

# A traveler's guide to Silopolis

#### Welcome traveler!

What you are holding in your hands (or more likely, browsing on your laptop) is our Culture
Handbook, a travel guide to the culture and work life at Silo AI.

The guide is divided into three parts: (i) a brief introduction for your arrival, (ii) a tour for getting around the organization and (iii) Silopolis activities and culture to make the

Now that you have arrived at your destination, our aim with this guide is to make sure your journey begins as smoothly as possible.

most of it.

Part 1 - Arrival Introduction to Silo AI: history, vision and values

Part 2 - Getting around Silo core, organization and business

**Part 3 - Making the most of it** Silopolis activities and culture: Learning Lab and beyond



# Part 1 Arrival

Learn how Silo AI's story began, what the big vision is, and which values drive us as a company.



# Congrats on your new adventure!



# History of SILO

Although Silo AI was founded in the fall of 2017, the story began during the global financial crisis in 2009



The first sparks of Silo AI came from co-founder Juha Hulkko
(founder of Elektrobit), who's concern was that Finland and
wider Europe were losing competitiveness due to the

ongoing talent drain. Comparing the current AI technology wave with the one in telecom in the '80s and '90s, he approached Peter

and his research group with the intent to build a leading AI lab to make sure we keep high-class AI talent in the region and help corporations stay

competitive. This marked the need for more collaboration between top academic researchers and engineering talent to serve practical product development needs in industry. It was time to build a bridge between those that develop AI and those that need AI.

In 2017, Silo AI was born

In early 2017, Tero Ojanperä
accompanied Juha Hulkko and Peter
Sarlin to build a private AI lab. Later
during the year, they united together
with Kaj-Mikael Björk, Johan Kronberg and
Ville Hulkko under the flag of Silo AI to build

a lab that brings cutting edge AI capabilities to organizations and delivers impactful AI-driven solutions and products around the world.

# Our vision

# **Fundamentals of Silopolis**

To familiarize yourself with the new environment, you first need to learn about the ground that you're standing on. Our vision gives us meaning and guides us on the busy streets of Silopolis.

Al for People defines what Silo Al stands for. Our vision is to create a world with safe human-centric Al that frees the human mind for meaningful work. This implies building Al that frees the human mind from manual labour and empowers human creativity, by elevating humans from routine tasks to more complex, higher value creating tasks.

We believe humans will remain at the center of most industries. The way we work, however, will change. We also believe people will benefit if we can accelerate the adoption of human-centric AI and human-machine co-operation for collective intelligence. This implies humans being at the very center by creating training data,

Love the problems, not the solutions. We want to see diverse views in problem solving.

- PETER SARLIN, CEO

developing algorithms, and taking decisions based on AI-driven recommendations. Finally, we believe having humans at the center is not only more useful but also aids in ensuring safe AI, as responsibility and accountability is still with us humans.



So how do we turn these grand words into practice?

We function as a trusted AI partner with world-class expertise and tooling to deliver AI-driven solutions and products to our clients. With a team of world-class AI scientists and engineers, as well as Silo AI infrastructure and tooling, we make sure our clients succeed in building solutions that push the boundaries of state-of-the-art AI and in deploying them into production. We are eager to face the most complex challenges that various applications and industries offer, while striving for modern workflows and solution design.

#### From vision to Silo AI identity

As a core element of AI, data is often said to exist in silos and humans often depicted by the need for simple, limited machine interfaces. The word silo symbolizes our grand aspiration to contribute to bridging and connecting data and designing optimal interfaces for humans and machines to interact. The Silo AI logo and stamp is designed based on the principles of simplicity, bridging silos and connecting humans and machines.

# Our values

# Fundamentals of Silopolis

#### We live by what we believe in

Silo AI values were co-created with the team in the early days of our journey. The guiding light was to tap into our intrinsic motivators - what makes us tick as people, not just as employees or as a business. That's how Be Good, Build Bonds, Keep Learning and Ask Why were born. They are the guiding principles for our work and behaviour with clients and fellow Silonauts, every day.

