

Florian Leitner, PhD

AI & Machine Learning Engineer

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PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY

Accomplished AI & ML engineer with 7 years of experience leading commercial NLP projects & teams, turning text and data into business value across multiple domains. Deep expertise in large language models, semantic retrieval, real-time inference, and evaluation frameworks, underpinned by a PhD in BioNLP and internationally cited research.

Career highlights: Head of Machine Learning at a global financial analytics company, CTO of a financial news startup, PhD in molecular biology/bioinformatics, first-author publication in Nature Biotechnology.

KEY SKILLS & EXPERTISE

- * Intent-based leadership (David Marquet)
- * Coaching through mutual learning (Roger Schwarz)
- * Scientific management: Toyota Kata (Mike Rother)
- ✓ ML Tooling: TensorFlow, PyTorch, SciKit-Learn, Huggingface, Unsloth
- ✓ AI Agents: LangChain/Graph, Claude Code, GH Copilot, Pydantic AI
- ✓ Data Analytics: Databricks, Pandas, SciPy, Statsmodels, Seaborn
- ✓ MLOps & Infra: LangFuse, MLFlow, vLLM
- ✓ DataOps: Elasticsearch, Lucene, Kafka, Spark
- ✓ AWS (incl. SageMaker), Azure (incl. AI Foundry)
- ✓ DevOps: GitHub, Docker, Terraform, Kubernetes, Datadog, PagerDuty
- ✓ Python, TypeScript/JS, Java/Scala/JVM, Go

PROFESSIONAL CAREER

ION Analytics

Head Of Machine Learning — Madrid, ES & London, UK

May 2021 — Present

- ▶ Led and coached multiple cross-functional Machine Learning and Data Engineering teams delivering NLP, search and generative AI systems supporting global capital markets workflows across IPO, M&A and credit products.
- ▶ Defined, executed, and governed the organisation's AI/LLM technical roadmap, aligning model development, infrastructure and product priorities with commercial objectives.
- ▶ Designed and deployed agentic AI workflows automating document ingestion, entity resolution and structured data generation at production scale, achieving human-level performance in structured extraction accuracy.
- ▶ Standardised value stream mapping across critical delivery pipelines, improving prioritisation clarity and execution predictability for AI automation.
- ▶ Architected a natural language query capability over complex financial datasets achieving sub-100ms latency while significantly improving product accessibility and client adoption.
- ▶ Developed the key capability of agentic workflows to collect financial documents and convert them to data: identifying and linking the financial entities.

Engineering Manager — Remote (New York, USA & London, UK)

Sep 2019 Sep — Apr 2021

- ▶ Led a team of 10 engineers during post-acquisition integration following Selerity's acquisition by ION Analytics.
- ▶ Delivered core search capabilities for a flagship enterprise platform serving capital markets participants.
- ▶ Re-architected search using natural language retrieval over Elasticsearch, accelerating user access to relevant financial intelligence.
- ▶ Directed optimisation of a real-time content recommendation engine, reducing infrastructure footprint and delivering annual cost savings exceeding \$100k.
- ▶ Established performance management and mentoring frameworks to elevate technical standards and support career progression.

Selerity Inc.

Chief Technology Officer — Remote (New York, USA)

May 2018 — Aug 2019

- ▶ Led a distributed engineering team of 25 people through the successful acquisition by ION.
- ▶ Owned end-to-end low-latency stream processing architecture across multilingual NLP pipelines processing news, research and financial communication streams.
- ▶ Directed development of latency-sensitive BERT-based topic classification systems supporting trading and risk workflows.
- ▶ Balanced product velocity with architectural robustness during high-growth scaling phase culminating in successful acquisition by ION Analytics.

Senior Data Scientist, Selerity Inc. — Remote (New York, USA)

Sep 2015 — Apr 2018

- ▶ Designed and improved large-scale information extraction systems for financial entities across multilingual streaming data.
- ▶ Led engineering of a real-time chat analytics engine supporting capital markets decision-making.
- ▶ Enhanced low-latency message streaming infrastructure, reducing system load and improving processing reliability.
- ▶ Implemented continuous model evaluation practices to strengthen classification performance and robustness.

Early Career

Data Catalytics SL: Data Science Consultant — Madrid, Spain

Sep 2015 — Feb 2018

CSO Lanifex: IT Consultant — Vienna, Austria

Mar 2003 — Aug 2003

HITS: Bioinformatician — Heidelberg, Germany & Remote

Jul 2002 — Jun 2003

Novartis: Bioinformatics Intern — Vienna, Austria

Aug 2001 — Jun 2002

ACADEMIC CAREER

IE University, Faculty Member, Instructor, Machine Learning and AI — Madrid, Spain

2018-2020

Adv. Statistics and Data Mining Summer School, Instructor, Statistical NLP — Madrid, Spain

2014-2019

Technical University of Madrid (UPM), Juan de la Cierva fellow, — Madrid, Spain

2014-2015

Span. Nat. Cancer Research Centre (CNIO), Post-doctoral Fellow — Madrid, Spain

2012-2014

Spanish Nation Cancer Research Centre (CNIO), PhD Student — Madrid, Spain

2006-2012

Institute for Molecular Pathology, Master Student — Vienna, Austria

2003-2006

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Academic Contributions

20 peer-reviewed journal articles, 6 as first author; h-index: 19

(scholar.google.com/citations?user=EkXLlysAAAAJ)

10 conference proceedings (talks) • 2 book chapters

Education

PhD, Bioinformatics (with distinction) — Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, 2012

MSc, Molecular Biology — Vienna University, 2006

Languages

German (native speaker), English (native speaker), Spanish (fluent)