David Emukpere

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Profile

Research engineer specializing in reinforcement learning and imitation learning for robotic manipulation, with academic and industry research experience. Focused on scalable methods for flexible physical intelligence, multimodal policy learning, and sim-to-real deployment.

Technical Skills

Research: Reinforcement Learning, Imitation Learning, Robot Learning, Robotics
ML: PyTorch, JAX, NumPy
Robotics: ManiSkill, Isaac Sim, Panda, Piper, Sim-to-Real Deployment
Software: Python, C/C++, JavaScript, Git, Bash

Experience

Research Scientist 05/2022 – Present
NAVER LABS Europe Grenoble, France

- Designed self-supervised RL methods for safe robotic manipulation, achieving 50–60%+ improvement over prior methods.
- Developed visual RL approaches for multi-object manipulation that improved sample efficiency and deployment-time generalization; deployed policies in sim-to-real settings.
- Led simulation benchmarking and evaluation of vision-language-action (VLA) policies to analyze generalization behavior.
- Supervised research on RL fine-tuning of multimodal generative policies, improving multimodality retention and downstream task performance.
- Led publications and presented work at ICRA and IROS; contributed to research direction on policy generalization and robustness.

Research Engineer 11/2021 – 03/2022
Inria Lille-Nord-Europe Lille, France

- Benchmarked model-free RL algorithms and developed open-source tutorials for agricultural decision-making tasks in a crop management RL environment (gym-DSSAT).

Research Intern 02/2021 – 08/2021
Inria Grenoble-Rhône-Alpes Grenoble, France

- Developed a transfer learning approach combining episodic control and successor features for rapid skill acquisition and adaptation.

Software Developer 02/2018 – 06/2021
Avira Operations GmbH Germany

- Developed production features for the web dashboard and browser extension of Avira Password Manager.

Education

M.Sc. Computer Science (Data Science) 09/2019 – 08/2021
Université Grenoble Alpes & ENSIMAG Grenoble INP
GPA: 16.06 / 20

Publications

David Emukpere, Romain Deffayet, Jean-Michel Renders.
Robust Skills, Brittle Grounding: Diagnosing Restricted Generalization in Vision-Language Action Policies via Multi-Object Picking. Under review, 2026.

Alberta Longhini, **David Emukpere**, Jean-Michel Renders, Seungsu Kim.
Unsupervised Mode Discovery for Fine-tuning Multimodal Generative Policies. Under review, 2026.

David Emukpere, Romain Deffayet, Bingbing Wu, Romain Brégier, Michael Niemaz, Jean-Luc Meunier, Denys Proux, Jean-Michel Renders, Seungsu Kim.
Disentangled Object-Centric Image Representation for Robotics. IROS 2025.

David Emukpere, Bingbing Wu, Julien Perez, Jean-Michel Renders.
SLIM: Skill Learning with Multiple Critics. ICRA 2024.

David Emukpere, Xavier Alameda-Pineda, Chris Reinke.
Successor Feature Neural Episodic Control. NeurIPS Meta-Learning Workshop, 2021.

Languages

English (Fluent) | Yorùbá (Fluent) | French (Intermediate) | German (Basic)

Personal Interests

Endurance running (5Ks to marathons), piano, jazz, football, cognitive science, reading.