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# VISIONEN

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March 2023



## Après-Ski

Magazin des Vereins der Informatik Studierenden an der ETH Zürich (VIS)

Switzerland's largest academic IT recruiting fair

# KONTAKTPARTY 2023

🕒 Saturday, March 11th 2023, 11am-5pm

📍 Mensa Polyterrasse, Einstein, Zweisstein

## Editorial

Liebe Leserinnen und Leser,

ChatGPT ist unser Untergang. Zumindest, wenn man den diversen Berichten Glauben schenken mag, die in dem System mal den Untergang der Allgemeinbildung, mal den Verfall sämtlicher Jobs sehen. War ich anfänglich noch schwer beeindruckt, so kann ich dieser Erzählung jedoch mittlerweile nicht mehr folgen. Der zugespitzte Satz des Philosophen Richard David Precht «Wer so schlecht ist, dass er von ChatGPT abgelöst werden könnte, den braucht's auch nicht» hallte nach dem Hören noch einige Stunden in mir nach. Es gibt genügend Beispiele für Anwendungsfälle, in denen ein solches Large-Language-Model einfach nicht ausreicht, um eine ernstzunehmende Konkurrenz zu Menschen darzustellen.

Diese Erkenntnis ist ein Grund zum Feiern, womit wir beim Thema der Ausgabe wären. Freut euch auf einen Ausschnitt aus der VSETH-Geschichte, Tipps fürs Skifahren und den Kater nach dem Après-Ski. Und für alle Erstis haben wir einen sehr lesenswerten Artikel mit Denkanstößen, falls die Basisprüfung doch nicht so erfolgreich war, wie erhofft.

Ich wünsche euch einen guten Start in das Frühjahrssemester und viel Spass beim Feiern und Lesen dieser Ausgabe!

Tobias Scheithauer



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# Präsikolumne

THOUGHTS OF A SOON TO BE FILZ

## Normalizing Positive Feedback: Overcoming the Tendency to Criticize and embracing the Power of Encouragement

A new semester is approaching, and after around 2.5 years, it's time for me to say good-bye to my position as a VIS board member. As that nears, I can't help but think about how lucky we are as students in our department.

The fact that we have the luxury of discussing "minor" issues and can plan on improving the overall quality of the student's life shows that the department tries and listens to us. One might only hear criticism, which stems mainly from the fact that people usually do not explicitly mention things that are good as they are. This shouldn't distract us, however, from giving positive feedback. As a student, I rarely felt the urge to say thank you or even sit down and write what made a lecture or a tutoring session that good. We often think they don't care, but from my contact with professors, I could see how much it meant to them. Golden Owls, and especially the CS Award, are things professors hold with pride. These gain value by being limited in number, contrary to individual feedback. So let's make an effort to also leave positive comments and show some appreciation now and then, not just in our academic life but in all aspects of our interactions with others.

## Connecting with Purpose: Overcoming Communication Challenges

A few weeks before writing this, Flo (Vice), Julia (HoPo), and I met with parts of the department's communication team. Funnily enough, the meeting, whose topic was connecting and discussing communication problems, started with a difficulty in communication. Both people from the other party are called Sandra. After said initial challenges and having a look at the fabulous new D-INFK bag, we went on to discuss our shared future. Without going too much into the details, I hope everyone can see VIS being more present in D-INFK's READ.ME and on the large CAB info screen.

## Après-Ski-VIS

I don't have much experience with Après-ski as I'm more of a cross-country skier or snowshoe hiker, so I have to write about something I know, VIS. I am confident that my successors will do great, and I'm looking forward to seeing all the projects that are in the pipeline becoming a reality. I, of course, won't entirely disappear. Else, I wouldn't fulfill the expectations of my promotion to a Filz. Yet it feels somewhat weird knowing that I'll suddenly gain more free time.

Enjoy your student life, and don't forget to visit our anniversary in 2024.

With regards  
Jason



*Jason on skis a long time ago*

This is the usual report of what the HoPo did, have fun!

## HS22 HoPo in review

LOOKS LIKE SOMEONE WAS TOO BUSY WITH "HOCHSCHULPOLITIK" TO PROVIDE A BYLINE

At the beginning of the semester, we had the semesterly HoPo-Stamm. A lot of otherwise non-HoPo people attended the event, and we got some interesting and productive insights into the following topics: Bachelor Graduation, Diversity Taskforce, Mental Health, CS Library at CAB / Study Places and Grade Statistics. Some results of these insights and more will be discussed below.

At the HoPo-Stamm we first discussed discussed how a Bachelor Graduation for D-INFK should look like. What was deemed as most important was that the event should look and feel official, meaning that the invitation would have to come from the department and that there should be some professors or people from the department involved too. To ensure this, we met with the department, which is happy to fund the event and also have some professors attend.

The newly founded Diversity Taskforce launched a questionnaire towards the end of the semester asking how VIS and the department are perceived when it comes to diversity and safety. These results are now being analysed to improve safety at events.

Ever since lectures have gone back to being in-person instead of online, lecture recordings have been a topic of major discussion, not only for students but also for professors and naturally the HoPoKo. While most students would have preferred for the standard of lectures being recorded to be upheld even

*pictured below:  
Julia overlooking the HoPo taskforces*



after coming back to university, there are many reasons why more and more courses are no longer recorded. Unfortunately, the study committee does not intend to honor our request of recommending the continuation of lecture recordings in general, but we did agree that there should be a way for students to catch up if they had missed a lecture due to sickness or other unforeseen events.

In a later meeting with Prof. Su, he did however agree to write an email to all lecturers in D-INFK to clarify that lecture recordings are not forbidden, but rather encouraged. Furthermore, he asks all lecturers who don't record lectures to either provide a detailed script or provide lecture recordings of previous years.

Moreover, we continued to oversee the Focus Groups in "Einführung in die Programmierung" and "Algorithmen und Datenstrukturen" and will continue to do so for next semester's courses.

Last but not least we helped VSETH found their own AG HoPo which is going to be organised very similarly to our HoPoKo and as always we are overrepresented in it.

If you feel like you want to change something at ETH about the everyday student live, then attend our meetings or join the committee. You can also reach us anytime (if we do not have exams ourselves) at [hopo@vis.ethz.ch](mailto:hopo@vis.ethz.ch).

Da ich mich meistens etwas ausgefallener kleide, werde ich des Öfteren auf einige meiner Kleidungsstücke angesprochen. Jedoch gibt es kein Item, worauf ich so oft angesprochen werde, wie dieses eine Ding, das mir am Hals hängt (siehe Bild). In diesem Artikel werde ich dieses Rätsel lösen.

#### Was könnte es sein?

Oft werde ich nicht nur gefragt, sondern es werden regelrecht Theorien aufgestellt, was es denn sein könnte. Die Meisten kommen zum Schluss, dass es ein Hörgerät sein müsste. Allerdings gibt es auch exotischere Theorien. Jemand hatte mal gedacht, es sei ein elektrisches Muskelstimulationsgerät, um meine Aufmerksamkeitsspanne zu erhöhen. Auch wenn ich manchmal das Gefühl habe, dass meine Aufmerksamkeitsspanne einem TikTok-Zoomer Kind ähnelt, hat diese Theorie weit gefehlt. Die Antwort ist viel banaler. Es ist ein Kopfhörer.

