Federated Deep Learning for Privacy-Preserving Medical Image Analysis

Thesis by
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In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

CALIFORNIA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
Pasadena, California

2025
Defended June 12, 2025

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my research advisor for continuous guidance, encouragement, and invaluable support throughout this doctoral research. Their mentorship has greatly influenced both the direction and quality of this dissertation.

I am also grateful to the members of my dissertation committee for their insightful comments and constructive suggestions, which significantly improved this work. My appreciation extends to the faculty, staff, and fellow researchers at the California Institute of Technology for providing an inspiring and collaborative research environment.

I would like to thank my colleagues in the Machine Intelligence Laboratory for their valuable discussions, technical assistance, and constant motivation during the course of this research. Their collaboration contributed greatly to the successful completion of this dissertation.

Finally, I am deeply indebted to my family and friends for their unwavering encouragement, patience, and support throughout my academic journey. Their belief in me has been a constant source of motivation and strength.

ABSTRACT

Artificial Intelligence has become an essential technology for medical image analysis, enabling the development of automated diagnostic systems capable of assisting healthcare professionals in disease detection and clinical decision-making. However, the centralized collection of sensitive medical data raises significant concerns regarding patient privacy, data security, and regulatory compliance.

This dissertation presents a privacy-preserving federated deep learning framework for medical image analysis that enables multiple healthcare institutions to collaboratively train deep neural networks without exchanging patient data. The proposed framework combines federated learning with modern convolutional neural network architectures to achieve high diagnostic accuracy while maintaining data confidentiality.

Extensive experiments were conducted using publicly available medical imaging datasets to evaluate the proposed approach under different federated learning settings. The framework was assessed using standard classification metrics, communication efficiency, and model convergence analysis. Experimental results demonstrate that federated learning achieves performance comparable to centralized training while substantially improving privacy protection.

The findings presented in this dissertation demonstrate the feasibility of deploying collaborative artificial intelligence systems in healthcare environments while preserving patient confidentiality. The proposed methodology contributes to the development of trustworthy and privacy-aware medical AI systems suitable for real-world clinical applications.

1. Carter, A. J., and Williams, D. R. "Privacy-Preserving Federated Learning for Medical Image Classification." *IEEE Transactions on Medical Imaging*, 2025.

2. Carter, A. J., "Efficient Federated Optimization for Healthcare Artificial Intelligence." Proceedings of the *International Conference on Machine Learning (ICML)*, 2024.

3. Carter, A. J., and Thompson, E. M. "Secure Collaborative Deep Learning for Clinical Decision Support Systems." *Journal of Biomedical Informatics*, 2025.

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has become one of the most influential technologies in modern healthcare, enabling automated analysis of medical images and assisting clinicians in disease diagnosis with unprecedented accuracy. Deep learning models, particularly convolutional neural networks, have demonstrated remarkable success in detecting abnormalities from medical imaging modalities such as X-ray, Computed Tomography (CT), Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI), and ultrasound images. These advances have accelerated the development of intelligent clinical decision support systems capable of improving diagnostic efficiency and reducing human error.

Despite these achievements, the widespread adoption of AI in healthcare remains limited by concerns regarding patient privacy and data security. Conventional deep learning approaches require centralized data collection, forcing hospitals and healthcare institutions to share sensitive patient information. Such centralized training strategies often conflict with privacy regulations including the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), making large-scale collaborative learning difficult.

Federated Learning has recently emerged as a promising solution to this challenge. Rather than transferring patient data to a central server, federated learning enables multiple healthcare institutions to collaboratively train a global model while keeping all patient information locally stored. Only model parameters or gradients are exchanged, significantly reducing privacy risks while preserving the benefits of collaborative learning.

This dissertation investigates the application of federated deep learning for privacy-preserving medical image analysis. The proposed framework integrates federated optimization strategies with modern convolutional neural network architectures to achieve accurate disease classification while maintaining strict data confidentiality. Experimental evaluation demonstrates that federated learning provides competitive predictive performance compared with centralized approaches while substantially improving patient privacy and regulatory compliance.

The remainder of this dissertation is organized as follows. Chapter 2 reviews existing

literature on federated learning, medical image analysis, and privacy-preserving artificial intelligence. Chapter 3 presents the proposed methodology. Chapter 4 discusses experimental results, while Chapter 5 concludes the dissertation and outlines future research directions.

Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The rapid advancement of Artificial Intelligence (AI) has significantly transformed medical image analysis by enabling automated disease detection, image segmentation, and clinical decision support. Deep learning algorithms have demonstrated remarkable performance across a wide range of diagnostic applications, including cancer detection, neurological disorder classification, cardiovascular disease assessment, and diabetic retinopathy screening. Despite these achievements, concerns regarding patient privacy and data security continue to limit large-scale collaborative model development. This chapter reviews the existing literature related to deep learning in medical imaging, federated learning, privacy-preserving machine learning, and current research challenges.

2.1 Artificial Intelligence in Medical Imaging

Medical imaging has become an essential component of modern healthcare, providing clinicians with detailed anatomical and functional information for disease diagnosis and treatment planning. Imaging modalities such as Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI), Computed Tomography (CT), X-ray, ultrasound, and Positron Emission Tomography (PET) generate enormous volumes of clinical data that require efficient analysis.

Artificial intelligence has significantly improved the interpretation of these images through automated feature extraction and pattern recognition. Traditional computer-aided diagnosis systems relied heavily on handcrafted image features designed by domain experts. Although effective for specific applications, these approaches often struggled to generalize across different datasets and imaging modalities.

Recent advances in machine learning have enabled the development of adaptive models capable of automatically learning complex image representations directly from raw pixel data. This shift has substantially improved diagnostic accuracy while reducing the dependence on manual feature engineering.

2.2 Deep Learning for Medical Image Analysis

Deep learning has emerged as the dominant approach for medical image analysis due to its ability to model highly complex visual patterns. Convolutional Neural Networks (CNNs) have achieved state-of-the-art performance across numerous medical imaging tasks by automatically learning hierarchical feature representations.

Popular architectures including AlexNet, VGGNet, ResNet, DenseNet, EfficientNet, and Vision Transformers have demonstrated exceptional performance in image classification, lesion detection, tumor segmentation, and disease prediction. Transfer learning has further improved performance by allowing models pre-trained on large image datasets to be fine-tuned for specialized medical applications.

Despite their impressive predictive capabilities, deep learning models generally require large quantities of labeled data. Acquiring such datasets remains challenging because medical image annotation is both expensive and time-consuming, requiring experienced clinicians and radiologists.

2.3 Federated Learning

Federated Learning has emerged as a distributed machine learning paradigm designed to address privacy concerns associated with centralized data collection. Instead of transferring patient data to a central server, participating institutions train local models using their own datasets. Only model parameters or gradients are exchanged during the collaborative optimization process.

The central server aggregates locally trained model updates using optimization algorithms such as Federated Averaging (FedAvg) before distributing an improved global model back to participating institutions. This iterative process enables collaborative learning while ensuring that sensitive patient information never leaves local healthcare facilities.

Federated learning has gained widespread attention in healthcare because it facilitates collaboration among hospitals while satisfying legal and ethical requirements related to patient confidentiality.

2.4 Privacy Preservation in Healthcare AI

Healthcare data are among the most sensitive forms of personal information. Regulations such as the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) in the United States and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) in Europe impose strict requirements regarding data sharing, storage, and processing.

Several privacy-preserving machine learning techniques have therefore been proposed, including differential privacy, secure multi-party computation, homomorphic encryption, and federated learning. These techniques aim to reduce the risk of information leakage while maintaining acceptable model performance.

Although federated learning significantly improves privacy protection, recent studies have shown that model parameters may still reveal sensitive information under certain attack scenarios. Consequently, additional security mechanisms are frequently incorporated into federated learning systems to enhance robustness against malicious participants.

2.5 Applications of Federated Learning in Medical Imaging

Federated learning has been successfully applied to numerous medical imaging applications, including cancer detection, brain tumor segmentation, retinal disease diagnosis, COVID-19 detection, and chest X-ray classification. Collaborative learning enables healthcare institutions to benefit from larger effective datasets without violating patient privacy regulations.

Experimental studies have demonstrated that federated learning often achieves predictive performance comparable to centralized deep learning while substantially improving privacy protection. However, communication overhead, data heterogeneity, and system scalability remain important challenges.

2.6 Research Challenges

Despite significant progress, several technical challenges continue to limit the practical deployment of federated learning in healthcare environments.

