Jan Sobotka

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Education

Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Lausanne (EPFL) Sep. 2024 – ongoing
M.S. in Computer Science *Lausanne, CH*

- Weighted grade average: **5.89** (scale of 1.0 to 6.0, 6.0 is the best)
- Anticipated graduation date: 07/26

Czech Technical University, Faculty of Information Technology July 2021 – July 2024
B.S. in Informatics, Specialization in Artificial Intelligence *Prague, CZ*

- Weighted grade average: **1.05** (scale of 1.0 to 4.0, 1.0 is the best)
- Ranked among the **top 5%** of students in the majority of courses.

Industry Experience

AI/ML Engineer Junior June 2021 – June 2023
Generali Česká pojišťovna *Prague, CZ*

- Prepared a machine learning pipeline that improved the accuracy of product recommendations by ∼**35%**.
- Built computing infrastructure for the company's internal data science community with over 90 members.
- Applied deep learning to product and text recommendation, client departure prediction, email classification, and unsupervised customer segmentation.

IT Generalist Feb. 2020 – June 2021
Startup Disrupt *Prague, CZ*

- Led the development of a web application for ticket sales.
- Deployed several websites and cloud services on AWS.
- Prepared IT setup for over 30 offline/online events.

Research Experience

Research Assistant at the Autonomous Systems Group July 2025 – ongoing
University of Texas at Austin, Oden Institute for Computational Engineering and Sciences *Austin, US*

- Interpretability and game-theoretic analysis of large language models in strategy games.
- Supervised by Prof. Ufuk Topcu.

Research Assistant at the MLBio Lab Aug. 2024 – July 2025
Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Lausanne (EPFL) *Lausanne, CH*

- Improving multimodal foundation models on computer vision tasks through unsupervised in-context learning.
- Developing algorithms for robust out-of-distribution weak-to-strong generalization.
- Supervised by Prof. Maria Brbić.

Research Intern at the Computational Systems Neuroscience Group Sep. 2023 – Aug. 2024
Faculty of Mathematics and Physics, Charles University *Prague, CZ*

- Worked on deep learning-based decoding of neural activity for use in brain-machine interfaces.
- Bachelor thesis titled *Decoding visual stimuli from cortical activity using neural networks* [PDF].
- Supervised by Mgr. Ján Antolík, Ph.D.

Research Assistant at the Data Science Lab Apr. 2023 – Feb. 2024
Faculty of Information Technology, Czech Technical University *Prague, CZ*

- Investigated the inner workings and applicability of optimization methods known as *Learning-to-Optimize* (meta-learning) and *fractional gradient descent* in the context of deep learning.

Computational Neuroscience Research Intern July 2023 – Sep. 2023
Biozentrum, University of Basel *Basel, CH*

- Worked on the research project *Bistable Dendrites Matter: Auto-Associative Memory in Networks of Neurons* under the supervision of Dr. Everton Agnes.
- Designed computational models of spiking neural networks and analyzed the role of bistable dendrites in memory.

Publications

Jan Sobotka, Luca Baroni, Ján Antolík (2025). OpenReview
MEIcoder: Decoding Visual Stimuli from Neural Activity by Leveraging Most Exciting Inputs.
*Conference on Neural Information Processing Systems (**NeurIPS 2025**).*

Myeongho Jeon*, **Jan Sobotka***, Suhwan Choi*, Maria Brbic (2025). OpenReview
Weak-to-Strong Generalization under Distribution Shifts.
*Conference on Neural Information Processing Systems (**NeurIPS 2025**).*

Jan Sobotka, Auke Ijspeert, Guillaume Bellegarda (2025). Submitted
Reverse-Engineering Memory in DreamerV3: From Sparse Representations to Functional Circuits.
*Conference on Neural Information Processing Systems (**NeurIPS 2025, CogInterp workshop**).*

Jan Sobotka, Petr Šimánek, Pavel Kordík (2024). Submitted
Enhancing Fractional Gradient Descent with Learned Optimizers.
Optimization Letters.

Jan Sobotka, Petr Šimánek, Daniel Vašata (2024). DOI | arXiv
Investigation into the Training Dynamics of Learned Optimizers.
*The 16th International Conference on Agents and Artificial Intelligence (**ICAART 2024**).*

Jan Sobotka, Petr Šimánek (2024). DOI
Investigation into the Training Dynamics of Learned Optimizers (Student Abstract).
*The 38th Annual AAAI Conference on Artificial Intelligence (**AAAI-24**).*

Selected Projects

Auxiliary Training Objectives in Reinforcement Learning Sep. 2024 – Feb. 2025
- Semester research project at the intersection of ML interpretability and reinforcement learning (RL).
- Investigated the impact of auxiliary training objectives on representations of recurrent RL agents.

Deep Reinforcement Learning for Optimal Experimental Design in Biology Jan. 2023 – June 2023
- Open research project focused on the efficient estimation of biological system parameters [OpenBioML].

Generative Models of Regulatory DNA Sequences Based on Diffusion Models July 2022 – Dec. 2022
- Open research project investigating the application of diffusion models to genomics data [OpenBioML].

Extracurricular Activities

Organizer of the Traion Community of Student Entrepreneurs June 2020 – Feb. 2021
- Organized offline meetings, educational seminars, and workshops targeted at startups and entrepreneurship.

Volunteer for an Entrepreneurship Education Program for Students Dec. 2019 – Aug. 2020
- Organized events and wrote a technology/entrepreneurship blog for the Soutěž and Podnikej organization.

Pitcher at the Czech Republic National Baseball Team U-15 Jan. 2017 – July 2017
- Secured third place at the U-15 European Baseball Championship 2017.

Honors and Awards

The Bakala Foundation Scholarship: Awarded to 12 out of 165 applicants | The Bakala Foundation | 2024
Merit-Based Scholarship for Academic Achievements: Czech Technical University | 2021, 2022, 2023
National Benchmark Exam in Mathematics: Scored higher than 97% of the 875 test takers | SCIO | 2021
Algorithms & Programming Competition FIKS: 4th out of 107 contestants | Czech Technical University | 2020
TOP25 Czech High School Students of the Year 2020: Selection based on extracurricular activities | 2020

Skills

Programming languages: Python, C, C++, Julia, JavaScript, Go
Other selected technologies: PyTorch, Scikit-learn, NumPy, Pandas, Matplotlib, Azure, AWS, Git, Docker, Bash
Languages: Czech (native speaker), English (C1, TOEFL iBT 105), German (A2)