li**, M. A. Maddah-Ali, and A. S. Avestimehr, "Architectures for Coded Mobile Edge Computing," Fog World Congress, Oct. 2017.
- C 14. S. Li, M. A. Maddah-Ali, and A. S. Avestimehr, "Communication-Aware Computing for Edge Processing," IEEE International Symposium on Information Theory (ISIT 2017), June 2017.
- C 13. S. Li, S. Supittayapornpong, M. A. Maddah-Ali, and A. S. Avestimehr, "Coded Terasort," the 6th International Workshop on Parallel and Distributed Computing for Large Scale Machine Learning and Big Data Analytics, May 2017.
- C 12. Q. Yu, S. Li, M. A. Maddah-Ali, and A. S. Avestimehr, "How to optimally allocate resources for coded distributed computing?," IEEE ICC, May 2017.
- C 11. **S. Li**, M. A. Maddah-Ali, and A. S. Avestimehr, "A Unified Coding Framework for Distributed Computing with Straggling Servers," IEEE NetCod, Dec. 2016.
- C 10. S. Li, Q. Yu, M. A. Maddah-Ali, and A. S. Avestimehr, "Edge-Facilitated Wireless Distributed Computing," IEEE GLOBECOM, Dec. 2016.
- C 9. **S. Li**, Q. Yu, M. A. Maddah-Ali, and A. S. Avestimehr, "Coded Distributed Computing: Fundamental Limits and Practical Challenges," IEEE Asilomar Conference on Signals, Systems, and Computers, Nov. 2016.
- C 8. **S. Li**, Q. Yu, M. A. Maddah-Ali and A. S. Avestimehr, "A Scalable Coded Computing Framework for Edge-Facilitated Wireless Distributed Computing," The First IEEE/ACM Symposium on Edge Computing, Oct. 2016.
- C 7. **S. Li**, M. A. Maddah-Ali, and A. S. Avestimehr, "Coded Distributed Computing: Straggling Servers and Multistage Dataflows," 54rd Annual Allerton Conference on Communication, Control, and Computing, Sept. 2016.
- C 6. S. Li, M. A. Maddah-Ali, and A. S. Avestimehr, "Fundamental Tradeoff between Computation and Communication in Distributed Computing," IEEE International Symposium on Information Theory (ISIT 2016), July 2016.
- C 5. **S. Li**, M. A. Maddah-Ali, and A. S. Avestimehr, "*Coded MapReduce*," 53rd Annual Allerton Conference on Communication, Control, and Computing, Sept. 2015.
- C 4. **S. Li**, D. Kao, and A. S. Avestimehr, "Rover-to-Orbiter Communication in Mars: Taking Advantage of the Varying Topology," IEEE International Symposium on Information Theory (ISIT 2015), June 2015.

- C 3. S. Li, E. Akyol and U. Mitra, "Power Allocation for Gaussian Multiple Access Channel with Noisy Cooperative Links," IEEE International Conference on Acoustics, Speech and Signal Processing (ICASSP 2014), May 2014.
- C 2. **S. Li**, U. Mitra and A. Pandharipande, "Cooperative Spectrum Sharing with Joint Receiver Decoding," IEEE International Conference on Acoustics, Speech and Signal Processing (ICASSP 2013), May 2013.
- C 1. **S. Li**, U. Mitra, V. Ratnam and A. Pandharipande, "Jointly Cooperative Decode-and-Forward Relaying for Secondary Spectrum Access," Conference on Information Sciences and Systems (CISS 2012), Mar. 2012.

News Articles

N 1. S. Li, and A. S. Avestimehr, "Coding for Distributed Computing on the Edge: Enabling Robust and Resilient Edge Computing in a Service Oriented Network," IEEE ComSoc Technology News (CTN) August Issue, 2018. Online at https://www.comsoc.org/ctn/coding-distributed-computation-edge-enabling-robust-and-resilient-edge-computing-service.

