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🌍 Nationality: Romanian 📅 Date of Birth: 30.04.1991



Education

- 2018 – 2022 📌 **Ph.D. in Computer Science Engineering, Ghent University, Belgium.**
Thesis title: *Accelerating Progress in Network Representation Learning: Systematic Evaluations and New Approaches.*
Supervisor(s): Prof. Tijl De Bie, Prof. Jefrey Lijffijt
- 2015 – 2017 📌 **M.Sc. in Computer, Communication and Information Sciences (Machine Learning and Data Mining Major), Aalto University, Finland.**
Thesis title: *A Comparative Analysis of Graph Signal Recovery Methods for Big Data Networks.*
Supervisor: Prof. Alexander Jung
Mentions: *Graduated with honours.*
- 2010 – 2014 📌 **B.Eng. in Computer Engineering, Technical University of Madrid, Spain.**
Thesis title: *Autonomous User-following Drone for Aerial Footage.*
Supervisor: Prof. Vicente A. García
Mentions: *Graduated with honours. Best academic record.*

Employment History

- 2023 – Now 📌 **Co-Founder and CEO.** Nobl.ai, Ghent, Belgium. (Full-time)
Nobl.ai is a tech startup that provides trustworthy AI for HR and the labour market including recommender systems, job ontology mapping, career coaching and more.
- 📌 **Postdoctoral Researcher.** Artificial Intelligence and Data Analytics group, IDLab, Ghent University, Belgium. (Part-time)
Topic: *AI for HR and the labour market, recommender systems, representation learning, LLMs.*
- 2018 – 2023 📌 **PhD Student and Teaching Assistant.** Artificial Intelligence and Data Analytics group, IDLab, Ghent University, Belgium. (Full-time)
Topic: *Network representation learning and design of fair evaluation tools.*
- 2016 – 2017 📌 **Research and Teaching Assistant.** Machine Learning for Big Data group, School of Science and Technology, Aalto University, Finland. (Full-time)
Topic: *Semi-supervised (transductive) learning methods for Internet-scale graphs based on graph signal processing and tools such as: GraphX, Spark and Scala.*
- 2015 – 2016 📌 **Research and Teaching Assistant.** Machine Learning for Big Data group, School of Science and Technology, Aalto University, Finland. (Part-time)
Topic: *Dictionary learning techniques and their application to network data.*
- 2014 – 2015 📌 **Research Engineer.** ONTIC FP7 European project, Technical University of Madrid, Spain. (Full-time)
Topic: *Design and implementation of new algorithms for network traffic analysis, anomaly detection, and capacity planning.*

Research Publications

- 1 **Mara, A.** (2023). Accelerating Progress in Network Representation Learning: Systematic Evaluations and New Approaches, PhD Dissertation, Ghent University Press.
- 2 **Mara, A.**, Lijffijt, J. & De Bie, T. (2022a). An Empirical Evaluation of Network Representation Learning Methods. *Big Data*.
- 3 **Mara, A.**, Lijffijt, J. & De Bie, T. (2022b). EvalNE: A Framework for Network Embedding Evaluation. *SoftwareX*, 17.
- 4 Adriaens, F., **Mara, A.**, Lijffijt, J. & De Bie, T. (2020). Block-approximated exponential random graphs. *2020 IEEE 7th International Conference on Data Science and Advanced Analytics*.
- 5 **Mara, A.**, Lijffijt, J. & d. Bie, T. (2020). Benchmarking Network Embedding Models for Link Prediction: Are We Making Progress? *2020 IEEE 7th International Conference on Data Science and Advanced Analytics*.
- 6 **Mara, A.**, Mashayekhi, Y., Lijffijt, J. & De Bie, T. (2020). CSNE: Conditional Signed Network Embedding. *Proceedings of the 29th ACM International Conference on Information Knowledge Management*.
- 7 Jung, A., Hero, III, A. O., **Mara, A.**, Jahromi, S., Heimowitz, A. & Eldar, Y. C. (2019). Semi-supervised learning in network-structured data via total variation minimization. *IEEE Transactions on Signal Processing*, 67(24), 6256–6269.

Skills

Languages	■ Native proficiency: Romanian, Spanish and English.
Coding	■ Java, Scala, C, C++, C#, Python, R, MATLAB, W TeX, Bash and VHDL.
Databases	■ Redis, MySQL, SQLite, MongoDB and HDFS.
Big Data Frameworks	■ Apache Hadoop, Apache Spark, Apache Storm and Apache Samza.

Awards and Achievements

- 2017 ■ **Graduated with honours.** School of Science and Technology, Aalto University, Finland.
- 2015 ■ **Honours Programme.** School of Science and Technology, Aalto University, Finland.
- 2014 ■ **Graduated with honours.** School of Computer Systems Engineering, Technical University of Madrid, Spain.
- **Best Academic Record Award.** School of Computer Systems Engineering, Technical University of Madrid in recognition of outstanding academic achievements throughout the years 2010-2014, Spain.
- **Department Prize for Outstanding Academic Performance.** School of Computer Systems Engineering, Technical University of Madrid, Spain.
- 2011 ■ **Excellence grant.** Scholarship awarded by the Spanish Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports in recognition of outstanding academic performance, Spain.
- **Department Prize for Outstanding Academic Performance.** School of Computer Systems Engineering, Technical University of Madrid, Spain.