Data Science and Startups

My commentary on getting a job, and working as a “data guy” at a startup in the Bay area.

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Overview

Timeline

• 1/2014 started at Wizeline
• "Sr. Analyst - Data Services"
• Work, work, work
• Learn, learn, learn
What is “Data Science” ???

• Different everywhere you ask
• Engineering
  • Data structures/algorithms
  • Best practices
• “Big data”
• Libraries
• Statistics
• ETL - mostly munging data
• Grunt work
What Kind of Data Scientist Am I?

Other:
• Engineering
• QA (debugging)
• “BI”
• Post-sales support
• Sales support
Essential Skills - Abstract

Learn Fast, Work Hard, Exceed Expectations

• Understand algorithms
• High level knowledge of all techniques
• Detailed knowledge of key techniques
• Understand data flow through the pipeline
• Physical intuition for interesting results
• Visualization and communication skills
• ABL - Always Be Learning
Essential Skills - Concrete

- Scripting language
  - Python/Ruby/Julia/…
- Stats language
  - R/…
- Statistical learning algorithms
  - Supervised - SVM, Random Forests, …
  - Unsupervised - NN
- Natural Language Processing
  - Latent Dirichlet, Naive Bayes
- Databases
- Data structures, algorithms
  - 100-200 level CS
- Engineering best practices
- “Standard” libraries
  - Hadoop/Hive/Pig
  - Spark/Shark/…
- Git, bash, linux, …

Not exhaustive, Requirements vary

I have a list of these I send to people, Ping me with an email, I’ll forward it to you
Finding a Job

Start a search
1. Find your job sector
2. Find your company list
3. Talk to hiring manager/recruiter

- Move to SF
- Talk to Recruiters
- Linkedin
- Fellowships
  - Insight, Zipf, many others
- NETWORK!!!
Interviewing for Jobs

- Prepare for it - don't be surprised
- Read coding interview books
- Check out their site
- Look on glassdoor.com
- Don't interview at your first choice first
Life at a Start-up

• Less money, more equity
• Learn fast, work hard - 4x
• More responsibility
• 1-2 year window - success or failure
• Network effects
• Less access to mentors
• Company culture varies
Resources

Build your network

- Github
- Hackernews
- Quora
- Linkedin
- Blogs
- Meetups
- Take Classes
- Coursera
- Insight and other fellowship
- Project with friends

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Questions?