

Gengrui (Edward) Zhang

 Bahen Centre, 40 St George St,
 Toronto, ON, M5S 2E4, Canada
 gengrui.zhang@mail.utoronto.ca
 <https://gengruizhang.github.io>

RESEARCH INTERESTS

The overarching objective of my research is to develop **3H** distributed systems—characterized by **h**igh performance, **h**igh scalability, and **h**igh availability. By integrating theoretical foundations with real-world imperatives, my research addresses the nuanced challenges that arise in practical applications; it is especially focused on designing general and tailored consensus algorithms, fault tolerance, and consistency models to effectively support various distributed applications, such as blockchains, distributed databases, cloud computing, and distributed training systems.

EDUCATION

University of Toronto	Toronto, ON, Canada
Doctor of Philosophy, Electrical & Computer Engineering	2019 - 2024
Dissertation: “ <i>Efficient and Scalable Consensus Algorithms</i> ”	
Advisor: Prof. Hans-Arno Jacobsen (<i>IEEE Fellow</i>)	
University of Chinese Academy of Sciences	Beijing, China
Master of Applied Science, Computer Science	2015 - 2018
Thesis: “ <i>Digital Content Protection Using Blockchain Technologies</i> ”	
Advisor: Prof. Cheng-Zhong Xu (<i>IEEE Fellow</i>)	
Hunan University (Talent Program)	Changsha, HN, China
Bachelor of Applied Science, Computer Science	2011 - 2015
Thesis: “ <i>Design and Implementation of GraphX Algorithms using Apache Spark</i> ”	

INDUSTRY EXPERIENCE

Tencent Technology Co. Ltd	Shenzhen, GD, China
Software Engineer, Platform & Content Group (PCG)	2018

FELLOWSHIPS & AWARDS

Doctoral Completion Award, University of Toronto	2023
ECE Student Fellowship, University of Toronto	2019 - 2022
Research Fellowship, University of Toronto	2019 - 2022
Outstanding Student, University of Chinese Academy of Sciences	2017
University Individual Scholarship, Hunan University	2012 - 2014
Best Paper Award	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The 13th International Conference on Green, Pervasive and Cloud Computing 	2018
Prize of Excellence, Asia SuperComputer Challenge	2014
Proud Team Award, Asia SuperComputer Challenge	2013

PUBLICATIONS

▷ Conference Papers:

- **Gengrui Zhang**, Shiquan Zhang, Michail Bachras, Hans-Arno Jacobsen. Cabinet: Dynamically Weighted Consensus Made Fast. *(Under review)*
- **Gengrui Zhang**, Yunhao Mao, Shashank Motepalli, Shiquan Zhang, and Hans-Arno Jacobsen. V-Guard: An Efficient Permissioned Blockchain for Achieving Consensus under Dynamic Memberships in V2X Networks. *arXiv preprint arXiv:2301.06210, 2023.* *(Under review)*
- **Gengrui Zhang**, Fei Pan, Sofia Tijanic, and Hans-Arno Jacobsen. PrestigeBFT: Revolutionizing View Changes in BFT Consensus Algorithms with Reputation Mechanisms. *In 2024 IEEE 40th International Conference on Data Engineering (ICDE). IEEE, 2024.* **(ICDE'24)**
- Yuqiu Zhang, Tongkun Zhang, **Gengrui Zhang**, and Hans-Arno Jacobsen. Lifting the Fog of Uncertainties: Dynamic Resource Orchestration for the Containerized Cloud. *In Proceedings of the 13th ACM Symposium on Cloud Computing, 2023.* **(Acceptance rate: 28.5%, SoCC'23)**
- **Gengrui Zhang** and Hans-Arno Jacobsen. Escape to Precaution against Leader Failures. *In 2022 IEEE 42nd International Conference on Distributed Computing Systems, 2022.* **(Acceptance rate: 19.7%, ICDCS'22)**
- **Gengrui Zhang**. Binding Efficiency and Robustness for Blockchains using Reputation-based Byzantine Fault-Tolerant Consensus Algorithms. *In Proceedings of the 23rd International Middleware Conference, 2022.* (Short Paper) **(Middleware'22)**
- **Gengrui Zhang** and Hans-Arno Jacobsen. Prosecutor: An Efficient BFT Consensus Algorithm with Behavior-aware Penalization against Byzantine Attacks. *In Proceedings of the 22nd International Middleware Conference, 2021.* **(Acceptance rate: 25.9%, Middleware'21)**
- James Meijers, Edward Au, Yuxi Cai, Hans-Arno Jacobsen, Shashank Motepalli, Robert Sun, Andreas Veneris, **Gengrui Zhang**, and Shiquan Zhang. Blockchain for V2X: A Taxonomy of Design Use Cases and System Requirements. *In 2021 3rd Conference on Blockchain Research & Applications for Innovative Networks and Services (BRAINS). IEEE, 2021*
- **Gengrui Zhang** and Chengzhong Xu. An Efficient Consensus Protocol for Real-time Permissioned Blockchains under non-Byzantine Conditions. *In International Conference on Green, Pervasive, and Cloud Computing. Springer, 2018* **(Best Paper Award)**

▷ Journal Articles:

- **Gengrui Zhang**, Fei Pan, Yunhao Mao, Sofia Tijanic, Michael Dangana, Shashank Motepalli, Shiquan Zhang, and Hans-Arno Jacobsen. Reaching Consensus in the Byzantine Empire: A Comprehensive Review of BFT Consensus Algorithms. *ACM Computing Surveys (CSUR)*
- James Meijers, Panagiotis Michalopoulos, Shashank Motepalli, **Gengrui Zhang**, Shiquan Zhang, Andreas Veneris, and Hans Arno Jacobsen. Blockchain for V2X: Applications and Architectures. *IEEE Open Journal of Vehicular Technology, 2022*

PATENTS

- **Gengrui Zhang**, Hans-Arno Jacobsen, and Sheng Sun. Method and System for Creating a Distributed Ledger of Verified Vehicle Transactions (Patent Ref: 92014620US01). International Patent. 2022.
- **Gengrui Zhang**, Tongxin Bai, and Chengzhong Xu. A Second-hand Vehicle Transaction Method, Apparatus and System based on Blockchain Technology. CN 106897887 A[P]. 2017.

INVITED TALKS

“Fairness in Byzantine Consensus”

- Macau University, Macau SAR, China, 2021.04

“Scaling Byzantine Consensus”

- Blockchain ACM SACMAT, Toronto, Canada, 2019.06

“Optimizing Consensus Algorithms for Permissioned Blockchains”

- Blockchain Week, Toronto, Canada, 2019.04

“Untangling Blockchain Consensus Protocols from Blockchain 1.0 to 2.0”

- Tencent, Shenzhen, China, 2018.04

“High-level Comparisons between Permissionless and Permissioned Blockchains”

- SIAT-CAS, Shenzhen, China, 2017.11

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

* Teaching assistantships are an integral part of the doctoral education at the University of Toronto.

▷ Guest Lectures:

- *“Introduction to Consensus Algorithms”* (Recordings available on [YouTube](#))
 - ECE419 Distributed Systems, 2023
- *“Blockchains and Consensus Protocols”*
 - ECE1770 Trends in Middleware: Blockchain Technology, 2022

▷ Teaching Assistantships:

Graduate-level courses:

- ◇ ECE1770 Blockchain Technology, Head TA, University of Toronto (2022)
- ◇ ECE1762 Algorithms and Data Structures, TA, University of Toronto (2020, 2021)

Undergrad-level courses:

- ◇ ECE419 Distributed Systems, Head TA, University of Toronto (2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023)
- ◇ ECE345 Algorithms and Data Structures, TA, University of Toronto (2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023)
- ◇ CSC343 Introduction to Databases, TA, University of Toronto (2023)
- ◇ ECE244 Programming Fundamentals, TA, University of Toronto (2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023)
- ◇ CSC263 Data Structures and Analysis, TA, University of Toronto (2021)
- ◇ CSC148 Introduction to Computer Science, TA, University of Toronto (2022)

STUDENTS MENTORED

Sofia Tijanic (University of Toronto, M.S. Student)

Michalis Bachras (University of Toronto, Ph.D. Student)

Shashank Motepalli (University of Toronto, Ph.D. Student)

Shiquan Zhang (University of Toronto, Ph.D. Student)

REVIEW AND SERVICE

Conferences:

- IEEE International Conference on Decentralized Applications and Infrastructures (DAPPS) 2024
- ACM/IFIP International Middleware Conference (Middleware) 2022
- ACM/IFIP International Middleware Conference (Middleware) 2020
- International Conference on Distributed Computing Systems (ICDCS) 2019
- IEEE International Conference on Blockchain (IEEE Blockchain) 2019

Journals:

- IEEE Transactions on Network and Service Management 2023
- Journal of Parallel and Distributed Computing (JDBC) 2018

REFERENCES

Prof. Hans-Arno Jacobsen

University of Toronto, Electrical & Computer Engineering
📍 BA 4116, 40 St George St, Toronto, ON, Canada, M5S 2E4
✉ jacobsen@eecg.toronto.edu
🏠 <https://www.ece.utoronto.ca/people/jacobsen-h-a/>

Prof. Robbert van Renesse

Cornell University, Department of Computer Science
📍 433 Gates Hall, Ithaca, NY 14853, USA
✉ rvr@cs.cornell.edu
🏠 <https://www.cs.cornell.edu/home/rvr/>

Prof. Andreas Veneris

University of Toronto, Electrical & Computer Engineering
📍 SF 2001A, 10 King's College Road, Toronto, ON, Canada, M5S 3G4
✉ veneris@eecg.utoronto.ca
🏠 <https://www.ece.utoronto.ca/people/veneris-a/>

Prof. Mohammad Sadoghi

University of California, Davis, Department of Computer Science
📍 Kemper 3055, 545 Bainer Hall Dr, Davis, CA 95616, United States
✉ msadoghi@ucdavis.edu
🏠 <https://cs.ucdavis.edu/directory/mohammad-sadoghi>

Prof. Baochun Li

University of Toronto, Electrical & Computer Engineering
📍 BA 4118, 40 St George St, Toronto, ON, Canada, M5S 2E4
✉ bli@ece.toronto.edu
🏠 <https://www.ece.utoronto.ca/people/li-b/>