All four values have two dimensions; the external and the internal. The external guides our way of interacting with our clients and wider society. The internal gives us Silonauts the direction of how we want to work and spend time together as a community.

- Build bonds Trust is our bond
- Be good Positive impact & results
- Ask why Know your why
- Keep learning Grow to excel





#### Trust is our bond

We connect with customers and always seek to understand how we can best help them, and make sure that we keep what we promise.

We encourage a culture where successes are celebrated, learnings shared and support provided for our team members to succeed.

#### **Building Bonds in practice**

We want to be the long-term trusted partner to our clients. In our way of thinking, trust and understanding go both ways and have to be earned.

At Silo AI anyone is invited to organize Silo Social events and go beyond the usual work activities to build a stronger connection with your peers. Also, even if we work from many locations and in a hybrid setting, support is always just a message away; fellow Silonauts are known to readily offer help whenever needed.



"Build Bonds creates trust which is the base for everything: connection, support & success. I can be myself and know that people communicate openly and want to be there for one another - be it for challenges or board games. For me this makes an excellent working place."

- ELA ARASOLA, TALENT ACQUISITION SPECIALIST.
WINNER OF THE "MY NAME IS BOND" SILO AWARD 2022



#### Grow to excel

We aim for excellence by learning from the market, sharing our competence, and attracting talent with a growth mindset.

We believe that expertise is not an achievement - it's a lifestyle of curiosity, learning, sharing and working with people who share the same hunger.

#### Learning in practice

At Silopolis you may find an extensive amount of AI competence in fields like computer vision, machine learning and NLP.

Our best example of how we share this knowledge is our Learning Lab, a framework we came up with to learn together as a team. Learning Lab offers a structured way to spread our expertise and learnings from each other's work.



"As a recent joiner, I was completely flabbergasted from winning the prize as I felt that I was not yet well-known at the company. During the first few months I popularized a low-maintenance method to run Docker on ARM architecture. This seemed to have helped out a lot of fellow Silonauts and I am grateful for this public recognition as it really made my first year as a Silonaut feel special."

- TYKO NIEMI, LEAD SOLUTIONS ARCHITECT
WINNER OF THE "DR CURIOUS" SILO AWARD 2022



#### Positive impact

We always strive to be transparent and open in our communications, take ownership and aim for positive impact and results in all we do.

We take pride in creating an equal and supportive workplace for talented and ambitious professionals from all nationalities, genders, orientations and backgrounds.

#### Being good in practice

For us, building AI-driven solutions means becoming a trusted advisor for our clients. Therefore in our collaboration, we emphasize honesty and transparency.

We celebrate each other's successes and share our appreciation by giving our weekly appreciations. Anyone can thank their colleague for good work or a nicely handled tough situation in our feedback channel in Slack. The praise is also shared in our Friday All-hands for recognition and good vibes.



"Be good value represents many things for me, but above all, treating others with kindness and respect. It reminds me that the little everyday things we do and say and how we take others into account through small gestures can make a big impact - being good is what truly brings happiness and fulfillment for me."

- RIINA MATHLIN, PEOPLE SPECIALIST
WINNER OF THE "GOOD HUMAN" SILO AWARD 2022



#### Know your why

We have the courage and agility to keep challenging what we're doing to assure value creation for customers.

We encourage open dialogue and debate, and strive for diversity in opinions to improve decision making.

#### Asking why in practice

Sometimes it happens in a project that we need to take a step back and review the situation. Are we focusing on what really matters? With AI projects, it is easy to get side-tracked by having some other data accessible, having an easier technical solution available or finding more support for a certain kind of approach. We want to be brave enough to discuss what truly makes sense and ask why we are doing things the way we are.



