

# Thorben Wölk

Freelance Data & AI Engineer

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<https://thorbenwoelk.github.io/>

Hamburg, Germany

## SUMMARY

Experienced Data & AI Engineer and Data Platform Lead. Focusing on microservices, serverless architectures, and DataOps. Combining technical engineering expertise with an agile mindset and leadership skills to develop and implement data-driven solutions. Particularly interested in cloud architecture, AI and machine learning.

## EXPERIENCE

### ZEIT ONLINE - Head of Data Platform

May 2023 – Aug 2025

- Leading data platform strategy and development for a major online news publisher
- Managing a team of 5+ data engineers, analytics engineers, and tracking experts
- Implementing user story mapping, a Kanban process, and release management

### ZEIT ONLINE - Software Engineer Big Data

Oct 2021 – Apr 2023

- Designed and built a scalable analytics and data science platform leveraging Google Cloud, Kubernetes, dbt Cloud, and Looker
- Developed Python apps for batch and streaming data ingestion on event-driven and pipeline architectures
- Onboarded tools and experts to the data platform in collaboration with my manager
- Implemented IaC using Terraform as well as branching concepts, CI/CD workflows, and coding best practices

### EOS Group - Software Engineer

Jan 2019 – Sep 2021

- Redesigned and operated a machine learning platform for a fintech company
- Migrated legacy Scala monolith to a microservice architecture
- Implemented AWS-backed solutions using AWS Sagemaker, Lambda, S3, and Redshift
- Automated infrastructure and ML model deployment using ansible, cdk, CloudFormation, and Jenkins

### Forward3D - Junior PPC Analyst

Sep 2017 – Nov 2018

- Analyzed and optimized pay-per-click campaigns for retail clients
- Automated daily and weekly reportings with Python and SQL

### briq - Institute on Behavior and Inequality - Research Assistant

Apr 2016 – May 2017

- Conducted data analysis with Python and R for economic research
- Contributed to publications on neuroeconomics and moral reasoning

## EDUCATION

### Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität Bonn

2014 – 2017

#### *Master of Science in Economics*

Focus on Behavioral Economics. Thesis on "Diffusion of Responsibility".

### Christian-Albrechts-Universität zu Kiel

2010 – 2013

#### *Bachelor of Science in Business Administration*

### Fernuniversität in Hagen

2012 – 2019

#### *Bachelor of Arts in Psychology*

### Université Paris I Panthéon-Sorbonne

2013 – 2014

#### *Erasmus Exchange in Economics*

## PROJECTS

### Data Ingestion Framework

OOP batch ingestion framework built with Python on Kubernetes and GCP.  
Property of DIE ZEIT

### Data Pipeline Manager

An API for engineers to manage and operate data ingestion jobs.  
Property of DIE ZEIT

### Photography Portfolio

A website showcasing photography work.  
Built with Svelte on Google Cloud Run.  
[View Portfolio](#)

## SKILLS

### Programming Languages

Python, SQL, JavaScript/TypeScript

### Cloud Platforms

Google Cloud Platform (GCP), Amazon Web Services (AWS)

### Data Technologies

BigQuery, PostgreSQL, dbt core, dbt Cloud, Dataflow, PySpark, Pub/Sub, Kafka, Redshift, Looker, LookML, Neo4j Cypher

### Machine Learning and AI

MLOps, Cursor, Claude Code, Anthropic API, OpenAI API, pydantic-ai

### DevOps, CI/CD

Kubernetes, Docker, GitHub Actions, Terraform, ansible, cdk, CloudFormation, Grafana, GCP Monitoring

### Methods

Agile Coaching, User Story Mapping, Test Driven Development

## LANGUAGES

German (Native), English (Fluent), Spanish (Good working knowledge), French (Basic)

## CERTIFICATIONS

### Agile Coach

July 2021

Beratung Judith Andresen

### AWS Certified Solutions Architect – 2020 Associate

## PUBLICATIONS

"Spreading inequality: neural computations underlying paying-it-forward reciprocity" 2018

Social Cognitive and Affective Neuroscience