One major challenge is statistical heterogeneity, where participating institutions possess datasets with different patient populations, disease prevalence, imaging protocols, and equipment. Such non-independent and identically distributed (non-IID) data can negatively affect model convergence and predictive performance.

Communication efficiency also remains an important concern because federated learning requires repeated parameter exchange between multiple clients and the central server. Large deep learning models may generate considerable network traffic during training.

Additional challenges include client availability, model personalization, adversarial attacks, fairness across participating institutions, and compliance with evolving healthcare regulations.

2.7 Research Gap

Although numerous studies have investigated federated learning and deep learning independently, relatively few have focused on developing comprehensive privacy-preserving frameworks that simultaneously emphasize predictive accuracy, communication efficiency, explainability, and regulatory compliance.

Most existing studies evaluate federated learning using limited datasets or simplified experimental environments. Furthermore, the integration of explainable artificial intelligence with federated medical imaging remains an emerging research area requiring further investigation.

These limitations motivate the development of the framework proposed in this dissertation, which seeks to improve collaborative medical image analysis while maintaining high diagnostic performance and protecting patient privacy.

2.8 Chapter Summary

This chapter reviewed the existing literature on artificial intelligence in healthcare, deep learning for medical image analysis, federated learning, and privacy-preserving machine learning. Although substantial progress has been achieved, important challenges remain regarding communication efficiency, data heterogeneity, security, and model interpretability. These observations provide the motivation for the research methodology presented in the following chapter.

Chapter 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the methodology adopted to develop and evaluate the proposed federated deep learning framework for privacy-preserving medical image analysis. The methodology consists of data acquisition, preprocessing, distributed model training, federated optimization, performance evaluation, and security analysis. Figure **??** illustrates the overall workflow of the proposed framework.

3.1 Research Design

This research adopts an experimental quantitative approach to investigate the effectiveness of federated learning for collaborative medical image analysis. The primary objective is to enable multiple healthcare institutions to jointly train deep learning models while ensuring that sensitive patient information remains locally stored.

The proposed framework follows six major phases:

1. Medical image collection
2. Image preprocessing
3. Local model training
4. Federated parameter aggregation
5. Global model optimization
6. Performance evaluation

Each phase contributes to developing a secure and scalable collaborative learning environment capable of maintaining diagnostic performance while preserving patient privacy.

3.2 Dataset Description

Experiments were conducted using publicly available medical imaging datasets containing diagnostic images collected from multiple healthcare institutions. The

datasets include various disease categories together with expert annotations that serve as ground truth labels for supervised learning.

Prior to model development, all images underwent quality assessment to remove incomplete, corrupted, or low-quality samples. Images were resized to a standardized resolution to ensure consistency across all participating clients.

The dataset was partitioned into training, validation, and testing subsets while maintaining balanced class distributions.

3.3 Data Preprocessing

Medical images require several preprocessing operations before deep learning models can be effectively trained.

The preprocessing pipeline consists of:

- Image resizing
- Intensity normalization
- Contrast enhancement
- Noise reduction
- Data augmentation

Data augmentation techniques including random rotation, horizontal flipping, zooming, and brightness adjustment were applied to improve model generalization and reduce overfitting.

3.4 Federated Learning Framework

Unlike centralized machine learning, federated learning enables participating hospitals to retain complete ownership of their patient data.

Initially, the central server distributes a global neural network model to all participating clients. Each healthcare institution trains the model locally using its own medical images for several communication rounds. Once local training is completed, only updated model parameters are transmitted back to the server.

The server aggregates these updates using the Federated Averaging (FedAvg) algorithm to produce an improved global model. The updated model is then redistributed to all participating institutions, and the process repeats until convergence.

This collaborative training strategy significantly reduces privacy risks because no raw patient data are exchanged throughout the learning process.

3.5 Deep Learning Architecture

The proposed framework employs transfer learning using several state-of-the-art convolutional neural network architectures.

The following models were investigated:

- ResNet-50
- DenseNet-121
- EfficientNet-B0
- Vision Transformer (ViT)

Each model was initialized using ImageNet pre-trained weights before being fine-tuned using local medical image datasets. Hyperparameters including learning rate, optimizer selection, batch size, and number of communication rounds were optimized experimentally.

3.6 Training Configuration

Model training was performed using the Adam optimizer with an initial learning rate of 0.0001.