#### Was ist es?

Es sind natürlich keine regulären Kopfhörer, sie gehen ja auch nicht ins, sondern ums Ohr. Der Ton wird hier über den Schädelknochen direkt auf das Innenohr übertragen. So nimmt man, während man sich beschallen lässt, gleichzeitig noch Umgebungsgeräusche wahr.

## Nein, das ist kein Hörgerät

CLEMENS BACHMANN - LISTENER OF MUSIC, CONSUMER OF PODCASTS

#### Warum nutze ich es?

Doch warum benutze ich nicht einfach In- oder Over-Ear Kopfhörer, so wie "normale Menschen"? Um ehrlich zu sein, gibt es tatsächlich viele Gründe, die gegen Bone-Conducting Kopfhörer sprechen. Man muss hier auf die deutlich schlechtere Tonqualität verweisen. Und warum soll man überhaupt Umgebungsgeräusche wahrnehmen? Wenn man sich neue Kopfhörermodelle ansieht, muss man feststellen, dass die Tendenz eher gegensätzlich ist. Produzenten statt Neuheiten mit Noise-Cancelling aus, um eben diese Geräusche zu unterdrücken. An sich bin ich von Noise-Cancelling auch begeistert, aber seit dem Song "079" sollte uns allen bewusst sein, dass im Strassenverkehr viele Gefahren lauern. Trams können fast nicht bremsen und AutofahrerInnen sind in Zürich eh eine Zumutung. Drum ist es, wenn man nicht gerade mit einem Vorstadtpanzer unterwegs ist, doch ratsam, etwas von der Umgebung mitzubekommen. Ich persönlich komme oft



*Das Einhorn in der Brusttasche ist nicht das Kleidungsstück, auf das ich am meisten angesprochen wurde.*

mit dem Rad an die ETH und so kann ich mir auf dem Weg gut Podcasts anhören. Hierbei geht es ja mehr um den Inhalt als die Tonqualität. Da ich ein wasserdichtes Modell nutze, habe ich es sogar schon zum Schwimmen getragen und auch dafür ist es geeignet. Mein Urteil nach etwa einem Jahr Nutzung ist, dass sie eine gute Ergänzung zu normalen Kopfhörern sind, diese aber nicht ersetzen. Zumindest, wenn man marginale Ansprüche an die Tonqualität hat.

# VSETH Mountain House

NILS - JENSEN

**VSETH once owned a Mountain-House near Klosters. How this came to be, what it was used for and why it was sold.**

After World War II, VSETH wanted to offer students cheap vacation possibilities in Switzerland. They decided to buy a mountain house (Lagerhaus). The total budget set aside was about CHF 80'000 (about CHF 400'000 today). After some research and long discussions, the decision was made to buy a house in Klosters-Selfranga. The house was bought for CHF 43'000 and the remainder of the set aside money was to be used to renovate the house.

Unfortunately, shortly after buying the house it was realized that the whole roof needed to be replaced. This and other problems with the house led to a cost of close to CHF 200'000 in order to renovate the house. This was a huge financial burden for VSETH, but with help from GEP (today ETH Alumni), they were able to cover the costs.

After renovations, the house offered space for around 150 students and started welcoming students in 1949. It was a great success in winter, with lots of students taking advantage of the cheap accommodation in the mountains. The house was operating year round, and was run by local inhabitants. Sadly, the success of the winter season was overshadowed by the lack of students using the accommodation during the semesters and in

the summer season. For this reason, the decision was made to operate only in the winter season.

In 1959, the house needed to be renovated once more, as a lot of the equipment had reached the end of its lifetime. Inside VSETH there was a big debate whether this was the best way to invest the students' money. It was decided to split off the house into its own Association. In 1972 after further years of difficulties keeping the house financially viable, the decision was made to sell the house for around CHF 550'000 (today CHF 1.5 Mio). The money was used to finance the first StuZ in Zürich, which would house VSETH in the coming decades. Today the House still stands in Klosters-Serneus, as the Chesa Selfranga Hotel.

This excerpt of VSETH-History is adapted from the book "Was Studenten bewegt - 150 Jahre Verband der Studierenden an der ETH" which is available from VSETH.

**Wake up, roll over and feel the room spinning. Sound familiar? We've all been there, the morning after a wild night out. But, fear not young students, for I, an old and wise Boomer (I really have been called a Boomer by fellow students), have some tips and tricks to help prevent and treat those pesky hangovers.**

First things first, let's talk prevention. The key to avoiding a hangover is moderation. I know, I know, easier said than done when the drinks are flowing and the party's just getting started. But trust me, pace yourself. The pitiful beginner you probably are if you are reading this, you should limit yourself to one drink per hour. And don't forget to drink water or other non-alcoholic beverages between drinks. The potential for improvement comes with practice. For example, after years of experience, I know that I can easily order a pint every 23 minutes for 2-3 hours without getting completely hammered afterwards. If the fun takes place at a flunkyball game, in



# Hangover Tips

PASCAL STREBEL - LIVES THE SAYING "NO BEER BEFORE 4 O'CLOCK..." (THAT SOUNDS LIKE SHIT IN ENGLISH) "..., BUT IT'S ME WHO DECIDES WHEN 4 O'CLOCK IS".

a club, or on a ski trip, where you are moving constantly, these intervals can even be shortened. One way or another, you should never forget to eat your mandatory Döner before hitting the bottle (unless you're really into not knowing where or who you are the next morning; every now and then that's still pretty fun). Food can slow down the absorption of alcohol and keep you feeling good all night long.

But let's be real, sometimes things get a little out of hand and the next morning you're paying the price. So, what do you do if you wake up feeling like death? First and foremost, get some rest and sleep. During your upcoming Analysis lecture, you would anyway just copy the lecturer's scribbles from time to time, without understanding what the decorations around this integral symbol are supposed to mean in the first place. And the Indian → who then explains it to you in 4 minutes on YouTube will gladly wait a few more hours for you. Next, drink water. Lots and lots of water. And, eat a healthy meal that includes complex carbohydrates, protein, and healthy

fats to help replenish your body's nutrients. If, like me, you don't have a clue about these food ingredients I've googled together, just try chips; they always work really awesome for me with all their salt. Moreover, if you're a member of that Adderall-Gang anyway, and you're shooting up your nose spray daily, you might as well take an Ibuprofen when you have a bad headache. If, on the other hand, you come from a strong bloodline, you just live with the pain and don't act like such a little pussy. And, last but not least, avoid any more alcohol and caffeine, as they can dehydrate you further and make your symptoms worse. I know, in desperation, a counter beer seems like a good idea, but it has never really worked for me.



