

SICSA DVF Report - Professor Jimmy Lin

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I requested and obtained a SICSA DVF for Professor Jimmy Lin (University of Maryland/University of Waterloo/Twitter), primarily as support for a keynote invitation that I had extended to him within the SICSA PhD Conference 2015. Aside from the SICSA PhD conference, Jimmy was involved in a number of other activities within this DVF visit, including DVF research talks hosted at Glasgow & Edinburgh universities.

SICSA PhD Conference: Jimmy attended both days of the SICSA PhD Conference 2015 and interacted well with the students. Moreover, in the post-conference survey, his keynote talk received a 92% approval rating, with comments such as “*very entertaining*”, “*very enthusiastic*”, “*excellent talk and very informative*”.

Edinburgh: During his visit to the University of Edinburgh, Jimmy was hosted by Adam Lopez, and met with several staff and students working in natural language processing, information retrieval, and algorithms for big data. He gave a very well-attended lecture that was jointly hosted by the Institute for Language, Cognition, and Computation; and the Center for Doctoral Training in Pervasive Parallelism. Adam also discussed with him an ongoing collaboration on developing GPGPU algorithms for natural language processing, which involves students from both University of Edinburgh and University of Maryland.

Glasgow: While based in Glasgow, Jimmy went to considerable effort to interact with PhD students and researchers in the IR research teams (from Strathclyde Univ. as well as Glasgow Univ.) to understand their research topics - ranging from recommender systems to social search - and offer guidance and ideas. Jimmy's new appointment at the University of Waterloo means that he will be defining new research directions, especially at the interface of the fields of IR, social information analysis and deep learning. Notably, Waterloo is a renowned institution in the field of deep learning. Since all these research areas are aligned with the current research objectives of SICSA, Jimmy's visit has facilitated discussion on future collaboration and directions for valuable scientific work and evaluation, which has resulted in collaboration in a number of activities:

- Joint coordination with Dr Richard McCreadie (Univ. of Glasgow) in the Real Time Summarisation task of the TREC 2016 evaluation conference, run by the National Institute of Standards & Technology (NIST), USA.
- Participation of the University of Glasgow Terrier Team in the SIGIR 2015 workshop on Reproducibility, Inexplicability, and Generalizability of Results (RIGOR).
- Joint chairing with Dr Craig Macdonald (Univ. of Glasgow) of the demonstration track of the SIGIR 2016 conference in Pisa.

Moreover, Jimmy has extensive connections in the tech startup community, having played key early roles in two Silicon Valley 'unicorns' (companies valued at \$1B+). He spent a great deal of time interacting with the Scoop Analytics spinout (c.f. Prof. Joemon Jose and James McMinn) at Glasgow University. Jimmy's research & industrial interests align closely with the objectives of the company (event detection in social streams), so he was able to offer considerable insight and establish future collaboration opportunities through his network.

Overall, I believe the above represents a significant outcome from Professor Lin's SICSA DVF visit, and I am grateful to SICSA for their support of his visit.