Thorben Wölk
Freelance Data & AI Engineer

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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

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

Machine Learning and AI
MLOps, Cursor, Claude Code, Anthropic API, OpenAI API

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 – Associate
2020

PUBLICATIONS

"Spreading inequality: neural computations underlying paying-it-forward reciprocity"
2018
Social Cognitive and Affective Neuroscience

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