Numerical Relativity as preparation for Industrial Data Science, a personal perspective

Much of the conversation in commercial enterprises these days revolves around industry buzz words such as Big Data, Data Science, and being Data Driven. Beyond the hype surrounding these terms, there is a real, continuously growing movement for organizations to make better use of the data assets they have to inform decisions, strategy, and policy. This push is not unique to the commercial sector; governmental and academic organizations are also embracing such initiatives. The skills required to staff a Data Science project typically come from a number of disciplines, ranging from computer science, statistics, modeling and simulation, to information technology, but the emerging wisdom in the community is that the rigor and discipline of a scientific background often makes for the best data scientists. In this talk, I will offer a personal perspective on making the transition from a career in computational physics (specifically Numerical Relativity) to a career in industry, where I have focused on helping organizations make more informed decisions through better access and analysis of data at their disposal. I will identify the skills and training that carry over from a background in physics, discuss the gaps in that preparation, hypothesize as to where this industry is headed, and offer a frank look at a life outside of academia.