

NADER AKOURY

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RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Postdoc

Cornell University

Principal Investigator: Qian Yang

July 2024 –

Ithaca, NY

Graduate Research Assistant

University of Massachusetts Amherst

Advisor: Mohit Iyyer

Sept 2018 – May 2024

Amherst, MA

Applied Scientist Intern

Amazon, Inc

Principal Investigator: Anjali Narayan-Chen

May 2021 – Aug 2021

Sunnyvale, CA (Remote)

Research Assistant

Auburn University

Principal Investigator: Anh Nguyen

Jun 2017 – May 2018

Auburn, AL (Remote)

EDUCATION

University of Massachusetts Amherst

MS/PhD in Computer Science

2018 – 2024

Amherst, MA

Guildhall at Southern Methodist University

Graduate Certificate of Interactive Technology in Digital Game Development

2005 – 2007

Plano, TX

Purdue University

BS in Computer Science and Mathematics

2000 – 2004

West Lafayette, IN

PUBLICATIONS

Peer-Reviewed Conference Papers

A Framework for Exploring Player Perceptions of LLM-Generated Dialogue within Commercial Video Games

Nader Akoury, Qian Yang, and Mohit Iyyer.

Findings of the Association for Computational Linguistics: EMNLP. 2023.

The Perils of Using Mechanical Turk to Evaluate Open-Ended Text Generation

Marzena Karpinska, **Nader Akoury**, and Mohit Iyyer.

Proceedings of the Conference on Empirical Methods in Natural Language Processing. 2021.

STORIUM: A Dataset and Evaluation Platform for Machine-in-the-Loop Story Generation

Nader Akoury, Shufan Wang, Josh Whiting, Stephen Hood, Nanyun Peng and Mohit Iyyer.

Proceedings of the Conference on Empirical Methods in Natural Language Processing. 2020.

Syntactically Supervised Transformers for Faster Neural Machine Translation

Nader Akoury, Kalpesh Krishna, and Mohit Iyyer.

Proceedings of the 57th Annual Meeting of the Association for Computational Linguistics (Volume 1: Long Papers). 2019.

Workshop Papers

Hybrid Dialogue Management for Task-Oriented Dialogue in Video Games

Nader Akoury and Mohit Iyyer.

Wordplay: When Language Meets Games. ACL 2024.

Towards Grounded Dialogue Generation in Video Game Environments

Nader Akoury, Ronan Salz, Qian Yang, and Mohit Iyyer.

Creative AI Across Modalities. AAI 2023.

Preprints

Spatial PixelCNN

Nader Akoury and Anh Nguyen.

<https://arxiv.org/abs/1712.00714>. 2017.

GRADUATE AWARDS & HONORS

◇ Dean's Outstanding Antiracism Leadership Award 2021

TALKS

◇ SynST: Syntactically Supervised Transformers for Faster Neural Machine Translation Apr 2019
Data Science Research Symposium, University of Massachusetts Amherst.

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

Workshop on Narrative Understanding (Organizer)

◇ NAACL 2021, 2022
◇ ACL 2023

Senior Area Chair

◇ ACL 2025

Reviewer

◇ ARR Oct 2021 –
◇ ACL 2021, 2022 (*top 2.5%*)*, 2023
◇ EMNLP 2019, 2020 (*top 10%*)*, 2021 (*top 5%*)*, 2022, 2023
◇ NAACL 2021
◇ AAI 2020, 2021
◇ CoNLL 2019, 2020
◇ CoLM 2024
◇ CHI 2025

* *Outstanding Reviewer*

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Graduate Teaching Assistant

University of Massachusetts Amherst

◇ CS685: Advanced Topics in Natural Language Processing Spring 2021
◇ CS690D: Deep Learning for Natural Language Processing Spring 2019

GUEST LECTURES

University of Massachusetts Amherst

- ◇ CS576: Game Programming Fall 2023
- ◇ CS590G: Game Programming Fall 2020, Fall 2021
- ◇ CS490A: Applications of Natural Language Processing Fall 2020

OUTREACH

Committee Against Racism and for Equity

Co-chair & Founding Member

<https://www.cics.umass.edu/diversity/care>

University of Massachusetts Amherst

Jul 2020 – Feb 2022

Black, Indigenous, and LatinX in Tech

Co-chair & Founding Member

<https://cics-built.github.io>

University of Massachusetts Amherst

Feb 2019 – Feb 2022

PhD Applicant Support Program

Co-chair & Mentor

<https://paspumasscs.github.io>

University of Massachusetts Amherst

Fall 2020, Fall 2021

Early Research Scholars Program

Mentor

Fall 2022, Spring 2023

Energizing, Mentoring, and Broadening Exposure to Research

Mentor

University of Massachusetts Amherst

Spring 2021

Girls, Inc. Eureka! Coding Workshops

Mentor

University of Massachusetts Amherst

Summer and Fall 2019

INDUSTRY EXPERIENCE

Yelp, Inc

Independent Contractor (Remote)

San Francisco, CA

Nov 2017 – Jun 2018

Petroglyph Games, Inc

Independent Contractor

Las Vegas, NV

May 2015 – Mar 2016

Yelp, Inc

Software Engineer (Remote)

Engineering Manager

Software Engineer (Remote)

San Francisco, CA

Jan 2015 – Apr 2015

Oct 2013 – Dec 2014

Jan 2013 – Oct 2013

Petroglyph Games, Inc

Lead Programmer

Lead Platform Programmer

AI Programmer

Programmer

Las Vegas, NV

Aug 2012 – Dec 2012

Aug 2010 – Aug 2012

Jun 2008 – Aug 2010

Apr 2007 – Jun 2008

High Voltage Software, Inc

Engine/Tools Programmer (Intern)

Schaumburg, IL

Jul 2006 – Sept 2006