Now, I know what you're thinking, "But Mr. Boomer, this all sounds like common sense." And you're right, it is. But, sometimes in the heat of the moment, common sense goes out the window. So, before you go out and party like it's 1999 (which, let's be real, was a much better year), keep these tips in mind. And here's the thing, if you can drink a lot and still get up early the next morning without grumbling, you're on the right track! It means you're young, you're healthy and you can handle the party and the next day's work. Let's all drink responsibly and avoid those pesky hangovers.

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# Another Spring Semester another Kontaktparty

**Let's not bore you with what the Kontaktparty is. Or do you in fact not know?<sup>1</sup>**

**FIONI - WILL HELP AT AND VISIT THE KONTAKTPARTY LIKE ANY GOOD COMPUTER SCIENCE STUDENT SHOULD.**

While writing this article, the days were quite sunny, which are is beneficial for mental health, while that dark unmotivated days seem far away. Also, with the new semester, new motivation is coming, right? New energy? New exciting plans and projects and adventures? So it might seem like there's enough motivation and inspiration here already, but there's no such thing as too much motivation and inspiration, because harder days will come and those family gatherings were you will be asked what you can work as after your studies will come, so let's prepare for those

Visiting the Kontaktparty will give you new inspiration and outlooks on your life after your studies or possibilities for projects and internships during your studies. See the Computer Science of the "real world" and lose your fear of speaking to companies.

And as you are coming anyway, you can as well just sign up for a helperslot, because the Kontaktparty is not only free, it indirectly provides you with all that coffee and beer you have been and will be drinking for free in the common room.

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[1] <https://vis.ethz.ch/de/visionen/archive/issue/visionen-2021-6/>

**Scroll to page 17 of the pdf to read a better article on what the Kontaktparty is.**



Dem gemeinen Bezieher dieses Magazins könnte, sofern der Tinte des Autoren gerecht, die postmoderne Ouvertüre des german-balearischen Insularphänomen Ballermann bereits aus anderer Primärliteratur wie dem Studium von Akustikverhalten nach allfälligem Wintersport, im Volksmunde auch als *Après-Ski* bekannt, oder gar manch festlicher Garnitur der *Società Academicas* des homo fabricatio machina zu Zürich ein wohlgenährtes Thema sein. Sei dies nicht der Fall, so sollen den Verzagten mit den angehenden Zeilen Lektion in Krauses Opus magnum liefern.

Das Libretto "Geh mal Bier hol'n" entstammt der Tinte des in der aus den Gefilden der Weimarer Republik entstandenen Bastion Niedersachsen wohnhaften Lyrikers Mickie Krause. Dessen Œuvre vor dem im Jahre **MMXVI** nach der Naissance Christi erschienenen Werke dieser Einordnung umspannt zahlreiche Opera wie "Biste braun, kriegste Frau", oder "Jan Pillemann Otze" umspannt. Ein besonderes Augenmerk sei hierbei auf die Intention des besagten Figaros gelegt, der, trotz seiner gewieften Lyrik und Melodie, weder ein Fuss in ein Kolleg jenseits der sekundären Stufe gesetzt hat, noch der Kunst des Notenlesens mächtig ist.

## “Geh mal Bier hol’n”, Libretto von Mickie Krause

EINE EINORDNUNG VON FABIAN RUCKSTUHL

### Textanalyse:

Die Zeilen 1 bis 4, eines Intros ähnlich, bestehen aus Aufforderungen Krauses an eine zuerst unbekannte Zweitpartei, die sich im Kontexte des weiteren Verlaufes als Chor zu verstehen geben, ihm Paroli in Form nach dessen Aufforderung bieten sollen. Der abschliesslich dem männlichen Geschlechte angehörende Chor vollführt wie ihm geheissen in beinahe marzialisch, militärischer Form.

Die dabei diktierten Chiffren formen das Akronym GMBH. Die Deutung dieses Akronyms kann vielseitig ausgelegt werden. Die naheiegendste ist zweifelsohne die titelgebende Aufforderung "Geh mal Bier hol'n". Doch auch die in anderem Kontexte übliche Verwendung als "Gesellschaft mit beschränkter Haftung" ist schlüssig. Möchte uns Krause mit dieser Zweideutigkeit auf den Umstand hinweisen, dass der aus gemeinen Trinkern bestehenden Gesellschaft wohl auch Fehler unterlaufen, die sie aufgrund des menschlichen Lasters des Alkoholkonsums begehen, deren Reactio sie selbst kaum Verantwortung tragen werden? Ist dies vielleicht sogar ein Kommentar Krauses auf die Spiritusindustrie, die, trotz des zahlreichen Dahinscheidens ihres Klientels, keine Konsequenz und Missgunst der Gesellschaft, deren Laster sie sich bemächtigt, trägt? Eine genaue Deutung ist auch unter Berücksichtigung der restlichen Zeilen nicht endgültig praktikabel.

Anschliessend an das Intro folgt ganz im spätbarocken Stile unmittelbar der Refrain. "Geh mal Bier hol'n, du wirst schon wieder hässlich", eine Andeutung des lyrischen Ichs an den bereits erwähnten Verfall aufgrund des menschlichen Lasters? Plausibel, denn in den nächsten zwei Zeilen "Ein, zwei Bier und du bist wieder schön", liefert uns der Autor nicht nur wiederum eine Anekdote auf das menschliche Laster, sondern auch einen klaren Selbstbezug. Denn so wird aus dem unpersönlichen Imperativ "Geh.", ein persönlicher Direktbezug "Du wirst., Du bist". Beschreibt uns der Autor hier seine persönliche Situation? →

Die Zeilen 10 bis 14 gipfeln die Selbstoffenbarung des Autoren kathartisch mit den Worten "Dass du hässlich bist, das muss ja nicht sein". Eine im generellen Kontexte dreiste Aufforderung, doch lässt es uns erleben, wie es dem lyrischen Ich ergeht: Eine Situation in welcher Scham bereits die Daseinsberechtigung verloren hat und sich dem Laster bereits vollends hingegeben wird.

Die erste Strophe schildert in einer frivolen, leicht verspielten Art, eine möglicherweise imaginäre Konversation des lyrischen Ichs mit dem ihm Vertrauten, salopp "Olle" genannt. Interessant ist hier die Wahl der dritten Person. Kann dies eine Anekdote auf die gesellschaftliche Entfremdung sein? Auch die Wahl des Settings liefert Diskussion: Das altbekannte übliche, das postmaterialistische panem et circenses, die konzentrierte Form des menschlichen Ergötzens Leistung anderer, in bewertender Form gebackene Konsteration von "Experten" in einer Runde gleich Denker. Ein klarer Bezug auf den Homo Ludens, der seinen simplen Gelüsten, dem "Dolce Vita" gleichen Traum erpicht. Doch die Realität ist nicht fern: Denn im Symbole der Gemahlin entspringt das persönliche Laster und die Unzufriedenheit, die sich in einem erneuten Refrain offenbart.

