Nuances in visual recognition

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Publication date
2014

Citation for published version (APA):
In the beginning of this doctorate I was told that a PhD is not a 100m sprint contest but a marathon. These were some wise words. In this marathon I was not alone.

First, I would like to thank Cees G.M. Snoek, my daily supervisor and my great friend. With Cees I have so many memories: our first handshake in the old building, our first paper and travel to Florence, the first windmill beers after a TRECVID victory shortly after my arrival, to name a few. In describing my relationship with Cees I need to resort to Dutch and say that it felt so gezellig. Day in day out I would arrive at the office and get some coffee, and after while I would go to his office and chat a bit, for a crazy new idea or a problem, scientific or personal. And Cees, was always happy to listen, to discuss and interact, to give smart advice and suggestions, to keep his cool when I had lost mine, to be there. Cees’ approach to science, with a genuine interest and open-mindness, great sense of the big picture and continuous optimism have marked me and showed me how a researcher should do research and how a supervisor should approach a student. What is a better proof for all this, but reality itself. When I started my doctorate, Cees was also starting as a post-doctoral researcher and a supervisor. Today he is already an associate professor, supervising a bunch of doctoral and post-doctoral students. Cees, thank you so much for believing in me, for all your help and support, scientific and personal.

I would also really like to thank Arnold W.M. Smeulders, my supervisor, my promotor and my mentor. What is characteristic of Arnold is that he is always ready for a discussion, whether for science or not, even without a moment’s notice. And discussions with him are like a storm in the summer: you wander in your blissful ignorance thinking that everything is normaal, and then, completely out of the blue, you get a shower of alternative, deep ideas, leaving you soaking “wet” and in a need of changing. Arnold is as much of a scientist inside science, as outside of it. Particularly, his hobby (and he is very good at it) is analyzing people and their personalities and helping them to improve. I won’t forget his advice, almost like directives at the time: stop saying “but”, and listen to the others or focus on a single subject at a time, strictly, and much more. His evaluations were spot on, as he often realized even before me what are my week spots, not only in my work but in my personal life as well. I do realize that at times it often appeared as I wasn’t listening (the next thing in my “to-change” list), however, I am really so grateful for this steering. All in all, Arnold has been a true guide, showing by argument and by example how a scientist should look like and act. For all these, for all the help and guidance, Arnold, I thank you so much.

At this point I would like to also thank in chronological order the people from University of Amsterdam that we worked together: first, Xirong Li, with whom we wrote a paper in only a few days, then, Massoud Mazloom, with whom our extensive collaboration in video event detection led to several publications. A great thanks goes to Zhenyang Li, whose invaluable help with the implementation of ideas led us to two papers so far, and hopefully many more in the future. Also, I would like to thank Ran Tao for our very interesting discussions and investigations, that led to a great paper. And last but certainly not least, I would like to thank Thomas Mensink, with whom I had the great honor and pleasure to work with, a collaboration that opened my eyes to certain research areas and how they should be approached.

Furthermore, I would like to thank the people from the KU Leuven I collaborated with, Tinne Tuytelaars and Basura Fernando. When I arrived in Leuven, I couldn’t know what the environment would be, or how research is done outside my “comfort zone”. However, you made it all so much easier, with your really friendly attitude and the exceptionally smart and fast-paced discussions. No wonder, our joint effort led to a publication despite the very short period of our interaction. A very warm thank you also goes to Stamatis and Kostas, also in KU Leuven, for helping me in so many different ways during my stay in Belgium.

Nothing would be the same without the people from ISLA. First, I would like to thank the senior researchers of the group: Theo, Marcel, Dennis, Albert, Nicu, Jan-Mark, who forged a great environment, not only for research but also for having fun, playing football or occupying windmills. Of course a great thanks goes to Jan, whose scientific mindset, persistence and outgoing personality have been truly inspiring. And also a great thanks to Thomas with whom discussions were always special. A huge thanks goes to Virginie for helping with all the problems in the University, nothing would be as easy without her help. And of course there are the fellow students. When I arrived most of the people at the time, Jasper, Koen, Gosia, Victoria, Vlado, Roberto, Ivo the dude, Michael, Daan, Fangbin, Ork, Arjan were half way with
their doctorates. With others, like Hamdi and Dung, we started the same period. And later, the newbies arrived, Amir and Massoud teaching me Persian, Svetlana, Sylvia, Zhenyang, Ran, Sezer, Fares, Lou, Li, Jan, Kandan, Pascal, Spencer, Jörn, and of course Agni, who all kept the group friendly, outgoing, fun. My time with all of them was simply great, with lots of memories from the windmill, BBQs or “The Big Lebowsky” nights. Finally, a special thanks goes to all the people we were playing football with in the UvA tournaments, and of course to M.G. Stevan, for being a very lively and fun office-mate during the last couple of months of my stay in Amsterdam.

