My Internship Experience

School of Informatics, PGR Induction Talks

Steven Kleinegesesse
Overview

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About Me — Steven Kleinegesesse

- 3rd year PhD student (3 months to go!)
  - Supervised by Michael Gutmann
- Part of the CDT in Data Science
- Research focus is on probabilistic ML
  - ML-based Bayesian experimental design
- Have done a lot of teaching support
  - Only TA for IAML this semester
- Have recently done an internship at Spotify
Why do an internship?

- Quite common in Computer Science / ML
- Many reasons for this:
  - Develop your research and communication skills
  - Improve your CV and make connections
  - Find out whether or not industry is for you
  - Take a break from your usual PhD research
  - Earn some money on the side (can fund a part of your PhD)
  - Potentially publish at big conferences
- Usually done in summer (which is a relatively quite time of the PhD)
The Application Process @Spotify

● I applied through an official summer internship call
  ○ 50k+ applications and around ~60 hires in EMEA (3 in my lab)
  ○ Roles ranging from Product Managers, Artist Relations, Designers, Data Scientists, RE, RS, ...

● Application Process:
  ○ Sent off a CV and Cover Letter in November
  ○ Two interviews in January with Senior Research Scientists (depends on the lab)
  ○ Confirmation in January!

● Also possible to apply off-cycle, although less common for Big Tech
The Interview Process @Spotify

- I did not have any cultural interviews
  - No “Tell me about yourself…” questions
- Some processes may involve cultural + coding + discussion parts
- Both of my interviews were in-depth discussions about certain areas
  - One was focussed on Bayesian / probabilistic machine learning
  - The other one was focussed on causal machine learning
- Large focus was on my PhD thesis and them testing out my limits
- The rest was spent on discussing potential projects
  - + showing your interest and that you can collaborate / bounce ideas off each other
Summer project @ Spotify:

Improving model selection for production systems via automated online experimentation

- Think: A/B tests but more scalable and target
- Focus is on extending a recent Spotify paper published at NeurIPS ’20
Personal Impression / Experience

- Loved the experience and working within my team
  - People were supportive and engaging
  - Helped me decide to go into industry vs academia
- Plenty of social events, despite the global pandemic
  - Socials every week, including “Fikas” every day
  - Meet-up with interns every week to chat and catch-up
- Lots of meetings to discuss ideas and help you stay on track
  - There are many more seminars, product talks, etc.
  - Also means that the experience is usually quite intense
Thank you! Any questions?

Contact Details
Email: steven.kleinegesse@ed.ac.uk
Website: https://stevenkleinegesse.github.io
→ Or send me a message on MS Teams!