Wo die erste Strophe uns Einblick in den Alltag des lyrischen Ichs liefert, so treibt es den Protagonisten in der zweiten Strophe hinüber zum Fremden. In ähnlich frivoler Art erzählt der Autor von hedonistischen Zwängen und dass selbst in diesen allzu persönlichen Situationen der gesellschaftliche Drang →

zur Last kaum genüge Getan werden kann. Denn "So sagt der Hans zur Rosi, Tu mir mal n' Gefalln", die Erkenntnis, dass nicht nur das lyrische Ich dem Laster erlegen ist, sondern dass dies wohl doch eine postmoderne Situation der Gesellschaft ist. Eine Melange aus Leben können und Leben müssen. Stets die Konsequenzen zu kennen, aber dem Vakuum nicht entfliehen zu können.

Kontroverse liefert Krause in Zeile 49 bis 51. Dem Aufruf "Und jetzt auf Holländisch", dem mit einem Echo, das eindeutig nicht der des Aufrufs geforderten Eigenschaft entspricht, Paroli geboten wird, kann vielerlei Bedeutung zugesprochen werden: Entflieht dem lyrischen Ich gar jegliche Kontrolle über das Dasein? Diese These stützt der Umstand, dass sich die Antwort des Chores, dessen letzter Auftritt im Intro stattfand, in keiner klaren Form äußert: "Schalalala...". Verliert das lyrische Ich hier jeglichen Bezug auf das Menschsein und gibt sich, ganz im Stile eines Dorian Gray, dem übermenschlichen Laster hin? Klar zu sagen ist das nicht, denn die letzte Wiederholung des Refrains liefert keine neue Information, er ist de facto sogar identisch wie jeder andere Refrain bis anhin. Die finale Deutung der Zeilen 49 bis 51 bleibt wohl subjektiv.

#### Fazit:

Der Librettist Mickie Krause wagt in seinem Opus "Geh mal Bier hol'n" eine Melange aus tiefgründiger Selbstexploration und hedonistischen Eskapaden. Eine klare Begründung bleibt indessen aus. Dem anfänglichen Hinweis hin, es könne sich um eine Reaktion des gesellschaftlichen Drangs hin zu lasterreichen Leben handeln, stellt sich eine Schilderung eines tief persönlichen Gegenmonopols entgegen und liefert Einblicke in das persönliche Selbstbilde des lyrischen Ichs, das in seiner Frivolität aus dem Erlebten schöpft und kommentiert. Ein lyrisches Meisterwerk von Mickie Krause, dem wohl nach Goethe bedeutsamsten Librettisten des deutschen Sprachkosmos.

©

# Après Ski: I don't understand

LOÏC - IS NEVER VOLUNTARILY IN APRÈS SKI

#### About a doctoral thesis, Ischgl and the positive things about après ski.

"Après Ski" or misunderstood by some as "Avant la gueule de bois" does not enjoy great renown. This is not bashing, but more of a reckoning with the lie of après ski. Often, it is not about skiing, but rather about human interaction, with or without cohabitation, as well as consuming alcoholic drinks and forgetting about life. And apparently, (former) PhDs do this too: for example, Georges Siddiqui thanked his French-speaking colleagues for the "many unforgettable nights out, travels, ski trips (and après skis...)". The "... speaks volumes.

He focused on "Controlling oxide surface chemistry for the growth of Au nanoparticles for photocatalytic applications" in his PhD thesis<sup>1</sup>. Given my limited understanding of chemistry, I was already challenged by the abstract, but I understood it roughly as: Siddiqui focuses on controlling the chemical properties of the oxide surface to form gold nanoparticles that are suitable for photocatalytic applications. Photocatalysts are substances that accelerate their reaction un-

der the influence of light. The improved gold nanoparticles can contribute to better utilization of light and increase the reaction rate. In his work, he presents an improved synthetic route for an Au organometallic precursor, [Au5Mes5], which is produced from AuCl<sub>3</sub> in one step, to grow such Au nanoparticles. These particles are about 0.6 to 1.4 nm small – in a metal, that corresponds to a distance of about four atoms.

The drama caused by the après ski in Ischgl was not small. Scientists from the "Kiel Institute for the World Economy"<sup>2</sup> modelled that the distance to Ischgl is indeed an important predictor of the number of cases. If all German districts were as far from Ischgl as the most distant district, Vorpommern-Rügen, there would have been about 45% fewer COVID-19 cases in Germany. The paper showed that the distance to Ischgl plays a role in the number of cases, but not in the mortality rate.

→



"dr Björn bim Ski gumpe" by Loïc

It would have been nice if I could have written here that the après ski ends fatally. Then I could discredit après ski with a rational argument. But in search of another paper to discredit skiing partiers under heavy alcohol influence with ski equipment, the personal worst-case scenario happened: Simma, Schlich and Axhausen showed in 2001 that direct ski infrastructure is less important for choosing a ski area than the possibilities for après ski.<sup>3</sup> That hurts.

Well, then I probably have to accept the existence of après ski. And the positive thing is: "après le ski, c'est avant le ski".

[1] <https://www.research-collection.ethz.ch/bitstream/handle/20.500.11850/155767/eth-49443-02.pdf>

[2] <https://www.degruyter.com/document/doi/10.1515/ger-2020-0063/html>

[3] <https://www.research-collection.ethz.ch/handle/20.500.11850/23644>

*Corrections, understandable explanations or feedback and reading tips gladly to [etterl@vis.ethz.ch](mailto:etterl@vis.ethz.ch) - I look forward to it.*

# Après Skin't

**On the pros and the (many) cons of après ski**

FLORENCE KISSLING - PARTYPERSON BY PROFESSION AND NON-SKIER WITH PASSION<sup>1</sup>

Snow is cold, wet and gets everywhere. I really don't see how some people start foaming at the mouth and frantically waxing their two glorified wood planks as soon as the first raindrops decide to crystallize in the air. Like for a day or two it's fine. I like to have a snowball fight as much as the next person. But spending every second possible sliding down the ever same slope? Incomprehensible. And then there's the après ski part of it all. You would believe that I, as a certified Partyperson, should be all for parties in every possible context. You'd be gravely mistaken. First the music. Après ski music sure does exist. There's really not more that needs to be said. I can appreciate the effort but the execution leaves much to be desired in basically all cases. Whenever I hear "Schatzi schenk mir ein Foto", a little piece of my soul dies. My main gripe is with the ski boots, however. I'm sorry, but I want to get out of them the first chance I get. Preferably just before hopping into the shower, because those boots can smell sometimes. Wearing them even longer to hop around wildly to aforementioned "music" surely should count as self-harm. Also, someone took them off during après ski once and I'm still traumatized. Chemical weapons are forbidden by the Geneva Convention for a reason as I found out.

Furthermore, the whole concept of après ski is questionable. After all, if you party right, how would you make it down from the Ski-hütte? Obviously, you could party less hard but that defeats the point. From a purely party-maximizing standpoint it just seems like an all-around bad idea.

