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MSDS 434

Demo Video Reflections

Reflecting back on all that we’ve completed in this class, I can truly say that MSDS434 is one of the most useful courses in the curriculum. The sheer amount of exposure that the projects and weekly demos forces you to familiarize yourself with the cloud technologies that F500 companies and small businesses use to accomplish their everyday task. That being said, Northwestern’s quarter-based schedule demands students to be on top of every topic and task. While this encourages a fast-paced learning environment, I also found it frustrating how quickly we had to move on to a new topic each week. Similarly, new technologies are constantly coming out that help increase the usability of cloud computing and its important to keep curriculum relevant to what people use today. Services outside of the “big3”t that are relevant to data engineers such as Snowflake, Apache Airflow, and Databricks are all relevant to the field and I wish there was some time to explore these technologies.

In terms of the demos we did weekly, I think it would be good to incorporate how to generate data pipelines and format the weekly demonstrations into a single product. While each week has a different scenario; all of these tools we worked with are often used in conjunction with another so I think it is important that the demos we complete each week reflect that. Furthermore, the student Mark Lawley created wonderful system diagrams that help visualize how each tool is being implemented to achieve a successful application. It would be extremely helpful to encourage or even mandate future students to engage in system design so they understand the holistic approach to application development outside of just writing code.

I’d also like to see more content regarding the differences, benefits, and disadvantages of different cloud deployment strategies (i.e. just getting virtual machine vs. Cloud Build/Run). It was great to see how each student had different approaches to tackling the same problem but often times I felt confused as what approach is the most appropriate

Overall, I am extremely happy with the class and it’s outcome. I wish there was more time to cover topics more in depth and explore newer technologies relevant to data engineers.