

STÉPHANE D'ASCOLI

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EXPERIENCE

AI4science Research Fellow

École Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne (EPFL)

Mar 2023 – Present

Lausanne

- Research interests: applying large language models for scientific discovery in the fields of biology, chemistry, neuroscience and mathematics.
- The AI4science program is a 2-year fellowship covering independent research in collaboration with a board of faculty members.

Ph.D. student

École Normale Supérieure (ENS) & Facebook AI Research (FAIR)

Sep 2018 – Sep 2022

Paris

- Research interests: theory of overparametrization and applications of transformers to vision and symbolic mathematics.
- Published 14 papers in top-tier conferences and scientific journals, including 11 as first author (full record on Google Scholar).
- Open-sourced several deep learning codebases, implemented demos and gave an interview with Yannic Kilcher.
- Teacher assistant of Marc Lelarge, Giulio Biroli and Francis Bach for graduate courses at ENS.

AI research intern

Snips.ai

Feb 2020 – Aug 2020

Paris

Developed an open-source deep learning codebase to generate text for data-privacy focused vocal assistants.

Visiting researcher

NASA Goddard & Rochester Institute of Technology

Feb 2017 – Aug 2017

Rochester, NY

Built a large-scale computational simulation of the light coming from a binary black hole and produced an explanatory video.

"Classe préparatoire" examiner

Lycées Henri-4, Saint-Louis, Michelet

Sep 2016 – Sep 2019

Paris

Oral examinations for undergraduate students in top institutions.

EDUCATION

M.Sc. in Theoretical Physics

École Normale Supérieure, Paris

Sep 2016 – Sep 2018

First class honours.

B.Sc. in Physics

École Normale Supérieure, Paris

Sep 2015 – Sep 2016

First class honours.

"Classe préparatoire"

Lycée Thiers, Marseille

Sep 2013 – Sep 2015

Entered ENS Paris (ranked 6th nationwide).

Prior to this, obtained a scientific baccalaureate with first class honours.

SKILLS

Programming: Python Pytorch

C/C++ Mathematica

Tools: Git Unix Slurm

Other: Driving license

LANGUAGES

English (native) ●●●●●

French (native) ●●●●●

Spanish ●●●●●

German ●●●●●

PUBLICATIONS

Conference Proceedings

- d'Ascoli, Stéphane, Kamienny, P.-A., Lample, G., & Charton, F. (2022a). Deep symbolic regression for recurrent sequences. In *ICML*.
- d'Ascoli, Stéphane, Kamienny, P.-A., Lample, G., & Charton, F. (2022b). End-to-end symbolic regression with transformers.
- d'Ascoli, Stéphane, Gabrié, M., Sagun, L., & Biroli, G. (2021). On the interplay between loss function and data structure in classification problems. In *NeurIPS*.
- d'Ascoli, Stéphane, Touvron, H., Leavitt, M., Morcos, A., Biroli, G., & Sagun, L. (2021). Convit: Improving vision transformers with soft convolutional inductive biases. In *ICML*.
- d'Ascoli, Stéphane, Coucke, A., Caltagirone, F., Caulier, A., & Lelarge, M. (2020). Conditioned text generation with transfer for closed-domain dialogue systems. In *SLSP*.
- d'Ascoli, Stéphane, Refinetti, M., Biroli, G., & Krzakala, F. (2020). Double trouble in double descent: Bias and variance (s) in the lazy regime. In *ICML*.
- d'Ascoli, Stéphane, Refinetti, M., Ohana, R., & Goldt, S. (2020). The dynamics of learning with feedback alignment. In *ICML*.
- d'Ascoli, Stéphane, Sagun, L., & Biroli, G. (2020). Triple descent and the two kinds of overfitting: Where and why do they appear? In *NeurIPS*.
- d'Ascoli, Stéphane, Sagun, L., Biroli, G., & Bruna, J. (2019). Finding the needle in the haystack with convolutions: On the benefits of architectural bias. In *NeurIPS*.

Journal Articles

- d'Ascoli, Stéphane, Refinetti, M., Ohana, R., & Goldt, S. (2022). The dynamics of learning with feedback alignment. *J. Phys. A (special issue)*.
- d'Ascoli, Stéphane, Sagun, L., & Biroli, G. (2022). Triple descent and the two kinds of overfitting: Where and why do they appear? *J. Stat. Mech (special issue)*.
- Geiger, M., Jacot, A., Spigler, S., Gabriel, F., Sagun, L., d'Ascoli, Stéphane, ... Wyart, M. (2020). Scaling description of generalization with number of parameters in deep learning. *J. Stat. Mech.*
- Geiger, M., Spigler, S., d'Ascoli, Stéphane, Sagun, L., Baity-Jesi, M., Biroli, G., & Wyart, M. (2019). Jamming transition as a paradigm to understand the loss landscape of deep neural networks. *Phys. Rev. E*.
- Spigler, S., Geiger, M., d'Ascoli, Stéphane, Sagun, L., Biroli, G., & Wyart, M. (2019). A jamming transition from under-to-over-parametrization affects generalization in deep learning. *J. Phys. A*.
- d'Ascoli, Stéphane, Noble, S. C., Bowen, D. B., Campanelli, M., Krolik, J. H., & Mewes, V. (2018). Electromagnetic emission from supermassive binary black holes approaching merger. *The Astrophysical Journal*.