Of course, après ski isn't all bad. For example, keeping the drinks cool is as easy as putting them in the snow. An really good way to save energy on cooling. Climate conscious as we should be, this is a big plus. Also après ski happens in our backyard. Parties at the beach do require a longer journey, most likely by plane. Since everyone is wearing ski attire, heating is also not much of a concern. Of course, this all presumes that there is snow. What would après ski be without snow after all? With the rate glaciers are receding and snow is becoming rarer and rarer, is après ski going to survive? Will it evolve into après hike maybe? Only time will tell. For now, I'm probably way too negative on après ski. We should enjoy it as long as we can. It seems to be on a timer anyway. Thank god.

[1] Author would like to remark that she can in fact ski. Also, please direct hate-mail to [apres.ski.hate69@gmail.com](mailto:apres.ski.hate69@gmail.com)

Dieser Artikel ist für diejenigen, die gerade die Basisprüfung geschrieben haben, egal was das Resultat war. In diesem Artikel erzählen gute Freunde von mir, welche nicht bestanden haben, wie sie damit umgegangen sind. Egal was das Ergebnis war, nehmt euch einen Moment und denkt darüber nach. Die Namen der jeweiligen Personen und Firmen wurden für den Artikel zu Anonymisierungszwecken angepasst. Jegliche Übereinstimmung mit Personen ist reiner Zufall.

#### Lena, 6. Semester Bachelor:

Die letzte Prüfung war zwar schon über eine Woche her, aber ich war trotzdem so ziemlich durchgehend nervös. Das, obwohl ich ziemlich sicher war, dass ich bestanden hatte. Zum Glück bin ich an dem Tag aus Nervosität zu Hause geblieben, denn als ich mich endlich bei myStudies anmelden konnte, um meine Resultate zu sehen, wurde mir direkt richtig schlecht. 3.76 war mein Schnitt. Ich konnte es nicht fassen, die Nachrichten meiner Freunde, die wissen wollten, ob ich bestanden hatte, habe ich ignoriert. Ich hatte sehr viel Zeit investiert, immer alle Aufgaben gemacht, hatte jede Vorlesung besucht, genauso wie sie. Bei ihnen hat es aber gereicht, bei mir nicht. Ich verstand die Welt nicht

# Nach der Basisprüfung ist vor der Basisprüfung

JOHAN STETTLER - HAT 6 JAHRE FÜR DEN BACHELOR GEBRAUCHT, NO RAGRETS

mehr und habe das ganze Wochenende völlig aufgelöst bei meinen Eltern verbracht. An die darauffolgenden Wochen erinnere ich mich kaum. Ich war wie in einer Trance. Meine Mutter wusste, dass es so nicht weitergehen konnte und hat mich dazu motiviert, einen Termin mit der Coaching- und Beratungsstelle der ETH zu machen. Das Gespräch mit ihnen war sehr schlüssig und ich kann es wirklich allen empfehlen. Sie helfen einem, die Situation nüchtern anzuschauen. Da alle meine Freunde bestanden hatten, habe ich das Gefühl gehabt, dass ich eine der Wenigen war, die nicht bestanden haben. Die Bestehensquote liegt jedoch bei 50%, nicht bei den mir gefühlten 90%.

Man vergisst schnell, dass die ETH sehr anspruchsvoll ist. Ich war immer sehr gut in der Kanti in Mathematik und in Informatik. Deswegen habe ich die Welt noch weniger verstanden. Was hatte ich falsch gemacht? Sie meinten, ich solle weitermachen mit dem Studium. Es mag vielleicht unverständlich sein, aber der Knoten wird sich mit der Zeit von selbst lösen. Es braucht für einige einfach länger Zeit, sich an das ETH Klima zu gewöhnen. Solange ich generell glücklich und zufrieden bin, wird sich das auch mit der Leistung ergeben. Ich kann bis heute nicht sagen, was ich im zweiten und im Wiederholungssemester anders gemacht habe, aber es hat funktioniert. Und ich bin tatsächlich sehr glücklich hier. Es hat einfach Zeit gebraucht, um in den passenden Rhythmus zu kommen. Man sollte auch nicht, um ein Semester zu sparen, beide Blöcke im Sommer schreiben. Laut dem VIS und der Beratungsstelle ist es besser, folgendes zu machen:

1. Semester -> 2. Semester -> 1. Semester ->
4. Semester -> 3. Semester -> 6. Semester ->
5. Semester.

Ich bin sehr froh darüber. Einige haben beide Blöcke im Sommer versucht und sind deswegen rausgefallen, da sie sich zu wenig auf den 1. Block konzentriert haben. Im Endeffekt macht ein Semester mehr oder weniger nicht viel aus. Und meine Freunde habe ich deswegen auch nicht aus den Augen verloren.

#### Sasha, wechselte zur FH

Damals habe ich die Basisprüfung zweimal geschrieben. Beide Blöcke habe ich einmal nicht bestanden. Als ich dann beim zweiten Anlauf nach zwei langen Jahren endlich mein Basisjahr überlebt hatte, dachte ich, dass der Albtraum nun vorbei sei. Licht am Ende des Tunnels, sozusagen. Dem war leider nicht so. Nach drei weiteren langen Semestern bin ich trotzdem wegen Statistik und Numerik rausgeflogen. Ich hatte also 3.5 Jahre für nichts verschwendet.

Ich liebe Informatik und habe mich nicht kleinkriegen lassen. Stattdessen habe ich an der FH meinen Master gemacht und arbeite seit 7 Jahren als Security-Engineer.

Das Einzige, das ich an meinem Werdegang bereue, ist, dass ich nicht schon nach den ersten verhaunenen Basisprüfungen an die FH gewechselt habe. Ich hätte mir viel Verzweiflung und Kopfschmerzen sparen können. An der ETH war ich nie wirklich glücklich, aber den Abschluss wollte ich trotzdem. Ein Abschluss an der ETH war in meinen Augen der einzig richtige Abschluss. Jetzt weiss ich, dass das die falsche Einstellung war.

Ich arbeite mit Leuten mit allen möglichen Hintergründen zusammen. Von PhDs über Bachelors zu einem Geografen mit Nebenfach Informatik, es gibt alles. Schlussendlich machen wir alle fast den gleichen Job zum →

selben Lohn. Alle sind glücklich, wo sie sind. Es gibt schon Vorteile, wenn man an der ETH studiert, aber man muss es absolut nicht. Die FH ist genauso gut und hat meiner Meinung nach eine viel bessere Atmosphäre, was sehr wichtig für Motivation ist. Und Motivation ist der wichtigste Faktor, um die eigenen Ziele zu erreichen.

#### **Noemi, Recruiterin bei Blockchain and Sons**

Ich bin nun seit 12 Jahren für die IT-Branche am Rekrutieren und war schon bei einigen Firmen mit dabei. Das Motivationsschreiben, die Persönlichkeit und ein Abschluss an einer Hochschule sind für mich massgeblich, ob ich jemanden in eine Einsteigerposition einstelle. Noten sind nicht so wichtig. Einige Ausnahmen sind speziellere Gebiete, wie Security. Da können ein Master oder ähnliche Zertifikate hilfreich sein, um das nötige Fachwissen nachweisen zu können.