"For me, work has always had a higher purpose than just providing means for living. I have found it very important to constantly question myself and the surrounding network (colleagues, partners, clients etc.) do we create meaningful value in all of the daily operations. "Ask why" has therefore been implicitly part of me way before joining Silo AI, and having it as one of the core company values has made it a conscious thing in everyday life."

- JOUNI HARTIKAINEN, LEAD AI SCIENTIST
WINNER OF THE "SOCRATES OF SILOPOLIS" SILO AWARD 2022



Learn how we are organized at Silo AI, what kind of people work here and what we value when looking for new talent.

# **Arriving to Silopolis**

We're a growing team of 250+ professionals, spread between five offices in Finland, and international locations currently in Sweden, Denmark, Norway and Canada. Global expansion is strongly on our agenda and we expect to see new countries being opened in the near future. Even though we don't see each other every day or week, we form a closely connected group

of individuals that work towards the same goal: to provide the best service to our clients.

We're happy to be a part of our diverse crew and to embrace each other's differences. We hold diversity to a high respect and are proud of offering an inclusive and equal workplace for all.

### Most people at Silo AI define themselves as

#### **AI Scientists**

who identify and build innovative technical solutions to challenging AI/ML/CV/NLP problems. Most of our AI Scientists have a strong academic background and a PhD.

#### AI Engineers

who come up with innovative solutions for challenging data related problems, covering data science, data engineering, devops and other software development for machine learning.

#### **Solution Architects**

who work with clients in defining their AI vision, choose AI technologies, build project roadmaps and help clients understand the strategic fit and potential impact this could have on their business.

#### **Designers**

who specialize in UX, UI or service design, helping us and our clients bring design thinking and usability into our AI solutions.

#### Software Developers

who work on various full-stack software development tasks.

#### **Business professionals**

who build our brand and trusted relationships with clients (sales, business development and marketing), ensure we attract the best AI talent and have meaningful work for them (talent acquisition and talent matching), build culture and ways of working that make Silonauts want to stay (people) and make sure our business is well governed and runs smoothly every day (finance, legal, IT and admin).

# We're a service & solution company

Our core business is to help our clients succeed in building AI solutions in a wide range of application in the following areas

- Smart Machines (incl. automotive, heavy duty vehicles and heavy machinery)
- Smart Devices (incl. consumer devices and network equipment)
- Smart Society (incl. manufacturing and energy)

#### Client work

We strive to build strong, long-lasting relationships with our clients. As a trusted AI partner, we either work as part of the client teams or in our own project teams. In practice most work can be done in a hybrid setting where you can choose to work mainly remotely or in our physical offices. Some clients may also have requirements for physical presence in their premises.

#### **Internal** work

While our focus is on client projects, we also build some tools and products to help scale our business. Also, if there is no client work available, the time in-between is used in developing tech competences in expert growth projects.



# Project Organization

Our service business model, together with the ambitious company growth targets require an organization model that enables company's fast scaling and ability to serve our clients in a flexible way across different locations and markets. That's why we are organized in a dynamic, project based model.

# Matching expertise to client cases

We've got a unique opportunity to work with our clients on the most strenuous problems at the core of their business. Our tech experts are allocated to projects depending on availability, competence area and level as well as experts' own wishes. A new project team is formed every time a new project starts. When a project ends, you move to the next one and join a new project team. You can be in more than one project team at the same time.

#### Project owners everywhere

At Silo AI, all projects are different. Sometimes there's a team of Silo AI people working together to solve a client's problem. Sometimes it's a mix of Silo AI experts and clients' own tech team, and then there's projects that have one Silo AI expert running the work. All projects require project steering to ensure we deliver what we promise. In more complex projects one of the Silo AI team members acts as a Project Owner, responsible for the deadlines and overall success of the project.

# Choosing most adequate working model

Silo AI empowers our experts with different ways of client collaboration. You can either be a Silo AI employee, receiving a fixed monthly paycheck or compensation based on an agreed project specific rate, or work as an hourly-based employee to flexibly accommodate your other commitments. From time to time, we also involve freelancers and for academics like professors and postdocs we can also set up shared part-time positions between Silo AI and universities.

