

Through the Weekly Demos, I demonstrated basic cloud virtual machine deployments on both GCP and AWS. My prior experience with AWS, combined with the fact that GCP is unavailable in my industry due to stringent cybersecurity requirements, meant I naturally gravitated toward AWS. The course didn't present any compelling reasons to change this preference, though I found it interesting to see many peers deploying primarily on GCP. Given that GCP expertise is rare in my field, I now feel uniquely positioned to discuss GCP-based infrastructures compared to the more common Azure and AWS solutions used in our projects.

The technology we used in the class was mostly already familiar to me, at least on the AWS side of things. I was already familiar with S3, EC2, Github, and Docker, but I was almost wholly unfamiliar with the GCP side of things as well as the AutoML offerings from AWS. Like GCP, I think I benefitted from exposure to AutoML in the sense that I can see its use cases and appreciate why and how to use it, but I don't think I was persuaded to incorporate it within my current workflow for my career - the use cases for AutoML and my preferences for my own tech stack don't have much in common with each other, since I tend to greatly value explainability and low operational costs, both of which are a weakness to some extent of the tech. I do, however, appreciate its use in prototyping and benchmarking models for comparison against more explainable ones prepared for implementation in production.

As far as improvements or updates go, around week 5 I fell quite a bit behind in both the weekly demonstrations and the final project. Feedback was critical in enabling me to catch up and limit the scope of my work to be more in line with the expectations of the class rather than the expectations I had for myself within the context of how I work professionally.

The main challenge was the breadth of material covered in just ten weeks—many of these technologies could easily justify their own dedicated courses. I would have liked to see demonstrations of additional tools I use professionally, such as AWS SMS, SQS (and their GCP equivalents), Kubernetes, ArgoCD, Apache Airflow, or RabbitMQ. A stronger focus on AWS or GCP professional certifications would also have been beneficial, though I recognize the difficulty of fitting such depth into a single course.

Overall, though, I've appreciated this class for what I believe it's intended to be - a familiarization exercise for a variety of ubiquitous tools within industry, enough so that a student may demonstrate some basic degree of understanding and implementation for these technologies and continue their own professional training with the tools they've identified as being most appropriate for their own specific use cases. I certainly was exposed to some I've never used and may never have learned about, and was able to improve my understanding of several I already was familiar with.