Preprints

- d'Ascoli, Stéphane, Refinetti, M., & Biroli, G. (2022). On the optimal learning rate schedule in non-convex optimization landscapes.
- d'Ascoli, Stéphane, Sagun, L., Biroli, G., & Morcos, A. (2021). Transformed cnns: Recasting pre-trained convolutional layers with self-attention.

Books

- d'Ascoli, Stéphane, & Bouscal, A. (2022). *Voyage au coeur de l'atome*. **First**.
- d'Ascoli, Stéphane, & Jaspers, J.-M. (2022). *Petit livret tricolore sur l'intelligence artificielle*. **First**.
- d'Ascoli, Stéphane, & Touati, A. (2021). *Voyage au coeur de l'espace-temps*. **First**.
- d'Ascoli, Stéphane. (2020a). *Comprendre la révolution de l'intelligence artificielle*. **First**.
- d'Ascoli, Stéphane. (2020b). *L'intelligence artificielle en 5 minutes par jour*. **First**.

COMMUNITY SERVICE

Organizer of the Data Science seminar at ENS Paris [↗](#)

Journals

- Nature Communications
- Nature Machine Intelligence
- Information and Inference
- IEEE Transactions
- Journal of Statistical Mechanics
- Journal of Physics A

Conferences

- ICML (since 2019)
- NeurIPS (since 2019)
- ICLR (since 2020)

AWARDS





- 2015-2019: ENS scholar fellowship: 4-year fellowship covering studies at ENS
- 2019-2020: ENS Ph.D. fellowship: 4-year fellowship covering Ph.D. thesis (only used 1 year)
- 2022: EPFL AI4Science fellowship: 2-year fellowship covering independent postdoctoral research in collaboration with a board of faculty members [↗](#)
- 2022: Special award of the press ("Coup de Cœur des Médias") at the 35th edition of the Roberval Prize, rewarding the book "Voyage au Cœur de l'Atome" [↗](#)

INVITED TALKS




Invited talks in 2019

- Machine Learning Seminar - Snips, Paris
- Inria Summer School on Deep Learning - University Pierre et Marie Curie, Paris
- Theoretical Advances in Deep Learning - Center for Mathematical Sciences, Istanbul
- NeurIPS 2019 - Montreal




Invited talks in 2020

- Youth in High-dimensions Conference - ICTP, Trieste 
- Summer School on Statistical Physics and Machine Learning - Les Houches
- DeepMath Conference - Online 
- ICML 2020 - Online 
- NeurIPS 2020 (Spotlight talk) - Online 

Invited talks in 2021

- Machine Learning Seminar - GResearch, London
- Machine Learning Seminar - Research Institutes of Sweden, Gothenburg
- ICML 2021 - Online 
- NeurIPS 2021 - Online 
- Weights and Biases Reading Group - Online 

Invited talks in 2022

- Yannic Kilcher interview - YouTube 
- Statistical Physics Colloquium - Ecole Normale Supérieure, Paris
- Random Matrix Theory Workshop - Ecole Normale Supérieure, Paris
- PSL intensive weeks - Ecole Normale Supérieure, Paris
- Centre Européen de Calcul Atomique et Moléculaire - EPFL, Lausanne
- London Machine Learning Meetup - London 
- ICML 2022 - Baltimore 

Invited talks in 2023

- CMStatistics 2023 - TU Munich
- Math and Machine Learning Seminar - Max Planck Institute

OUTSIDE WORK

Science outreach

- Wrote several science books [↗](#), all published by First Editions. Some were adapted to audio book and translated abroad.
 - Spoke on radio and TV (France Culture with Etienne Klein [↗](#), France Bleu with Sidonie Bonnet [↗](#), France Info [↗](#), ...).
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Music

- Obtained a final Conservatoire diploma in clarinet, and earned first and second prizes in international competitions.
 - Performed in solo, chamber music and orchestra concerts. See my YouTube channel for some videos [↗](#).
 - Managed an orchestra [↗](#) for a year.
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Travelling on my bicycle

- From September 2022 to March 2023, I cycled through South America, from Quito (Ecuador) to Punta Arenas (Chile). You may find a step-by-step narrative of our trip here [↗](#).
- Along the way, I filmed the most beautiful places we encountered with my drone and created several videos [↗](#).