

Laurel Goodhart

Software Engineer & Computational Linguist

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I work at the intersection of language, technology, and storytelling to create the next generation of character-driven AI experiences.

Technical Skills & Tools

- Specialties* Natural Language Processing (NLP), Natural Language Understanding (NLU), conventional Machine Learning (ML), Deep Learning, Large Language Models (LLMs)
- Skills* Data Management, Annotation, User Interface and User Experience Design (UI/UX), Research
- Code* Python, C#, JavaScript, TypeScript, React, C++, Java
- Tools* Unity, Jupyter, Chakra UI, Flask, MongoDB, MySQL, Stanford CoreNLP, NLTK, spaCy, Rasa, Git

Experience

2021—2024 **Natural Language Understanding Specialist**, *Walt Disney Imagineering*, remote

Projects D3-O9, interactive Star Wars droid character (Star Wars Galactic Starcruiser, Walt Disney World); internal AI character creation tools

- Responsibilities*
- Leading training, evaluation, and improvement of NLU systems for D3-O9 character
 - Collaborating with creative peers to guarantee that our products embody “Disney magic”
 - Using expertise in AI character production to translate between creative and technical teams
 - Designing and building software tools for next generation of AI character experiences

2019—2021 **Senior Software Engineer**, *Primed Technologies*, San Francisco, CA / remote

Product Long-term companion robot + app-based character for kids

- Responsibilities*
- Led software architecture design for state-of-the-art computer conversation at scale
 - Created a fantastical digital companion in a sprite-based iOS app
 - Conducted rapid prototyping of 3D mobile games

2018 **Natural Language Processing Specialist**, *Woebot Labs, Inc.*, San Francisco, CA

Product *Woebot*, a mental health chatbot that teaches users Cognitive Behavioral Therapy techniques

- Responsibilities*
- Applied expertise in chatbot conversational design to improve existing product
 - Created a novel application of NLU to therapeutic exercises
 - Trained, evaluated, and deployed language models for activity and mood classification
 - Established a data collection and annotation strategy
 - Conducted analysis of effects of NLU performance on retention during app onboarding

2015—2017 **Artificial Intelligence Engineer**, *PullString, Inc. (formerly ToyTalk, Inc.)*, San Francisco, CA

Products *PullString Author*, a no-code software platform for authoring human-fidelity AI conversation; *Hello Barbie*, a first-of-its-kind two-way conversational Barbie doll; character chat apps including: *Hearthstone*, *Call of Duty*, and *Humani: Jessie’s Story* (Facebook Messenger); *Doctor Strange* (Skype); and *Thomas & Friends Talk to You* (iOS and Android)

- Responsibilities*
- Designed and implemented NLP features for use by non-technical users
 - Negation detection, number conversion, user and author input normalization
 - Expressive word/pattern matching syntax for use by non-technical users
 - NLP and ML -powered synonym and phrase suggestion
 - Established large-scale testing to support data-driven decision-making

Education

2013—2014 **Professional Master of Science in Computational Linguistics**, *University of Washington*, Seattle, WA

- Focused on Natural Language Processing, Machine Learning, and language modeling
 - Specific topics included Machine Translation, Information Retrieval, and Question Answering

2009—2013 **Bachelor of Arts in Applied Linguistics**, *Portland State University*, Portland, OR

- Minor in Computer Science
- Honors College, undergraduate thesis: “The Linguistics of Sentiment Analysis”