Tharun V Puthanveettil

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Education

University of Maryland Aug. 2022 – May 2024
Master of Engineering in Robotics (3.76/4.0) *Maryland, USA*

Vellore Institute of Technology Jul. 2014 – Apr 2018
Bachelor of Technology in Electronics and Communication (GPA:8.59/10.0) *Vellore, India*

Experience

Robotics Intern Feb 2022 – Present
CATT Labs *Maryland, USA*
- Analyzing and assessing security vulnerabilities associated with the autonomy stack of the Husky robot.

Graduate Research Assistant Nov. 2022 – Present
Perception and Robotics Group, UMD *Maryland, USA*
- Working on *"Human-Robot Interaction using Multi-Modal interaction schemes"* under **Dr.Yiannis Aloimonos**
- Implemented an Imitation Learning-based policy to learn robot action space from human demonstration, speech, and gestures.

Research Intern June 2021 – Dec. 2021
Indian Institute of Science *Banglore, India*
- Implemented a robotic manipulator based *Precision Weeding Robot* to optimize pesticide usage in indoor farms.
- Developed YoloR-based crack detection algorithm with 94% accuracy for asset inspection challenge at IROS21.
- Implemented an encoder-decoder-based Monocular Depth Estimation model using the NYU Dataset.
- Submitted a review paper on "Application of Mobile Collaborative Robots using Deep Learning in Precision Weed Control of Large Farms".
- Conceptualized and submitted a poster on "Event-based Dynamic Obstacle Avoidance in Outdoor Environments" for IROS21.

Project Engineer Jul. 2018 – May 2021
CTO Office, Wipro Digital *Banglore, India*
- Served as the **AI Team Lead** and designed the yearly project lineup for the Innovation team of Wipro.
- Implemented a 2D CNN-based real-time tool tracking and detection system using a Leap Motion controller to identify and track tools in the user's hand and provide real-time assistance with hardware assembly.
- Developed a Transfer Learning based car model detection module with 96% accuracy using Tflite for an insurance solution targeted for mobile apps.
- Implemented vision and learning-based algorithms for *My Style*, Wipro's top 2 retail solutions for the year 2020.

IOT Specialist May 2017 – July 2017
IB Hubs *Banglore, India*
- Performed functionality test for STM-based dev boards like *Maple Mini* & *Blue Pill* for *IB Cricket* smart bat.
- Used core IOT protocols like MQTT, and COAP to design IOT projects for educational demos.

Publications

[1] **Tharun V. P.**, Abhra Roy Chowdhury, (2021) "Application of Mobile Collaborative Robot using Deep Learning in Precision Weed Control of Large Farms". In: Big Data Analytics in Agriculture: Algorithms and Applications, Academic Press, Elsevier 2021 [`manuscript`]

[2] **Tharun V. P.**, Ramya, P., Renuga Devi, S. (2021) "A Univariate Data Analysis Approach for Rainfall Forecasting". In: Communication and Intelligent Systems. Lecture Notes in Networks and Systems, vol 204. Springer, Singapore. [`manuscript`] [`link`]

[3] **V. P. Tharun**, R. Prakash, S. R. Devi. (2018) "Prediction of Rainfall Using Data Mining Techniques". In: Second International Conference on Inventive Communication and Computational Technologies (ICICCT),2018 [`link`]

[4] L. P. Pratap, P. M. Shailendrasingh, A. Anand and **V. P. Tharun** (2017). Wall climbing robot using soft robotics. In: IEEE International Conference on Power, Control, Signals and Instrumentation Engineering (ICPCSI) [`link`]

Patents

AGGRIP *(In Progress)* [link] Oct 2021 – Present

- Developed an innovative gripper for manipulators to perform precision weeding(plucking and spraying) catering to the detected weed type.
- The unique design ensures minimal contact with non-weeds using an adaptive vision-based control mechanism.

Technical Skills

Programming: Python, C/C++, SQL (mysql), JavaScript, HTML/CSS, Matlab, Labview
AI/ML/Data Science: Tensorflow, Pytorch, OpenCV, Keras, Tableau
Robotic Platforms: Turtlebot 2, Turtlebot 3, Delta, OpenManipulator-X, Husky
UI/UX/AR/VR/MR: Unity, Three.js, A-frame, AR.js, Vuforia
Embedded/IOT/Robotics: ROS, MQTT, HTTP, Socket, Softrobotics

Projects

Autonomous Weeding Robot | *Python, Matlab, OpenCV, Tensorflow, Pytorch*[video] June 2021 – Sep 2021

- Implemented a robotic manipulator-based precision weeding robot for optimizing pesticide usage in indoor farms.
- Created a YOLOR object detection model trained on augmented synthetic data for weed localization.
- Implemented an Inverse Kinematics solver based on a feed-forward neural network for precise manipulation.

Virtual Try-On | *Python, OpenCV, Tensorflow, Pytorch, Flask*[link] Jan 2021 – Mar 2021

- An AI solution to bring down trial room drops and to provide customers with a style quotient evaluator.
- Implemented a Generative model capable of creating customizable unique textures which in turn can be rendered onto 3D Augmented Reality(AR) apparel models.
- Developed an Aesthetic Quality Assessment Model(AQAM) that evaluates the generated apparel to provide professional recommendations.
- Developed an additional Explainable AI plugin that justifies the outputs of AQAM.

AI Cricket Coach | *Python, OpenCV, Tensorflow, HTML, CSS, Angular.js, Unity* [link] Jul 2020 – Present

- An AI-backed solution that classifies bowl types based on video feeds and provides batsmen with end-to-end coaching assistance in a WebVR environment.
- Developed a Body Pose Estimation plugin to provide batting pose correction feedback.
- Implemented a custom bowl classification model using 3D CNN trained on synthetic data generated in a VR Game.

my Style | *Python, OpenCV, Tensorflow, Pytorch, Mysql, Flask*[link] [video] Jun 2019 – Sep 2019

- An end-to-end AI-powered shopping app.
- Implemented a human body measurement extraction module based on 2D photogrammetry & Body Pose Estimation that enables real-time 3D human body reconstruction(Customer Digital Twin).
- Modelled a Content-based recommendation engine for apparel recommendation.
- Developed a GAN-based product customization model for dynamic apparel styling.
- Implemented a fit analyzer model that evaluates the fit of the chosen apparel in terms of a 'Fit %' metric.

Achievements

RAMI Cascade Campaign - IEEE/RSJ IROS 2021[link]

- Secured 3rd place for providing an aerial robotic solution for asset Inspection and Management (I&M).

Late Breaking Results - IEEE/RSJ IROS 2021[link]

- Poster on " Event-based Dynamic Obstacle Avoidance in Outdoor Environments" accepted amongst the top 25 posters for a presentation.

Winter School Projects - IEEE RAS 2021[link]

- Finished as one of the Top 2 teams to complete 4/4 tasks with a presentation for a challenge on "SLAM in Deformable Environments"

National Retail Federation 2020 - Top 2 Solution[link]

- Led a team into developing and designing a retail solution that was shortlisted for a showcase at NRF 2020, a retail-based exhibition held at New York inaugurated by Satya Nadella, CEO of Microsoft.