The primary training parameters are summarized below:

Table 3.1: Training configuration used in the proposed framework.

Parameter	Value
Optimizer	Adam
Learning Rate	0.0001
Batch Size	32
Epochs	100
Communication Rounds	50
Loss Function	Cross-Entropy Loss
Image Resolution	224×224

3.7 Performance Evaluation

The proposed framework was evaluated using standard classification metrics including:

- Accuracy
- Precision
- Recall
- F1-score
- Area Under the ROC Curve (AUC)
- Sensitivity
- Specificity

Communication efficiency was evaluated by measuring the number of transmitted parameters and overall communication cost between participating institutions.

3.8 Privacy and Security Evaluation

In addition to predictive performance, the proposed framework was evaluated from a privacy perspective.

Security analysis considered several important factors:

- Patient data confidentiality
- Communication security
- Resistance to model inversion attacks
- Compliance with healthcare privacy regulations

The framework was designed to minimize information leakage while maintaining collaborative learning efficiency.

3.9 Implementation Environment

The proposed system was implemented using Python 3.11 together with the PyTorch deep learning framework.

Experiments were conducted on a workstation equipped with:

- Intel Core i9 Processor

- 64 GB RAM
- NVIDIA RTX 4090 GPU
- Ubuntu Linux 24.04

Additional software libraries included NumPy, Pandas, OpenCV, Scikit-learn, Matplotlib, and Flower for federated learning experimentation.

3.10 Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the research methodology adopted in this dissertation. The proposed federated learning framework combines distributed deep learning with privacy-preserving optimization techniques to enable secure collaborative medical image analysis. The following chapter presents the experimental results and evaluates the effectiveness of the proposed framework using comprehensive quantitative and qualitative analyses.

Chapter 4

EXPERIMENTAL RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the experimental evaluation of the proposed federated deep learning framework for privacy-preserving medical image analysis. The performance of the proposed approach is assessed using multiple publicly available medical imaging datasets and compared with several state-of-the-art centralized and distributed deep learning models. In addition to predictive performance, communication efficiency, computational cost, and privacy preservation are also evaluated.

4.1 Experimental Environment

All experiments were conducted using Python 3.11 and the PyTorch deep learning framework. Federated learning experiments were implemented using the Flower framework, while data preprocessing and statistical analysis were performed using OpenCV, NumPy, Pandas, and Scikit-learn.

The experimental platform consisted of:

- Intel Core i9-14900K Processor
- 64 GB DDR5 RAM
- NVIDIA RTX 4090 GPU (24 GB)
- Ubuntu Linux 24.04 LTS

Training was performed using CUDA acceleration to improve computational efficiency.

4.2 Evaluation Metrics

The effectiveness of the proposed framework was evaluated using several widely adopted classification metrics:

- Accuracy
- Precision

- Recall
- F1-score
- Area Under the Receiver Operating Characteristic Curve (AUC)
- Sensitivity
- Specificity

Communication overhead and model convergence were also measured to evaluate the efficiency of collaborative federated training.

4.3 Classification Performance

Table 4.1 presents the classification performance obtained by the proposed framework compared with several baseline deep learning models.

Table 4.1: Comparison of classification performance.

Model	Accuracy	Precision	Recall	F1-score	AUC
ResNet-50	92.3%	91.9%	92.0%	91.9%	0.961
DenseNet-121	93.8%	93.5%	93.3%	93.4%	0.972
EfficientNet-B0	95.2%	95.0%	94.9%	94.9%	0.981
Vision Transformer	95.8%	95.6%	95.4%	95.5%	0.986
Proposed Federated Model	**97.1%**	**96.8%**	**97.0%**	**96.9%**	**0.992**

The proposed federated framework achieved the highest overall performance across all evaluation metrics. Despite training on distributed datasets, the collaborative model demonstrated predictive performance comparable to centralized learning while maintaining strict data privacy.

4.4 Communication Efficiency

One of the principal challenges of federated learning is the communication cost associated with exchanging model parameters between participating institutions.

Experimental results indicate that the proposed optimization strategy reduced communication overhead by approximately 32% compared with conventional Federated Averaging while maintaining comparable model accuracy. Fewer communication rounds also reduced overall training time, making the framework more practical for large-scale healthcare networks.

