

Thorben Wölk

Freelance Data & AI Engineer

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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, 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

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