

Dr. rer. nat. Sebastian Lapuschkin

* December 16, 1986 in Würzburg

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scholar.google.com/citations?user=wpLQuroAAAAJ

Short Bio

Sebastian Lapuschkin is the Head of the Explainable Artificial Intelligence research group at Fraunhofer Heinrich Hertz Institute (HHI) in Berlin.

He received his Ph.D. degree with distinction from the Technische Universität Berlin in 2018 for his pioneering contributions to the field of Explainable Artificial Intelligence (XAI) and interpretable machine learning. From 2007 to 2013 he studied computer science (B. Sc. and M. Sc.) at the Technische Universität Berlin, with a focus on software engineering and machine learning.

Sebastian is the recipient of multiple awards, including the Hugo-Geiger-Prize for outstanding doctoral achievement and the 2020 Pattern Recognition Best Paper Award.

His research has shaped the field of XAI from the very beginning, with contributions to the first wave of XAI such as the popular and widely-used Layer-wise

Relevance Propagation method, as well as timely works influencing the second wave of XAI with additions to the sub-fields of Mechanistic Interpretability, Data Attribution and XAI-based model- and data improvement.

Sebastian is an avid advocate for Open Science, demonstrated by numerous Free Open Source Software toolboxes published with the intent to warrant and facilitate reproducibility in AI research.

Since 2024 he is co-organizing The World Conference on eXplainable Artificial Intelligence and serves as a Topic Editor on “Opportunities and Challenges in Explainable Artificial Intelligence” for the MDPI Open Access Journals.

Further research interests include efficient machine learning and data analysis, as well as data and algorithm visualization.

Professional Experience

Technological University Dublin

DUBLIN, IRELAND

External Scholar

2025 -

at the Centre of eXplainable Artificial Intelligence. The Centre is the first of its kind in the Republic of Ireland and it aims to increase further and synergise cross-centres, college and external research collaboration.

Multidisciplinary Digital Publishing Institute (MDPI)

Topic Editor

2024 - 2026

for “Opportunities and Challenges in Explainable Artificial Intelligence”.
Submission pre-screening, review management and decision handling.

XAI4Science

Organizer

2024 - 2025

of the Workshop “XAI4Science: From Understanding Model Behavior to Discovering New Scientific Knowledge (2025)”, co-located with ICLR 2025 at Singapore EXPO, Singapore.

World Conference on eXplainable Artificial Intelligence

Steering Committee Member

2024 -

for the 3rd XAI World Conference (2025) in Istanbul, Turkey.
Conference and Special Track co-organization.

Programme Committee Chair

2023 - 2024

for the 2nd XAI World Conference (2024) in Valetta, Malta.
Conference and Special Track co-organization.

Fraunhofer Heinrich-Hertz-Institute

BERLIN, GERMANY

Contact Person

2025 -

for the Erasmus Mundus Joint Master in Intelligent Field Robotic Systems (IFRoS) associate partnership of Fraunhofer HHI.

