I am a Senior Research Expert at SAP Switzerland, developing software libraries for forecasting retail store sales. Use cases range from assortment planning across price and promotion optimization to automatic store replenishment. Industries include supermarkets, department stores, drugstores, home improvement, furniture and fashion. Our clients daily forecast sales of tens of thousands of articles for hundreds or thousands of stores, forecasting and subsequent logistical processes need to be as robust and automated as possible, as there is simply no way that many forecasts could ever be reviewed on time by a competent forecaster.

These aspects of “forecasting in the field” motivate my main scientific interests: on the one hand, I introduce new advances from academia into the software that makes sure your favorite brand of detergent is available in your drugstore – and conversely, I try to help academic forecasters to better understand the challenges the applied forecaster labors under. While forecasting is my main interest, I also work in adjacent areas of the “forecast value chain”: how to automatically preprocess, clean and prepare the data our forecasts will be based on, how to optimize orders based on forecasts and how to improve the numerical stability of our algorithms. As I am also involved in consulting with clients, I am also interested in the change management involved in the forecasting process as well as in how best to educate non-specialists about basic forecasting.

I have been fortunate to be able to work with theoretical and practical forecasters interested in similar topics in my contributions to and work (as an Associate Editor) for Foresight. As a venue where theoretical and practical forecasting meet, Foresight offers (and lives up to) great potential for facilitating the dialogue between the two worlds of forecasting.

In the past four years as a Director of the IIF, I have been responsible for the forecasters.org website (where Pam Stroud, our great Business Director, does the actual work), continued my role as an Associate Editor for Foresight and assisted with the IIF certification program. If reelected, I will continue to support the interaction between theory and practice in forecasting, most importantly through the existing platform provided by Foresight, paying particular attention to increasing interdisciplinary cooperation between forecasting, optimization, supply chain and other experts, which is beneficial to all sides.