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Intro to AI in Python

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Interview with a Date Scientist

Note: While I was unable to personally inter a data scientist, I found online an interview with a data scientist which I found to be revealing of the data science profession.

Soheila works as a data scientist at Mediaan, a data-driven business and tech consultation firm. Ironically, she did not study data science, but biomedical engineering. However, she discovered the field when taking a course after her graduation. Her education consisted of an introduction to machine learning through her biomedical engineering track, as well as sufficient knowledge of programming which proved valuable as a data scientist. This shows the freedom in one joining the data science field, even if from a vastly different educational background, as Soheila was.

As Mediaan is a consulting and consumer firm, Soheila mainly focuses her data science project to align with her clients’ needs. Therefore, her specific assignment may change from month to month, or even week to week. Additionally, being a data scientist involved learning many new technologies, programming skills, datasets, and more. One needs to remain up to date will all relevant software and technologies. Additionally, a data scientists’ job does not end when the data ends: one need to display or present this data! If not, then what was the point of build a model and analyzing data? Therefore, it is equally crucial to have proficient communication skills, be able to fluidly present your findings, and have a keen eye for problem solving.

Once, Soheila was contracted by a manufacturing factory. Interestingly, her job did not simply contain sitting behind a desk writing code and looking at data. She tours the assembly lines and visits factories. She speaks with employees and learns about companies. This helps inform what features to take into account when making a model, and what model to make (regression, classification, anomaly detection, recommender, etc.). On a daily basis, she also engages with other data scientists. They share data and information, which may help on of their colleagues with their projects. The constant sharing of data creates a community of knowledge and information, which helps all parties in the data science field.

More specifically, Soheila commented on the rapid automation in the data science field. Many tasks which used to be completed by traditional data science employees are now being automated via software such as Auto-ML, a computer assisted machine learning computation application. Additionally, once a model is created once, it can be reused easily. This leads Soheila to reaffirm that data scientists should focus energy in to learning and perfecting big data systems and deployment processes.

Lastly, she comments on misconceptions about data scientists. She disagrees with the public notion that data science is a new fad, or a bubble waiting to burst. She posits that data science is rooted in mathematics and statistics and is here to stay. She also notes how this field has affected nearly every part of our everyday lives. Data scientists have become more specialized, meaning the field has been widening and burgeoning.

Source: https://mediaan.com/mediaan-blog/the-life-of-a-data-scientist