Tom Effland

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Research Interests

Natural language understanding, deep generative models, semantic parsing, information extraction, knowledge discovery and representation, text mining, semi-supervised learning.

Education

Columbia University, New York, New York USA

Ph.D., Computer Science, Expected May, 2020
M.S., Computer Science, December, 2016
Research Area: Information Extraction, Natural Language Processing, Machine Learning
Advisers: Prof. Luis Gravano and Prof. Daniel Hsu

University at Buffalo, The State University of New York, Buffalo, New York USA

B.S., Applied Mathematics, Honors, May, 2015
Minors in Computer Science and Statistics, *(GPA: 3.99/4.0)*

Research Experience

Columbia University, New York, New York USA

Graduate Research Assistant **August, 2017 - Present**
Department of Computer Science
- Researching semi-supervised learning of broad-coverage semantic parsing using variational autoencoders, with a focus on leveraging existing structured knowledge.
- *Advisers:* Prof. Michael Collins and Prof. David Blei

Graduate Research Assistant **August, 2015 - June, 2017**
Department of Computer Science
- Researched principled methods and strategies for extraction of actionable information from rare events on social media
- Collaborated with NYC Department of Health to identify foodborne illness outbreaks from Yelp and Twitter to facilitate targeted investigation of restaurants
- *Advisers:* Prof. Luis Gravano and Prof. Daniel Hsu

TextIQ Inc., New York, New York USA

Research Intern **June, 2016 - August, 2016**
- Researched novel techniques for natural language interfaces, semantic parsing, and question answering over structured knowledge sources
- Implemented a system for automatically building question answering chatbots from scratch for new structured data sources

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Urbana, Illinois USA

Research Assistant **June - August, 2014**
Passionate on Parallel NSF-Supported REU, Parallel Computing Institute
- Researched techniques for using Hadoop to automatically parallelize scientific codes
- Parallelized atmospheric science pollution simulation research software with MPI
- *Advisers:* Prof. Nicole Riemer, Prof. Matthew West

University at Buffalo, The State University of New York, Buffalo, New York USA

Independent Honors Research **August, 2014 - April, 2015**
Department of Computer Science
- Won 1st place in ACM SIGCSE Undergraduate Student Research Competition Grand Finals

- Researched and developed context-focused web crawling framework for extracting similar content from heterogeneous seed domains.
- Specific application was retrieval of university course descriptions given only domain names.
- *Adviser:* Prof. Bina Ramamurthy

NASA Europa Challenge Team Member, iGlobe project **March - May, 2014**
Department of Computer Science
- Won 2nd place University Project in international software competition
- Researched and coordinated implementation of weather API interface layer into iGlobe
- *Adviser:* Prof. Varun Chandola

Research Assistant **January, 2013 - May, 2014**
Department of Computer Science, Department of Mathematics
URGE to Compute NSF-Supported REU
- Developed scalable, accurate, and secure matching algorithms for fingerprints
- Researched machine learning and error correcting code applications to secure fingerprint matching
- *Advisers:* Prof. Atri Rudra, Prof. John Ringland

Journal Publications

T. Effland, Anna Lawson, Sharon Balter, Katelynn Devinney, Vasuhda Reddy, Luis Gravano, Daniel Hsu. Discovering Foodborne Illness in Online Restaurant Reviews. *Journal of the American Medical Informatics Association (2018)* - **To Appear**

Conference Publications

T. Effland. 2015. Focused Retrieval of University Course Descriptions from Highly Variable Sources. In *ACM Student Research Competition Undergraduate Grand Finals*. **First Place Award**.

J. Hartloff, M. Morse, B. Zhang, **T. Effland**, J. Cordaro, J. Schuler, S. Tulyakov, A. Rudra, V. Govindaraju. 2015. A Multiple Server Scheme for Fingerprint Fuzzy Vaults. In *Computer Vision and Pattern Recognition Workshops (CVPRW), 2015 IEEE Conference on*.

M. Morse, J. Hartloff, **T. Effland**, J. Schuler, J. Cordaro, S. Tulyakov, A. Rudra, V. Govindaraju. 2014. Secure Fingerprint Matching With Generic Local Structures. In *Computer Vision and Pattern Recognition Workshops (CVPRW), 2014 IEEE Conference on*. pages 84-89.

T. Effland, M. Schneggenburger, J. Schuler, B. Zhang, J. Hartloff, J. Dobler, S. Tulyakov, A. Rudra, V. Govindaraju. 2014. Secure fingerprint hashes using subsets of local structures. In *Proc. SPIE 9075-12, Biometric and Surveillance Technology for Human and Activity Identification XI, 90750D*.

Conference Presentations

T. Effland. Focused Retrieval of University Course Descriptions from Highly Variable Sources. ACM SIGCSE Student Research Competition, Kansas City, Missouri, March, 2015.

T. Effland, M. Schneggenburger, J. Schuler, B. Zhang, J. Hartloff, J. Dobler, S. Tulyakov, A. Rudra, V. Govindaraju. Secure fingerprint hashes using subsets of local structures. SPIE Defense, Sensing, Security Biometrics Workshop, Baltimore, Maryland, May, 2014.

T. Effland, M. Schneggenburger, J. Schuler. Fingerprints as Passwords. National Conference for Undergraduate Research (NCUR), Lexington, Kentucky, April, 2014.

Poster Presentations

T. Effland. Identifying Foodborne Illness from Social Media. Columbia University Data Science Day, New York, New York, April, 2016.

T. Effland. Focused Retrieval of University Course Descriptions from Highly Variable Sources. University at Buffalo Celebration of Excellence, Buffalo, New York, April, 2015.

T. Effland. Focused Retrieval of University Course Descriptions from Highly Variable Sources. ACM SIGCSE Student Research Competition, Kansas City, Missouri, March, 2015.

Professional Experience

NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, New York, New York, USA

Technical Consultant **January, 2016 - Present**

- Development and integration of social media analysis software for automatically detecting possible foodborne illness outbreaks

Schussmeisters Ski Club, Inc., Buffalo, New York, USA

Technical Consultant **May, 2013 - April, 2015**

- Synthesized business needs and developed integrated data management application to provide business organization and analytics for informing data-driven decisions by board members
- Developed and implemented club website servicing over 1,200 members

Marketing Director **May, 2012 - May, 2013**

- Utilized communication and planning skills to supervise approximately 20 volunteers daily
- Successfully increased annual membership totals from approximately 1,100 members to 1,250 by effective promotion and innovative advertising methods

Honors and Awards

Columbia University:

- Northeast Big Data Hub Young Innovators Award **June, 2016**
- NSF Graduate Research Fellowship **April, 2016**
- NSF IGERT "From Data to Solutions" Fellowship **August, 2015**

University at Buffalo:

- 1st Place - ACM Student Research Competition Grand Finals **May, 2015**
- Outstanding Senior Award, Mathematics Department **May, 2015**
- NSF Data-Intensive Computing Fellowship (NSF-DUE-CCLI-0920335) **August, 2014**
- 2nd Place - NASA Europa International Software Competition **June, 2014**
- Harriet F. Montague Award **May, 2014**
- Phi Beta Kappa **February, 2014**
- Grace Capen Academic Award **May, 2013**
- Provost Scholarship **Fall 2011 - Spring 2015**
- Deans List **Fall 2011 - Spring 2015**