Für den akademischen Bereich oder Forschung bei den Techgiganten braucht man natürlich ein Doktorat und da können Noten relevant sein. Die Techgiganten sind generell pingeliger bei Einsteigerpositionen, wobei ich eher empfehle bei anderen Firmen einzusteigen und dann erst zu wechseln.

In Senior Positionen spielen die Uniabschlüsse weniger eine Rolle als die Erfahrungen und die zusätzlichen Zertifikate, welche man sich in der Praxis erarbeitet bei seinem ersten Job.

Ob man jetzt fünf Jahre fürs Studium oder zehn gebraucht hat, ist oft egal. Einige machen Zwischenjahre, studieren Teilzeit, studieren Informatik erst im 2. Studium, bestehen einige Fächer nicht und müssen das nachholen. All das ist sehr gängig und kennt man in der Branche. Man sollte sich sicher nicht gestresst fühlen, ein bis sogar drei Jahre länger fürs Studium gebraucht zu haben (verweist auf den Autor). Auf die Dauer des Studiums schaut selten jemand kritisch.

Ich empfehle sogar länger zu studieren, dafür schon das eine oder andere Praktikum zu machen. Der VIS bietet mit der ERK, der Kontaktparty und der VIScon sehr gute Möglichkeiten, mit Firmen früh in Kontakt zu treten und ihr könnt verifizieren, ob das hier im Artikel stimmt, was da behauptet wird.

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**Prof. Dr. Manuela Estrich - After her ~~sugardaddy~~ husband Manfred Keller, who took on the concerns of students in an unnamed other student association magazine, apparently retired in secret, then came back, and re-disappeared, Manuela Estrich took over. But since she is the one with taste in this regard, she has chosen her medium a little more carefully.**

## What keeps you awake at night competent answers to serious questions

Dear Prof. Dr. Estrich

I'm going to the Snowdayz, but I can't actually ski. It's just that under no circumstances should anyone notice. What is the best way to proceed, step by step?

Best regards  
M.H.



→

**Professor Estrich works at D-INFK in the Smart Software Group. There she uses Blockchain, Virtual Reality and Artificial Intelligence to automatically generate API's for ERP systems in the Metaverse. She volunteers at the Soup Kitchen Zurich and is part of the Keller-Kind-Foundation. At Visionen, she helps desperate students and prepares them for the wicked world outside.**

Dear M.H.

For me, skiing has always been one of those pointless activities to make you forget that it's actually freezing outside and you'd surely rather bury yourself until summer. Manfred once explained to me, however, that the whole spirit of alpine sports is actually more about a dick comparison between would-be and actual high earners, quite comparable to throwing out scientific papers without any real content.

From this way of thinking you can directly derive your answer. As Oscar Wilde wrote years ago: "In matters of grave importance, style, not sincerity, is the vital thing". So it's less about what you actually do and more about how you look while pretending to do it.

First things first, you'll want to invest some of your hard-earned minimum TA wage in some really expensive ski goggles. Not that you actually need them, no, you only wear them on your helmet anyway and never over your eyes. But it's the most eye-catching accessory of your ski outfit. What else you wear depends somewhat on your parents' income, but from Bogner-Full-Body-Suits through Napapijri-Kangaroo-Jackets to the latest Aldi-Collection, you can find outfits for almost any wallet size that will make you look like an indifferently snob.

Once you are properly equipped, it's all about technique. Do you know that when what the circus performers do seems like a piece of cake? And at the same time, when you're just trying a head flip in the pool, you look

more like a dying walrus? Somehow it is an art to make something look like child's play. But not if you just go through the children's programme!

Here's what you do. You just queue up at the ski lift and hope that the line is really long. Then you ride it up - and down - and up again - and so on. As soon as anyone suspects what's going on, you get off at the top and pose in the sun for a bit. Especially later in the afternoon, it's also no problem if you simply head to the nearest bar, which is probably no more than 20 metres away from the ski lift station. To get there, you can practice a kind of ski walk, pretending to ski but actually walking, similar to what my aunt does in the swimming pool. Then you sing along with Mickie Krause and have the perfect excuse for the miserable cable car exit you'll make later instead of the slippery downhill run.

With these simple steps, you'll be able to fool everyone into thinking you're a seasoned skier. Just remember, the key is confidence. So, go out there and show off your ski walk with pride.

Kind regards,  
Prof. Dr. Manuela Estrich

Do you have a question? Write to [visionen@vis.ethz.ch](mailto:visionen@vis.ethz.ch) today and we will forward it anonymously to the busy professor!

# I'm an Influencer

FIONI - DOESN'T WANT YOUR MONEY, JUST WANTS YOUR ATTENDANCE

Since my ants are still hibernating I will try to make you come to another cool event.

On **Saturday, April 15, 2023** you can once again pair up to cook for and eat with strangers. That short description sounds rather uncomfy, but it is my favorite adventure and I can only recommend it. I wrote in Visionen about it before, so you might want to take a look at our archiv.



<https://vis.ethz.ch/de/visionen/archive/issue/visionen-2020-1/>

Scroll to page 14 to read a better article on what this event is about (if you can't read German come by the oVIS and let it someone translate for you :P)



<https://www.rudirockt.de/de/events/rudirockt-zurich-april-2023>

This is the event website to sign up and see more details.

Join me in a conversation with the 2022 winner of the CS Award for best teaching, Dr. Ghislain Fourny. He talks about what makes a good lecture, advice to improve your teaching, the importance of sleep and quantum physics.

## VISàVIS: Dr. Ghislain Fourny

MANUEL HÄSSIG — ASKS OTHERS QUESTIONS SO THEY TELL HIM WHAT TO WRITE.

**VISIONEN:** Last autumn, you have been awarded the CS Award for best teaching. Congratulations!

Dr. Fourny: Thank you. The award was a big, pleasant surprise and I was really super touched by the students' appreciation of my, and my TAs', work.

**What differentiates your teaching from the rest of ETH?**

I can answer by trying to say what I think the students generally appreciate in the way things are taught. One aspect is that when you teach you want the knowledge to come across. I think the burden is on the teacher to make the knowledge accessible and understandable for the students. I think it is important to put some passion in what you are doing to show that you are interested in the subject and that the subject is fascinating. Maybe because I experienced it myself when I was a student. I had a lot of excellent professors that I admired and this in turn made me notice that these professors had something contagious about their passion. You just get into the topic because the professor loves it and they make you love the topic as well with the way that they teach.



The accessibility of the knowledge is not only influenced by the way you explain it but also by the flexibility afforded to students in how to take in learning materials. This became especially apparent with the pandemic where everyone was struggling with the situation in their own way. An important aspect was that I think people needed some flexibility in how to take a lecture. I think that providing a way to attend in the lecture hall and on Zoom provided some important flexibility as not everybody was able to come to the lecture hall.

