Joel Niklaus

Schwarztorstrasse 108, 3007 Bern, Switzerland
joel@niklaus.ai | (+41) 78 664 46 59

EDUCATION

UNIVERSITY OF BERN
PhD in Computer Science
Jul. 2020 - Jan. 2024 | Switzerland
summa cum laude (Grade average: 6/6)
Advisors: Matthias Stürmer & Ilias Chalkidis

STANFORD UNIVERSITY
Research Visit
Oct. 2022 - Mar. 2023 | Switzerland
Advisors: Daniel E. Ho & Percy Liang
Collaboration with the CRFM

UNIVERSITIES OF BERN, NEUCHÂTEL, AND FRIBOURG
MSc in Computer Science
Sep. 2018 - Dec. 2019 | Switzerland
Grade average: **5.50/6** | Thesis: **6/6**
Exchange: **NTU** , Singapore

UNIVERSITY OF BERN
BSc in Computer Science
Sep. 2013 - Aug. 2018 | Switzerland
Grade average: **5.41/6** | Thesis: **6/6**
Exchange: **University of Exeter** , England

LINKS

Google Scholar
LinkedIn:// **joelniklaus**
Twitter:// **@joelniklaus**
Github:// **joelniklaus**
HuggingFace:// **joelniklaus**

SKILLS & INTERESTS

LANGUAGES
German • English • Spanish • French

PROGRAMMING
used regularly:
Python • Java • PHP • TypeScript
can get things done:
Kotlin • Sass • SQL • LaTeX

FRAMEWORKS
transformers & datasets • PyTorch • JAX •
PAX • T5X • SeqIO • SpaCy • Keras

TOOLS
Docker • Git • PyCharm • AWS • GCP

RESEARCH INTERESTS
Legal NLP • Data Centric ML •
Benchmarking • Multilingual Language
Model Pretraining • Instruction Tuning

EXPERIENCE

HARVEY | Research Scientist
Sep. 2024 - present | San Francisco, United States
I run large scale model evaluations on internal and external legal benchmarks.

(GOOGLE) X | PhD Resident
Jul. 2023 - Nov. 2023 | Mountain View, United States
I pretrained and instruction tuned multi-billion parameter multilingual LLMs in the Legal Domain on hundreds of TPU cores achieving state-of-the-art on LegalBench.

THOMSON REUTERS LABS | Data Science Intern
Mar. 2022 - Aug. 2022 | Zug, Switzerland
I cheaply pretrained Longformers for the Legal Domain. Patent Application pending.

BERN UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES | Lecturer
Aug. 2021 - present | Bern, Switzerland
I lecture about LLMs in three applied modules on AI.
I planned and conducted the technical part of the module Software Engineering.

UNIVERSITY OF BERN | Lecturer and Teaching Assistant
Sep. 2015 - Dec. 2024 | Bern, Switzerland
I co-teach about transformers (CAS), planned and led the "NLP Seminar" (BSc/MSc), and was a TA for "Programming Languages" (MSc), "Software Engineering" (BSc) and "Computer Networks" (BSc).

AWARDS

2024	Winner	Outstanding Paper Award @ ACL for MultiLegalPile
2021	Research Grant	60'000 CHF from Swiss Federal Supreme Court
2019	Nominee	Best MSc Thesis, University of Fribourg, Department of Computer Science
2017	Winner	Excellent Work in Computer Science (BSc Thesis), Joint Alumni Assoc., Universities Bern, Neuchâtel & Fribourg

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

J. Niklaus , J. Merane, L. Nenadic, S. Ahmadi, Y. Gao, C. A. H. Chevalley, C. Humbel, C. Gösken, L. Tanzi, T. Lüthi, S. Palombo, S. Poff, B. Yang, N. Wu, M. Guillod, R. Mamié, D. Brunner, J. Pereyra, N. Grupen
SwiLTra-Bench : The Swiss Legal Translation Benchmark
ACL Main 2025 , Vienna, Austria

J. Niklaus , L. Zheng, AD. McCarthy, C. Hahn, BM. Rosen, P. Henderson, DE. Ho, G. Honke, P. Liang, C. Manning
LawInstruct : A Resource for Studying Language Model Adaptation to the Legal Domain
NAACL Findings 2025 , Albuquerque, United States

J. Niklaus , V. Matoshi, M. Stürmer, I. Chalkidis, D. Ho
MultiLegalPile : A 689GB Multilingual Legal Corpus
ACL Main 2024 , Bangkok, Thailand

J. Niklaus , V. Matoshi, P. Rani, A. Galassi, M. Stürmer, I. Chalkidis
LEXTREME : A Multi-Lingual and Multi-Task Benchmark for the Legal Domain
EMNLP Findings 2023 , Singapore, Singapore