Ethics Committee Member	2023 -
Founding member of the first ethics committee at Fraunhofer HHI.	
Head of Explainable Artificial Intelligence	2021 -
Research Group Leadership and direction of XAI research & applications.	
Tenured Researcher	2019 - 2020
PostDoc research position in the Machine Learning Group at Fraunhofer HHI.	
Research Associate	2014 - 2018
Founding member of the Machine Learning Group at Fraunhofer HHI.	
Technische Universität Berlin	BERLIN, GERMANY
Research Associate	2013 - 2014
Supervision by Prof. Dr. Klaus-Robert Müller.	
Student Research- & Teaching Assistant	2011 - 2013
Research & Teaching assistant to Prof. Dr. Klaus-Robert Müller.	
Student Teaching Assistant	2009 - 2011
Teaching assistant to Prof. Dr. Marc Alexa, Prof. Dr. Odej Kao and Prof. Dr. Oliver Brock.	
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Education	
Technische Universität Berlin	BERLIN, GERMANY
PhD in Machine Learning (<i>summa cum laude</i>)	2018
<i>Date of oral defense: December 19th, 2018.</i>	
<i>Dean's signature on Doctorate Certificate dated January 23rd, 2019.</i>	
Thesis: "Opening the machine learning black box with Layer-wise Relevance Propagation"	
Supervision headed by Prof. Dr. Klaus-Robert Müller.	
Master of Science in Computer Science	2013
Focus on machine learning, computer vision and large scale data analysis.	
Bachelor of Science in Computer Science	2010
Focus on algorithms and software development	
Deutschhaus-Gymnasium	WÜRZBURG, GERMANY
Abitur (pre-university secondary education)	2007
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Teaching	
Teaching of and teaching support for 19 university courses since 2009, including	
"Responsible Artificial Intelligence 1", Technische Universität Berlin	2023 -
"(An Introduction to) Explainable AI", Universitat de Girona / IFRoS	2021 -
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Talks & Lectures	
Over 32 invited talks and individual lectures held since 2017, including	
Decoding AI: How Explainability Unlocks Actionable Insights	2025
dida conference 2025, Berlin, Germany	
XAI as a Tool Beyond Model Understanding – From Heatmaps to Concepts and XAI Automation	2024
CBS CoCoNUT Max Planck Institute for Human Cognitive and Brain Sciences	
Explaining AI with Concept Relevance Propagation	2023
4 th Japanese-American-German Frontiers of Science (JAGFOS) Symposium	
Towards Human-understandable Explanations with XAI 2.0	2022
AI4Good webinar series of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU)	
Towards Actionable XAI	2022
International Artificial Intelligence Doctoral Academy	
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Third-Party Funded Research Projects

7 third-party funded research projects acquired and managed since 2018, including

ACHILLES Human-Centred Machine Learning: Lighter, Clearer, Safer Funded with 8.2MM€ by the European Union	2024 - 2028
TEMA Trusted Extremely Precise Mapping and Prediction for Emergency Management Funded with 11.3MM€ by the European Union	2022 - 2026
iToBoS Intelligent Total Body Scanner Funded with 11.7MM€ by the European Union	2021 - 2025

Honors & Awards

Machine Learning and the Physical Sciences Reproducibility Badge	2024
Stanford Top 2% Scientist Worldwide*	2021 - 2023
Best Short Paper Award	2023
Pattern Recognition Best Paper Award and Pattern Recognition Medal	2020
Hugo-Geiger-Prize (1st place)	2019
Freunde des HHI Nachwuchspreis	2019
ERCIM Cor van Baayen Award (finalist)	2019
Best Paper Award	2016

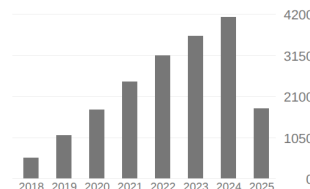
Patents

Attention Head Functionalities in Machine Learning Models	2025
A Concept Representation of a Machine Learning Model	2024
Relevance Score Assignment dealing with an Attention Module and Applications thereof	2024
Analyzing an Inference of a Machine Learning Predictor	2023
Method and System for Simulating an Optical Image of a Photonic and/or Electronic Device	2022
Pruning and/or Quantizing Machine Learning Predictors	2020
Relevance Score Assignment for Artificial Neural Networks	2016

Publications

Summary of Scientific Impact

	All	Since 2020
# Publications	91	71
# Citations	19175	17028
h-index	35	35
i10-index	56	55



per Google Scholar, retrieved on June 17th, 2025.

Selected Publications

Theoretical & Methodological Contributions to XAI

1. Achtabat, Hatefi, Dreyer, Jain, Wiegand, **Lapuschkin**, Samek (2024).
“AttnLRP: Attention-Aware Layer-wise Relevance Propagation for Transformers”.
In: *Proceedings of the 41st International Conference on Machine Learning (ICML)* 135–168.
In this paper we adapt the popular LRP method to contemporary Transformer architectures, yielding state-of-the-art explanation quality at exceptional computational efficiency. This achievement enables the analysis of the reasoning processes of Vision Transformers and LLMs in real time, eg. in chat bot applications.

