

UTKARSH SONI

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Phoenix, AZ, USA

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EDUCATION

Ph.D. in Computer Science

Arizona State University

Jan 2019 – Present

Phoenix, USA

- Working on enabling preference specification and explanation generation in human-in-the-loop **reinforcement learning** systems. Also worked on generating personalized explanations in multi-user settings; and using **data visualization** as a modality for effective human-AI communication. Advised by Dr. Subbarao Kambhampati.
- GPA: 4.0/4.0
- Major courses: Artificial Intelligence, Topics in Reinforcement Learning, Human-aware AI, Social Media Mining, and others

M.S. in Computer Science

Arizona State University

Aug 2016 – June 2018

Phoenix, USA

- GPA : 4.0/4.0
- Statistical Machine Learning, Data visualization and others.

Bachelor and Master of Technology in CS

Indian Institute of Information Technology

Aug 2011 – April 2016

Gwalior, India

- GPA : 8.36/10.0

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Graduate Research Assistant

Arizona State University Yochan lab

Jan 2019 – Present

Phoenix, USA

- Developed a framework that generates explanations, in user's vocabulary, for actions taken by a reinforcement learning agent.
- Developed a framework that learns user's vocabulary online. This allows the user to specify their preferences which are incorporate in a reinforcement learning agent.
- Developed a framework that personalizes explanations produced by the robot based on the background knowledge of the user.
- Developed a web interface that lets users explore an agent's policy and produces visual explanations for agent's actions.
- Tech : Python, TensorFlow, PyTorch, Numpy, Pandas, \LaTeX .

Graduate Research Assistant

Arizona State University Vader lab

Jan 2017 – April 2018

Phoenix, USA

- Created multiple web interfaces for Maricopa Association of Government that allow them to analyze employment data
- Conducted large scale human studies to learn a human's cognitive model that relates the perception of graph properties with graph drawings.
- Tech : Flask, D3.js, Node.js, Gephi

CLASS PROJECTS

- Developed an **RL agent** to assist users by predicting their goals and improve its prediction using inverse reinforcement learning.
- **Cyberbullying detection** by training a hierarchical bi-directional LSTM on combined social and temporal data
- Compared state-of-the-art **outlier detection** algorithms. Improved the best one through a visual analytics component.
- **WebMD data analytics** Created a visual dashboard to analyze 5-years of WebMD data. Interface visualized similarity between topics, topics' popularity etc.
- Created a tool that helps students learn programming. Used recommendation algorithms to build curriculum and visualization for progress tracking.

SKILLS

- Python • Scipy, Sklearn (2+ years)
- PyTorch, Tensorflow, Keras (2+ years)
- Java • C++ • Linux bash
- OpenCV • Numpy • Pandas • Scikit-learn
- Flask • Javascript • Bootstrap • Git

PUBLICATIONS

- Sreedharan, S., **Soni, U.**, Verma, M., Srivastava, S., & Kambhampati, S. Bridging the Gap: Providing Post-Hoc Symbolic Explanations for Sequential Decision-Making Problems with Inscrutable Representations. *Accepted in ICLR 2022*; (link).
- **Soni, U.**, Sreedharan, S., Verma, M., Guan, L., Marquez, M. & Kambhampati, S. Towards customizable reinforcement learning agents: Enabling preference specification through online vocabulary expansion. Accepted in **NeurIPS 2022 workshop** on Human in the Loop Learning (link)
- **Soni, U.**, Sreedharan, S., & Kambhampati, S. Not all users are the same: Providing personalized explanations for sequential decision making problems. Accepted in **IROS 2021**; (link).
- Mishra, A., **Soni, U.**, Huang, J., Bryan, C. Why? Why not? When? Visual Explanations of Agent Behavior in Reinforcement Learning. *Accepted in PacificVis 2022*; (link).
- **Soni, U.**, Lu, Y., Hansen, B., Purchase, H. C., Kobourov, S., & Maciejewski, R. The perception of graph properties in graph layouts. Accepted in **EuroVis 2018**. ; (link).
- Gopalakrishnan, S., **Soni, U.**, & Kambhampati, S. Feature-directed Active Learning for Learning User Preferences. *International Workshop of Explainable AI Planning ICAPS 2019* ; (link).