

# Christopher Gandrud, Ph.D

Director of Data Science  
**Spotify**

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## Work Experience

I build teams that solve more problems, faster. Automated auction systems generating **hundreds of millions of euros**. A/B testing infrastructure supporting **hundreds of concurrent experiments**. Algorithmic metrics proxying for downstream outcomes that scale across recommendations for hundreds of millions of users. AI evaluation systems **easy to set up, maintain, and accurate** across all use cases. No firedrills. No one-off solutions. No low value-add work.

### Spotify (2022-present)

#### Director of Data Science (2023-Present)

I lead teams of data scientists responsible for personalizing the Home, Search, and promotions experience on Spotify, which accounts for 75% of consumption for 700 million users. Key initiatives include:

- **AI Evaluation and Fine tuning** Lead teams of ML engineers and data scientists to build AI evaluation systems (including LLMs as Judges) and refine the ML reward functions and generative recommendations systems powering recommendations.
- **Connecting Product Metrics to Business Outcomes:** Built measurement systems aligning short-term engagement signals with long-term retention and revenue, eliminating guesswork and accelerating decision velocity across recommendation surfaces.
- **Enhancing Discovery and Engagement:** Drove projects that resulted in substantial increases in user discovery and engagement with new video content formats, contributing to significant growth in overall platform consumption, monetisation, and user retention.

#### Senior Insights Leader (2022-2023)

I guided teams of data scientists and user researchers in developing personalization algorithms and optimizing impression economics, significantly influencing user experience for 400+ million daily users on the Spotify Home.

### Zalando SE (2017-2022)

I built and managed a cross-functional organization that developed frameworks, tools, and services aimed at fostering deep customer relationships at Zalando.

#### Director of Economics and Experimentation (2020-2022, Head 2019-2020)

- **Measuring the right things:** I led managers of teams comprised of economists, data scientists, engineers, and product managers to redefine Zalando's customer-centric KPI framework. This initiative was pivotal in delivering long-term value to customers and operationalizing insights across the company.

- **Scaling incremental impact research software and services:** I spearheaded the development of Zalando's large-scale A/B testing platform and a broad program that employed causal machine learning methods to assess incremental impacts, enhancing company-wide decision-making processes.

### **Economics Team Lead (2017-2019)**

I established and led a team that developed Zalando's real-time, machine-learned content recommendation system, significantly expanding the company's advertising capabilities and enriching customer content diversity and quality.

### **Harvard University Institute for Quantitative Social Science (2017)**

#### **Research Fellow**

I led a team that developed statistical software for both academic and industry applications.

### **City, University of London (2015-2018)**

#### **Lecturer in Statistics and International Political Economy**

### **Hertie School of Governance (2013-2017)**

#### **Post-Doctoral Fellow in International Political Economy and Statistics**

### **Yonsei University (2012-2013)**

#### **Lecturer in Statistics and International Political Economy**

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## **Education**

### **London School of Economics (2008-2012)**

#### **MRes/PhD in Political Science (Quantitative Research Methodology)**

*Awarded MRes with Distinction*

### **London School of Economics (2005-2006)**

#### **MSc in Comparative Politics (Research Methodology)**

*Graduated with Distinction*

### **McGill University (2003-2005)**

#### **BA (Honours) in Political Science & Geography**

*Graduated with First Class Honours, in the top 10% of the class*

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## **Publications**

**Book:** Reproducible Research with R and RStudio, Third Edition, 2020. *Chapman & Hall/CRC Press, a division of the Taylor & Francis Group.*

For a full list of my publications and open-source software projects, please visit: [https://github.com/christophergandrud/cv/blob/main/cv\\_pdf/Gandrud\\_cv.pdf](https://github.com/christophergandrud/cv/blob/main/cv_pdf/Gandrud_cv.pdf)

## Other Skills

### Programming and Machine Learning

I am proficient in AWS, Bash, BigQuery, CSS, GCP, Git/GitHub, HTML, JavaScript, Julia, Jupyter, LaTeX, Linux, SQL, Python, Pytorch, R, Shiny web apps, Stan, and Stata.

### Languages

B1 German proficiency. I have also studied Korean, Spanish, and French.