Xu Cao

University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign
Ph.D. Candidate (2026 Google PhD Fellow), Computer Science
Advisor(s): James M. Rehg, Jimeng Sun
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Summary

Researcher in multimodal foundation models and vision-language models for 5 years; 30+ papers at CVPR, NeurIPS, ICCV, ECCV, EMNLP, COLM; Founder of the PediaMed AI lab.

Education

University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign 2023.08 – Present
Ph.D., Computer Science. Advisor: James M. Rehg, Jimeng Sun

New York University, Courant Institute 2020.09 – 2022.09
M.S., Computer Science. Advisor: Elena Sizikova, Megan Coffee

Fudan University, School of Data Science 2016.09 – 2020.06
B.S., Chemistry and Data Science

Experience

PediaMed AI 2025.06 – Present
Director & Tech Lead. Lead a lab building generative-AI tools for screening and assessment of pediatric neurodevelopmental disorders. 8 Top AI Conference Publications.

Meta Reality Labs 2026.08 – Present
Research Intern. Research on Interactive MLLM. Build MAUI, Top 1 in VideoFDB.

Google Research 2025.09 – 2026.07
Student Researcher. Multimodal human behavior modeling for agentic AI systems and AR.

NEC Laboratories America 2024.05 – 2025.08
Research Intern. Reinforcement-learning post-training for video vision-language models.

SambaNova Systems 2022.10 – 2023.07
Software Engineer (Machine Learning). Developed and optimized multimodal Vision Transformers, Stable Diffusion, and LLMs on SambaNova's Reconfigurable Dataflow Unit.

Tencent, T Lab 2021.05 – 2021.08
Research Intern. Built the THMA active-learning system for HD map annotation; won the Innovative Applications of AI Award (AAAI 2023).

Selected Publications

* corresponding author. Full list on Google Scholar.

CogSense. B. Li, et al., X. Cao*. *NeurIPS 2026*
ChildPose. J. Chen, et al., X. Cao*. *NeurIPS 2026*
GazeAnywhere. X. Cao, et al. *CVPR 2026*
HippoVLM. X. Cao, et al. *CVPR 2026*
MedDream. X. Cao, et al. *CHIL 2026* **(Best Paper Award)**
TransGesture. X. Cao, et al. *NeurIPS 2025*
VCog-Bench. X. Cao, et al. *COLM 2025*
SocialGesture. X. Cao, et al. *CVPR 2025*
MAPLM. X. Cao, et al. *CVPR 2024*
AggPose. X. Cao, et al. *IJCAI 2022*

Awards

Google PhD Fellow in Machine Perception 2026
Best Paper Award, CHIL 2026 2026
Selected Researcher of Anthropic AI for Science Rare Disease Program 2026
CIFAR Next Generation Trainee PhD Fellow 2025
Innovative Applications of Artificial Intelligence Award, AAAI 2023 2023

Service

Area Chair: NeurIPS 2026
Founder & Organizer: CVPR 2026 CV4CHL (with AI Children Challenge), ICLR 2025 AI4CHL, WACV 2027 SEAI, WACV 2024 LLVM-AD