Another facet of the accessibility of knowledge are the requirements, which are different in a computer science masters course and a service lecture. While you can assume that students have seen the basics of algorithms in a computer science course — although there might be some students from other universities — in service lectures that are offered to all departments you cannot take anything for granted and need to make sure that every item is explained or pointers to the requirements are given.

**Didactic research shows that the lectures that students enjoy the most are not necessarily those that are didactically the most effective. [1][2] How do you measure the effectiveness of your lectures apart from how much students appreciated it?**

One way is at the exam. If you see that students are doing well, this is the best reward that you could get because it means that you have done your job and the knowledge was actually transmitted. During the semester itself when you offer possibly graded exercises and then you enter into discussions with students that disagree about solutions or think that their solution is also right is also a good sign. For a lecturer it is really a great feeling to see the students entering in conversations like that because it also means that they think critically about the content. Further, they can only sustain such a conversation if they really understood the material. I remember one of the guest lecturers once said that the goal of a university is that one can put a recent graduate in front of a Turing Award winner and

they can have a conversation on equal footing. So if a lot of students are stirring up conversations like this it is a great sign as it shows that things are going exactly as expected.

I want to link that with the work of Manu Kapur on productive failure. [3] This is something I am also watching and that I am trying to make use of in the way that I teach together with the TA team. For example, at the exam the goal is that the questions are precise to have an objective way to measure performance. But when you are creating exercises during the semester it actually brings value if there are some ambiguities and inconsistencies as Prof. Kapur's research shows that it leads to higher grades at the final exam. I really think that if a student starts reading a question and it triggers them to do some research, they learn something more than if there had been no ambiguities. Ideally you want to engineer that productive failure, but sometimes, even by accident, if it pushes the students to learn until they can argue with us on that level this is great.

**Everyone has to start somewhere with their teaching. What did you do to improve your teaching and what advice can you give to others, especially TAs, who are trying to improve their teaching?**

I made mistakes. There are actually some mistakes that I like to talk about. When I taught for the very first time, back then I was a student TA, I would send students to the blackboard to solve exercises, not asking →

for volunteers. Maybe because that is what I saw in other places, like in France. What happened is that students got stressed and the attendance started dropping. So I learned the hard way. At that point I decided to change everything. Later in the same semester I started to only ask for volunteers and I also started preparing slides instead of just teaching on the blackboard. Consequently, the students came back. That's how I learned the lesson. When I started my doctorate I taught exactly like that and the class was full. The fact that people are motivated and coming to the exercises gives you feedback that you are on the right track. This is an example.

What I would give as advice for people who are starting as TAs is that people learn better if they are not stressed. You need to give people an environment where they are in their comfort zone, to make them understand that they can fail and that it is fine to fail. This is a university. That is how science is done. Encourage your students to ask questions. Often I hear a question prefaced with — and I still do it myself sometimes — “maybe this is a stupid question, ...” and I always tell them that there are no stupid questions. It is the whole point of learning to ask questions. I really make sure to make them understand that it is always okay to ask a question. In fact, there is usually half of the room who had the same question but did not dare to ask it and appreciates that someone asked it. I think providing an environment in which people feel safe to make mistakes and ask questions is of paramount importance because this is how you get an environment that is conducive to learning things.

I do not think that there is only one way to teach. Everyone who teaches has to converge on their own style of teaching. In that sense, there is no general advice that says this is how you should teach. However, there are several approaches to the fundamental method you use in tracking. Do you want to prepare the information in digestible units so that it comes across or do you want to have higher hurdles which seem more difficult to learn at first sight, where you put the burden



on the students to investigate anything that they are missing? I know some people who prefer the latter style and it works. I tend to do it the other way around and consider it as my burden as a teacher to prepare how the knowledge should be presented.

There is also a lot of general advice. For example, Markus Püschel circulates excellent slides on how to give good presentations. [4] There is again more than one way of preparing slides but there are still general aspects to consider. For example, you do not want to be

in competition with your slides. If your slides are covered with 20 lines of text and you're talking at the same time, you cannot expect people to follow you because then either they read the slide or they listen. So one has to be careful about finding the right balance of the text that one puts on the slides.

**In the end there is a lot of information out there that can help people. Also about the psychology of learning and how people take in information.**

Yes, actually that is a great transition to something else. I also watched a lot what companies like Duolingo are doing, because they released some of their thinking and the way that they function. One thing I learned from them is the concept of spaced repetition. It is the idea that you repeat the same thing over and over, but with some time between repetitions. That is one reason why many people actually offset the exercises from the lecture, because then you hear the material one week, then it comes back the week after that, and then you correct it two weeks later. All of these things facilitate how knowledge stays in the brain. It is also partly due to the fact that part of the way that knowledge remains in the brain is sleep, which is why we want to make sure that we give enough sleep cycles for the knowledge to actually stay in the brains of the students. This is one example of the application of neuropsychology.

Another aspect of having an environment that feels comfortable is something that I keep repeating in particular to PhD students is the importance of having enough sleep, of eating enough, of taking breaks. It's fun-

damental because output increases with the time spent on something only for a while. Then it starts decreasing again. It is important to understand that and to understand that we are humans and for learning we have to make sure that the brain has enough sleep and food.

**During your studies you were a VIS board member and one of your main duties was to collect the exams for the exam collection. Nowadays, you're on the other side. You make the exams and give them to VIS. With this unique perspective, what do you think about the studying habit to study for exams by relying heavily on practicing with old exams?**

There are two ways to look at this. It is tempting to see that as a difference of view between a student and a teacher but I think that is not how it should be seen. I think it should be seen rather as an apparent conflict between the short and long-term. In fact, I think it comes back to what it means to study and have a degree and be at a university. A university is not just there to give a degree, its goal is to transmit knowledge so that it can be used later.

Of course the two aspects are important because as a student I also wanted to pass my exams with good grades and hopefully get a degree. Then it is tempting to optimize for the exam and for getting a high grade by just looking at all the prior examinations. But one should not forget to also have the long term in mind. This is maybe something that becomes clearer when one starts teaching. Of →



course my goal is also that as many students as possible pass my exam, but my goal is also that they learn as much as possible that can be used later in 10 years, in 20 years, in 30 years. And I also want them to be able to learn new things during their career easily as well, because already having the general groundwork for later is useful.

That brings me to the aspect of how you match the performance assessment to what will be useful for later. In an ideal world you can match the two perfectly, but in our world that does not necessarily work because there are other aspects of what you transmit that you cannot necessarily assess in an exam. The advice that I try to give is to not only focus on the past exams themselves, but also on the content of the course itself because that's going to be useful later also after the exam. Also one of the aspects of preparing with past exams is also that it gives you more peace of mind because you get a general feeling of what to expect at the exam.

That actually gives me a transition to something else, which is the peace of mind. This fits with the advice that I would generally share with teachers. Part of the comfort zone is to give some predictability to the students related to the exam. Let me give you an example. We now have the exam on computers with the LET team of ETH and in some of the courses we have an environment with software installed. For example, in Big Data we have databases installed and the processing frameworks so it is possible to query actual data on the machine.