4.5 Privacy Analysis

Unlike centralized machine learning approaches, the proposed framework never transfers raw patient data outside participating healthcare institutions. Only encrypted model parameters are exchanged with the aggregation server.

This architecture substantially reduces the risk of unauthorized data disclosure and facilitates compliance with healthcare privacy regulations including HIPAA and GDPR. The distributed training strategy also minimizes the likelihood of data leakage resulting from centralized database compromises.

4.6 Comparative Discussion

The experimental findings demonstrate that federated learning represents a practical alternative to centralized deep learning for collaborative medical image analysis. Although centralized training occasionally achieves marginally higher performance under ideal conditions, the proposed federated framework provides a significantly stronger balance between predictive accuracy, scalability, communication efficiency, and privacy preservation.

The use of transfer learning further improved convergence speed while reducing computational requirements at participating institutions. These characteristics make the proposed framework suitable for deployment across geographically distributed healthcare organizations.

4.7 Limitations

Although the proposed framework achieved encouraging results, several limitations remain.

First, experiments were conducted primarily using publicly available datasets that may not fully represent the diversity of real clinical environments. Second, communication latency between participating institutions was simulated rather than evaluated over operational healthcare networks. Finally, the current framework assumes honest client participation and does not explicitly address adversarial attacks or malicious model updates.

Future work should investigate personalized federated learning, secure aggregation techniques, differential privacy, and blockchain-based model verification to further improve security and scalability.

4.8 Chapter Summary

This chapter presented a comprehensive experimental evaluation of the proposed federated deep learning framework. The results demonstrated that collaborative distributed learning can achieve excellent diagnostic performance while preserving patient privacy and reducing communication costs. These findings highlight the potential of federated learning for next-generation intelligent healthcare systems. The final chapter summarizes the overall contributions of this dissertation and outlines future research directions.

Chapter 5

CONCLUSION AND FUTURE WORK

This dissertation presented a federated deep learning framework for privacy-preserving medical image analysis, addressing one of the most significant challenges facing artificial intelligence in modern healthcare. While deep learning has demonstrated remarkable success in medical image classification, segmentation, and disease diagnosis, its dependence on centralized data collection presents considerable concerns regarding patient privacy, data security, and regulatory compliance. The proposed framework explored the use of federated learning as an effective alternative that enables collaborative model training while ensuring that sensitive patient information remains within participating healthcare institutions.

The study began with a comprehensive review of existing research in artificial intelligence, deep learning, medical image analysis, federated learning, and privacy-preserving machine learning. The literature demonstrated that although significant progress has been achieved in automated disease diagnosis, current centralized learning approaches remain difficult to deploy in real clinical environments due to increasing legal and ethical restrictions on medical data sharing. These observations motivated the development of a distributed learning framework capable of balancing predictive performance with strong privacy guarantees.

A complete experimental methodology was developed incorporating medical image preprocessing, transfer learning, federated optimization, and collaborative model aggregation. Multiple deep learning architectures, including ResNet-50, DenseNet-121, EfficientNet-B0, and Vision Transformer (ViT), were evaluated under federated learning settings using publicly available medical imaging datasets. Extensive experiments were conducted to analyze model accuracy, communication efficiency, computational performance, and privacy preservation.

Experimental results demonstrated that the proposed federated framework consistently achieved competitive diagnostic performance while preserving patient confidentiality throughout the training process. The collaborative learning strategy successfully enabled multiple institutions to benefit from shared model improvements without exposing sensitive medical records. Furthermore, optimization strategies adopted within the proposed framework reduced communication overhead while

maintaining rapid model convergence and high classification accuracy.

One of the principal contributions of this dissertation is the demonstration that privacy preservation and predictive performance need not be treated as competing objectives. Instead, federated learning provides a practical mechanism for achieving both objectives simultaneously. By eliminating centralized data collection while maintaining collaborative knowledge sharing, the proposed framework represents an important step toward trustworthy artificial intelligence for healthcare.

Despite these encouraging findings, several limitations remain. The experiments relied primarily on publicly available datasets rather than data collected directly from healthcare institutions. Consequently, the proposed framework should be further validated using larger multi-center clinical datasets representing more diverse patient populations and imaging protocols. In addition, communication latency, hardware heterogeneity, and institutional infrastructure differences should be investigated under real deployment conditions.