Amsterdam has not only been the place where I did my doctorate, but also a place where I met so many great friends: Thanassis and Carsten, my crazy buddies, who not only helped me a lot in the beginning and throughout my doctorate, but also, together with Ieva, were part of so many fantastic memories in Amsterdam and abroad. Of course I couldn’t forget Emiliano and Lampros, some of my dearest friends, with whom we spent so many nights of amazing fun and adventures inside and outside Amsterdam. The same goes for Manos and Natalia, with the merciless suit-hunting afternoons and the refreshingly homey weekend evenings. I will also not forget the great times with the philosopher/comedian Gilly -with whom discussions feel so sharp and rejuvenating-, Tom, John, Vicky, Sunshine and Sunray, Cagri, Taylan and Konstantina, Erdinc and Andrea. Finally, a very, very warm hug goes to my beloved friends Emrah and Özge, two of the most beautiful people and couples that I know.

Moreover, I would like to thank all the friends from Greece that visited Katerina and me. Your visits reminded me some of my happiest moments, when we were at the University together. Also, I would also like to dedicate this thesis to the memory of Jimmy, whose loss has been a tragic event.

In completing this thesis from a practical point of view I was not alone. I would like to thank my committee, Prof. dr. T. Gevers, Prof. dr. A. Hanjalic, Prof. dr. T. Tuytelaars, Prof. dr. M. Welling and dr. J. C. van Gemert for honoring me with reading this thesis and participating in my defense. I also thank the people from the BeeldCanon project that supported my research financially. A special thanks goes to Zhenyang for helping with things when I was not in Amsterdam, and to Hamdi for discussing and helping with the final details of the thesis.

Last, I would like to express my gratitude to my family.

Για να φτάσω μέχρι το σημείο αυτό η ηθοποιία μου υπήρξε καταλήκτης και της ομαδικής της πρωτιάς της. Κατάρξης, θέλω να εκφράσω την ευγνώμονή μου στους γονείς μου, τον πατέρα μου, αρχηγό της ομάδας μου, και την μητέρα μου, οι οποίοι εκεί έχουν την ικανότητα να εμπλουτίσουν τη μια εμένα, για την περιπέτεια τούς και την αμφίβολο των, για τα βράδια που διασώζουν την εποχή, προσπαθώντας να γίνουμε καλύτεροι ο αδερφός μου και εγώ. Επίσης, θα τοποθετήσω και εγώ κάποτε το να καταφέρω όπως εσείς. Στον αδερφό μου, Μανώλη, θα ήθελα να πω ότι οι ένας δύο μήνες που έμεινα εδώ ήταν φανταστικό και σε ευχαριστώ τόσο, μαζί να μπορούσαμε να περνάμε περισσότερο χρόνο μαζί. Αλλά όσο μαζί και αν βρακώμαστε δεν θα έχει ποτέ τόση σημασία, γιατί πάντα θα είσαι ο αδερφός μου και πάντα θα είσαι θύρα μου. Και φυσικά, θα ήθελα να πω ότι οι γονείς μου, Αλέξανδρο και Μαρία, όχι μόνο λόγω της Κατερίνας, αλλά και γιατί είστε υπέροχοι άνθρωποι.

Τέλος, θα ήθελα να μιλήσω για έναν σπάνιο άνθρωπο, την σύντροφό μου, την Κατερίνα μου. Έρθεσα στο Αμστερνταμ μαζί, γνωρίσαμε καινοτόμα πράγματα και ανθρώπους μαζί, γύρισαμε τον κόσμο μαζί. Με επιπλέκης και με ρυθμούς τόσα πολύ. Λένε ότι οι συνέχειες μας είναι άγνωστες, και αυτή ένας μόνο τυχαίος άνθρωπος. Έγειραν πάντα εκεί, με μια δύο ή τρεις για να περάσουμε καλύτερα και να είμαι αστόχος. Είδε ώστε και στα συνεδρία εργάσαμε μαζί μου, καθώς και για να γνωρίζεις μέχρι και τι του είναι το Bag-of-Words. Επάλληλα επιμένως θεωρώ ότι όσο δικό μου είναι το έργο αυτό, άλλο τόσο είναι και δικό σου. Ματάκια μου, τα καταφέραμέ!