In the very first years that we started doing this exam we did not share the data sets with the students in advance. There is what we call the cheat sheet, a Jupyter notebook which contains sample queries. We would share an obfuscated version of that where you could not see what the data actually looks like. It actually worked well and the students did well at this exam. But then I realized that some students would have felt better if they actually knew in advance what the data looks like or what the schema is. I think that there's no reason why we should hide the data or the data set because in real life you already know the data in advance and I don't think that it prevents the performance assessment in any way. So I changed that policy and for a few years now we have been sharing all the data, the schema, and the data sets openly before with the students with the exact Jupyter notebook that is expected on exam day.

That provides more predictability and I think that this is also something that contributes to diminishing the stress on exam day. The goal of a lecturer is not to put stress on the students. The goal of a lecturer in addition to the transmission of knowledge is to assess performance. If you want to assess performance properly, you need for the students to be in a calm and quiet state.

**Before you were talking about the exam that you noticed that the students could be less stressed. What do you look for in student feedback you get for lectures or exams and what feedback is especially useful when you see it in the evaluation of the lecture?**

Maybe I can give examples of feedback that we acted on in the past. One of those is that several students suggested having a textbook for the Big Data lecture because there was no textbook available at all in the beginning. I looked for one but I didn't find anything that would provide for teaching at a university. Thus, I initially relied on research papers on the topics and a few books that the ETH library and the department's library ordered. But many students submitted that a textbook would be useful. So semester after semester I started working on one and now it's about 80% complete. [5] That is one concrete example because that is direct feedback on what would be useful to the class.

Then the sort of feedback that I also implemented was that there was not enough time at the exam and or too many questions. This is something that I also changed in the sense that I increased the allocated time to three hours. Now I openly communicate to the class that we have 60 questions at the exam and I tell my TAs that I will remove anything more than 60 graded questions. I see that there is a good balance if I see a reasonable amount of people leaving before the end of the exam. That is a good sign and means that there was enough time. So now that's what tends to happen.

Of course, often there is also diverging feedback. Let me give you an example where people have different opinions. One year the feedback was that some students found the exam was too easy and I think they were afraid that it wouldn't give them the opportunity to shine and that it would flatten the grades. Then I said, okay, I'm going to increase the difficulty level the next year. So I increased the level, then I got feedback that the exam was too difficult. But after a couple of years you start having a good idea of where you put the difficulty, which is also a form of spaced repetition.

**Your position here at the department is a senior scientist with a focus on education. What does your position entail and how did you get here?**

The senior scientists with focus on education are new positions that were created a few years ago. At that time I was contacted by professors, asking if I was interested, and I jumped at the opportunity. It is basically a position with a strong focus on education and teaching. So most of my time is spent on actually preparing and teaching lectures, and interacting with students. This is probably more than half of my time.

There are two other aspects: administration and research. The administration revolves around the coordination of study programs. For example, I am the study coordinator for the DAS in data science and the Masters in →

data science. Part of that is also the admissions to the program and coordinating with both the faculty members and the study administration.

Then I still do a bit of research, less than most post-doctoral positions, which are more research oriented. I have two main research topics. One topic is the continuation of the research topic through my doctorate, which are databases and the RumbleDB project, which we also use in the class, to query data that is nested and heterogeneous at large scales. The other part of my research used to be hobby research that I was doing in my free time which dates back to some time I spent at Stanford with a professor who is interested in game theory. It is about rebooting game theory with a different assumption on free choice. That is how the Nash equilibrium works. You can pick your strategy independently of what other people are doing, but then you run into dilemmas like the prisoners' dilemma and you are stuck in non-optimal outcomes.

With this professor I started working on a different approach where you assume that our decisions are interdependent, interrelated, and there is something called a counterfactual dependency between the decisions. For example, if I cooperate, you would cooperate and if I did not cooperate, you would not cooperate either. That is how you optimize on the diagonal of the prisoners' dilemma. I was doing that on my free time and I did not make much progress because of course there is not so much free time. But then I thought, I have a position that is not primarily focused on research. My performance is primarily judged

on education. So I thought that this is an opportunity to take a big risk to do something I would never do if I were a professor or if I had a research position because that would probably endanger my career. I thought that now I have the position that allows me to take that risk so I went ahead and turned that into one of my topics.

Since then, I have been focusing more on quantum physics. I think it is the same assumption that choices are independent of one another is exactly I think what is blocking quantum physics from being extended to get rid of probabilities. This is basically what Einstein was arguing about and I think he was correct about that. I am in the minority to think this and so now I am spending a lot of my time researching these topics.

#### **What would you like to give our readers on their way as a last word?**

Do not hesitate to be kind to each other, think critically, question things. This is how scientific progress is made. Sure, grades are important but once you start working in the industry they become less and less important with time. Lastly, do not overstress yourself and don't forget to eat and sleep.

[1] <https://doi.org/10.1002/j.2168-9830.2011.tb00013.x>

[2] <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1821936116>

[3] <https://www.manukapur.com/>

[4] <https://people.inf.ethz.ch/~markusp/teaching/guides/guide-presentations-new.pdf>

[5] <https://ghislainfourmy.github.io/big-data-textbook/>

# Overview of upcoming events

**For more events, check your mail, check the VIS website or check out the screens in the common room.**

## **VIS General Assembly 08.03.2023**

We discuss and Vote the goals and projects of the VIS of 23

Elect the Board members

Drink and Eat



POV: You suggested 2k more budget on beer and they vote yes

**Kontaktparty 11.03.2023**

Big IT-Company fair hosted by VIS @ Polyterasse. More than 180 Companies.

**VISKAS Somewhen in May**

Big grillparty at the lake, where every VIS-Member eats and drinks for free.  
It truly is a Very Important Session at KatzenSee.

**VSETH Summerbar 15.05.2023 - 02.06.2023**

The last 3 Weeks of the Semester, there will be a student bar on the Polyterasse.

**VIS Summer Brunch 02.06.2023**

BIG free brunch for all VIS members on the last day of the semester.





*v.l.n.r. Manuel Hässig, Julia Bogdan, Florence Kissling, Johan Stettler, Fabian Ruckstuhl, Pascal Strebel, Tobias Scheithauer, Fiona Pichler*

## Dein Artikel im VISIONEN

Alle Leserinnen und Leser sind immer herzlich eingeladen einen Artikel im VISIONEN zu veröffentlichen. Hast du etwas, das du anderen mitteilen willst? Warst du im Ausland und willst von deinen grossartigen Erfahrungen berichten? Hast du Lust einen Artikel zu schreiben aber keine Idee? Schreib uns und wir brainstormen zusammen. Natürlich können auch nicht-Informatikstudierende Artikel einreichen.

Infos, wie du einen Artikel schreiben kannst, findest du unter <https://visionen.vis.ethz.ch>

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