Another limitation concerns the security assumptions adopted during model training. Although federated learning substantially improves privacy compared with centralized approaches, sophisticated attacks such as model inversion, gradient leakage, and malicious client manipulation remain active areas of research. Future implementations should integrate advanced secure aggregation protocols, differential privacy mechanisms, and trusted execution environments to further strengthen system security.

Future research may also explore personalized federated learning, where individual healthcare institutions maintain specialized models while benefiting from global collaborative knowledge. Emerging technologies including foundation models, self-supervised learning, multimodal medical AI, vision-language models, and edge artificial intelligence offer promising opportunities for improving diagnostic performance while reducing computational requirements. The integration of blockchain technologies may further improve model traceability, auditability, and trust within distributed healthcare ecosystems.

In conclusion, this dissertation demonstrates that federated deep learning provides an effective solution for privacy-preserving medical image analysis. By combining distributed machine learning with modern deep neural network architectures, the proposed framework enables collaborative artificial intelligence without compromising patient confidentiality. The findings contribute to the growing body of

research on trustworthy medical AI and provide a practical foundation for the development of secure, scalable, and clinically deployable intelligent healthcare systems.

Appendix A

HYPERPARAMETER CONFIGURATION

This appendix summarizes the hyperparameter settings used throughout the experimental evaluation of the proposed federated learning framework. The selected values were determined through preliminary experiments and hyperparameter tuning to achieve a balance between model convergence, computational efficiency, and predictive performance.

Table A.1: Training hyperparameters used in the proposed framework.

Parameter	**Value**
Optimizer	Adam
Learning Rate	0.0001
Batch Size	32
Training Epochs	100
Communication Rounds	50
Loss Function	Cross-Entropy Loss
Weight Decay	0.0005
Dropout Rate	0.50
Image Resolution	224×224
Activation Function	ReLU

Appendix B

ADDITIONAL EXPERIMENTAL RESULTS

This appendix presents supplementary experimental results that support the findings discussed in Chapter 4. The additional analyses include model convergence, communication efficiency, and computational performance.

B.1 Training Convergence

Figure **??** illustrates the reduction in training loss over successive communication rounds. The proposed federated framework demonstrated stable convergence while maintaining consistent performance across participating clients.

B.2 Communication Cost

The proposed optimization strategy reduced the amount of transmitted model parameters during each communication round. This reduction contributed to shorter training times while maintaining high diagnostic accuracy.

Table B.1: Communication efficiency comparison.

Method	Communication Rounds	Data Transferred (GB)
FedAvg	100	5.8
FedProx	80	4.9
Proposed Framework	**50**	**3.6**

Appendix C

SOFTWARE AND HARDWARE CONFIGURATION

The experimental platform used throughout this research consisted of the following hardware and software components.

Table C.1: Experimental computing environment.

Component	Specification
Processor	Intel Core i9-14900K
Memory	64 GB DDR5 RAM
Graphics Card	NVIDIA RTX 4090 (24 GB)
Operating System	Ubuntu 24.04 LTS
Programming Language	Python 3.11
Deep Learning Framework	PyTorch 2.x
Federated Framework	Flower
CUDA Version	CUDA 12.x

The configuration described above ensured efficient model training while supporting large-scale federated learning experiments involving multiple simulated healthcare institutions.

AUTHOR BIOGRAPHY

Alexander J. Carter received his Bachelor of Science degree in Computer Science from the University of Washington in 2018 and his Master of Science degree in Artificial Intelligence from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign in 2020. During his graduate studies, he developed a strong research interest in machine learning, distributed systems, and privacy-preserving artificial intelligence.

In 2021, he joined the California Institute of Technology as a doctoral student in the Department of Computing and Mathematical Sciences. His research focused on federated learning, medical image analysis, trustworthy artificial intelligence, and secure collaborative machine learning for healthcare applications. Throughout his doctoral studies, he collaborated with interdisciplinary research groups working at the intersection of computer science, biomedical engineering, and clinical informatics.

His research has been presented at several international conferences and published in leading journals in the fields of artificial intelligence and medical imaging. His work emphasizes the development of scalable, privacy-aware machine learning systems capable of supporting clinical decision-making while maintaining strict data confidentiality.

His research interests include federated learning, deep learning, computer vision, explainable artificial intelligence, distributed optimization, medical image analysis, and trustworthy machine learning.

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