Posters & Abstracts

- P 6. S. Li, Q. Yu, "Accelerating Cloud Computing via Coding," Qualcomm Innovation Fellowship Finalists Poster, Apr. 2017.
- P 5. **S. Li**, Q. Yu, M. A. Maddah-Ali and A. S. Avestimehr, "Coded Distributed Computing: Fundamental Limits and Practical Impacts," Information Theory and Applications Workshop (ITA) Graduation Day Poster, Feb. 2017.
- P 4. **S. Li**, M. A. Maddah-Ali and A. S. Avestimehr, "Coded MapReduce: Trading Computation for Bandwidth via Coding," 2015 EE Research Festival, University of Southern California, Nov. 2015.
- P 3. **S. Li** and U. Mitra, "A Jointly Cooperative Scheme for Secondary Spectrum Access," 2013 EE Research Festival, University of Southern California, Feb. 2013.
- P 2. **S. Li** and U. Mitra, "Cooperative Spectrum Sharing with joint receiver decoding," CSI's 30th Anniversary Conference and Celebration, USC Davidson Conference Center, Nov. 2012.
- P 1. **S. Li** and U. Mitra, "Jointly cooperative decode-and-forward relaying for secondary spectrum access," 2012 North American School of Information Theory, Cornell University, June 2012.

Professional Service

• Journal Editor

• Guest Editor

- Entropy, Special Issue "Information Theory for Distributed Systems", 2023.
- Journal of Surveillance, Security and Safety, Special Issue "AI Security and Privacy", 2023.

• Organizing Committee Member

 2023 The 8th International Conference on Computer and Communication Systems (ICCCS 23), Track 4: Security and Privacy for Distributed Computing and Learning (Track Chair).

• Technical Committee Member

- International Conference on Wireless Communications and Signal Processing (WCSP-22), 2022.
- IEEE Region 10 Conference (TENCON-22), 2022.
- IEEE Journal on Selected Areas in Communications, Special Issue on Communication-Efficient Distributed Learning over Networks (JSAC-CEDL-22), 2022.
- IJCAI International Workshop on Trustworthy Federated Learning (FL-IJCAI-22). 2022.
- AAAI International Workshop on Trustable, Verifiable and Auditable Federated Learning (FL-AAAI-22), 2022.
- AAAI Conference on Artificial Intelligence, 2022.
- ICML International Workshop on Federated Learning for User Privacy and Data Confidentiality (FL-ICML'21), 2021.
- o MobiCom Technologies for the Wireless Edge Workshop, 2018.

• Invited Speaker

- "DeepPrivate: Scalable Distributed DNN Training with Data and Model Privacy," Sixth London Symposium on Information Theory (LSIT 2021), 2021.
- "Nakamoto Meets Shannon: Scaling Blockchains Using Codes," Iran Workshop on Communication and Information Theory (IWCIT 2021), 2021.
- "Coded Merkle Tree: Solving Data Availability Attacks in Blockchains," The Third IEEE International Blockchain and Mobile Applications (BlockApp 2021), 2021.

• Reviewer for

- Journal: IEEE Transactions on Information Theory, IEEE Journal on Selected Areas in Information Theory, IEEE Transactions on Information Forensics and Security, IEEE Transactions on Signal Processing, IEEE Transactions on Communications, IEEE Journal on Selected Areas in Communications, IEEE Transactions on Mobile Computing, IEEE Transactions on Wireless Communications, IEEE Wireless Communications Magazine, IEEE Communication Letters, IEEE Transactions on Knowledge and Data Engineering, IEEE Transactions on Services Computing, EURASIP.
- Conference: NeurIPS, ICML, AAAI, ISIT, ITW, ICC, ICASSP, SPAWC, WUWNET.

SELECTED COURSE WORK

• Graduate level courses at the University of Southern California

- Random Processes in Engineering
- Random Processes in Engineering II

- Information Theory
- Network Information Theory
- Error Correcting Codes
- Mobile Communications
- Estimation Theory
- Real Analysis
- Convex Optimization
- Network Flows and Combinatorial Optimization
- Analysis of Algorithms
- Data Mining
- Advanced Distributed Systems
- Advanced undergraduate level courses at NYU-Poly Digital Communication, Wireless Communication Laboratory, Advanced Topics in Telecommunications.

TECHNICAL SKILLS

- **Programming Languages**: C++, Rust, Python, GO, Matlab, LaTeX, Lab-VIEW.
- Libraries and frameworks: Apache Hadoop, Apache Spark, Apache MXNet, TensorFlow, Ray
- Platforms: Amazon EC2, Digital Ocean.
- VLSI Design: Spice.

LANGUAGES

- Chinese: Native
- English

Professional Memberships

- IEEE Information Theory Society
- IEEE Communication Society
- IEEE Computer Society
- Tau Beta Pi Member NY R Chapter