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. Scaled, high leverage teams and products. 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 across Spotify's generative recommendations systems.

- **Connecting Product Metrics to Business Outcomes**: Built company-level 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 engagement and 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 and effectively distributing all Spotify content types.

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 Head (2017-2019)

I established and led a team of economists, engineers, and product managers 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

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

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.