2. Achtabat, Dreyer, Eisenbraun, Bosse, Wiegand, Samek and **Lapuschkin** (2023).
 “From attribution maps to human-understandable explanations through Concept Relevance Propagation”.
 In: *Nature Machine Intelligence* 5(9):1006–1019.
A paper introducing the second generation of Explainable Artificial Intelligence with human-readable and abstract concept-based explanations.
3. Pahde, Dreyer, Samek and **Lapuschkin** (2023).
 “Reveal to Revise: An Explainable AI Life Cycle for Iterative Bias Correction of Deep Models”.
 In: *Proceedings of the International Conference on Medical Image Computing and Computer-Assisted Intervention* 596–606.
This paper is dedicated to the incorporation of XAI as a standard component into the life cycle of Artificial Intelligence systems, with the intent to improve performance, reliability, and safety of AI.
4. Hedström, Weber, Krakowczyk, Bareeva, Motzkus, Samek, **Lapuschkin** and Höhne (2023).
 “Quantus: An Explainable AI Toolkit for Responsible Evaluation of Neural Network Explanations and Beyond”.
 In: *Journal of Machine Learning Research* 24(34):1–11.
In this paper we present the Quantus toolkit, the first-ever comprehensive XAI evaluation toolkit, constituting a well-organized collection of metrics and tutorials for evaluating explainable models, driven by community contributions.
5. Montavon, **Lapuschkin**, Binder, Samek and Müller (2017).
 “Explaining NonLinear Classification Decisions with Deep Taylor Decomposition”.
 In: *Pattern Recognition* 65:211–222.
A paper discussing the mathematical foundation of LRP and its properties. Pattern Recognition Best Paper Award and Pattern Recognition Medal winner of 2020.
6. **Bach**, Binder, Montavon, Klauschen, Müller and Samek (2015).
 “On Pixel-wise Explanations for Non-Linear Classifier Decisions by Layer-wise Relevance Propagation”.
 In: *PLoS ONE* 10(7):e0130140.
A very influential and early work on local XAI, introducing the widely used Layer-wise Relevance Propagation method. This work has so far received over 5400 citations as counted by Google Scholar.

Applications of XAI

7. Anders, Weber, Neumann, Samek, Müller and **Lapuschkin** (2022).
 “Finding and Removing Clever Hans: Using Explanation Methods to Debug and Improve Deep Models”.
 In: *Information Fusion* 77:261–295.
The authors’ first work in a series dedicated to the exploitation of knowledge derived from XAI for the improvement of performance and robustness of AI systems.
8. Yeom, Seegerer, **Lapuschkin**, Binder, Wiedemann, Müller and Samek (2021).
 “Pruning by Explaining: A Novel Criterion for Deep Neural Network Pruning”.
 In: *Pattern Recognition* 115:107899.
In this paper we leverage information about the importance of latent neural network structures obtained through XAI, in order to drastically reduce over-parameterization by identifying and removing non-critical components, resulting in up to 95% smaller models without loss of performance, and thus strong gains in energy and run time efficiency.
9. Horst, **Lapuschkin**, Samek, Müller and Schöllhorn (2019).
 “Explaining the Unique Nature of Individual Gait Patterns with Deep Learning”.
 In: *Scientific Reports* 9:2391.
This paper is representative of many, in which we leverage techniques from XAI in domains where model transparency is critical, enabling for the first time the application of more powerful non-linear predictors beyond traditional linear systems in a feasible manner.
10. **Lapuschkin**, Wäldchen, Binder, Montavon, Samek and Müller (2019).
 “Unmasking Clever Hans Predictors and Assessing what Machines Really Learn”.
 In: *Nature Communications* 10:1069.
One of the first papers to rigorously perform model- and data analysis through the lens of XAI, adding a voice of caution to the ongoing excitement about machine intelligence.
11. **Lapuschkin**, Binder, Montavon, Müller and Samek (2016).
 “Analyzing Classifiers: Fisher Vectors and Deep Neural Networks”.
 In: *Proceedings of the IEEE Conference on Computer Vision and Pattern Recognition (CVPR)* 2016:2912–2920.
This is the first paper to use XAI to analyze and document differences in the behavior of state of the art predictors from several epochs of AI, in turn illuminating their use of yet unknown confounding features embedded in widely used computer vision benchmark datasets, critically scrutinizing previous key results from AI research.