#### Compensation

Our compensation models are transparent. For fixed salaries we have a framework that covers role levels and salary ranges for each position. There's five seniority levels from junior to principal, which have documented requirements to provide clarity in growth paths within the company. Also the rates for project based salaries have set ranges depending on the seniority requirements in the project.

# Kicking-off

# Your journey in Silopolis

Silopolis offers fascinating AI challenges for you to work on in different areas, such as machine learning, computer vision, and natural language processing.

We bring cutting-edge AI into our clients' core business and products and, among many others, work with large car manufacturers, industry-leading device manufacturers, global machine builders, large banks, as well as energy and retail companies.

During your Silo AI journey, we aim to provide you with an exciting and challenging environment to learn, grow, and use your skills for a good purpose.



## Examples of our work

Examples of our partners include Allianz, Danske Bank, Envision Energy, Intel, Kemira, Körber, NVIDIA, Philips, Rolls-Royce, the United Nations, Mila – Quebec AI Institute, and many more.

#### The United Nations

Silo AI and United Nations
collaborate to fight AIDS with NLP
and automated data processing



## **Philips**

Computer vision-powered MRI image analysis for cancer tissue detection



#### Finnair

Machine learning-based flight delay prediction



#### Köber

A visual quality control solution for pharma industry inspection machines



# People are the key

# Diverse team of experts

#### Cornerstone of recruiting

Our bread and butter is our people and their worldclass expertise in various fields of AI. Finding that kind of talent through equal hiring forms the cornerstone for our recruiting, based on the following criteria:

#### Expertise in their field

We look for warm, open-minded people who consider themselves to be experts in their field, be it science, engineering or business.

For us expertise is not just an achievement, it's a lifestyle of curiosity, learning, sharing and working with people who share the same mindset. In this way, we believe we can develop and learn from each other, which makes us both better colleagues and AI partners to our clients.

#### Our values and culture add

We value diversity and want to offer an inclusive workplace for everyone. We take pride in creating an equal workplace for all nationalities, genders, orientations and backgrounds. We believe that differences within people can make Silo AI an even better workplace. At the same time as we are inclusive and appreciate diversity, we are also careful in ensuring that everyone who joins the company shares our core values.

# **Working at Silo**

#### YOU HEARD IT FROM THE TEAM



"My work at Silo AI is simultaneously challenging and fulfilling. Coming into the world of AI consulting with a background in mathematics research, I'm constantly learning about coding, client communication and the realities of applied machine learning. I expect that these learning opportunities continue to manifest as the in-house knowledge at Silo AI keeps on growing. The communal support at Silo AI really elevates the working experience."

- ALEXANDER AURELL, SENIOR AI SCIENTIST



"At Silo AI, we have this valuable opportunity to participate in various learning workshops, research presentations, and project presentations which helps us to understand our colleagues line of work better and get acquainted with many state of the art solutions in versatile areas. I personally have been also involved with many interesting projects which have helped me to expand my skill set both in hard and soft skills, just like how to become a good speaker! Last but not the least about Silo AI working culture is the flexible working hours and as a result the work-life balance you get."

- ELIN EHSANI, SENIOR AI SCIENTIST



"Software development can digitalize products, but only Artificial Intelligence can unlock their true potential and bring real value. At the Silo AI community, we are working on projects that are pushing the boundaries of what's possible – and that's what makes it so exciting!"

- OKSANA KALGANOVA, SENIOR SOFTWARE DEVELOPER

# Part 3 Making the most of it

Get to know the culture of Silopolis! In this part, you'll learn what the Learning Lab is, how we support the wellbeing of Silonauts, and what it means to have a Silo Buddy.

# Onboarding to Silo AI

# Welcoming you into the community

During the past years, we've welcomed new colleagues to Silo AI almost every week - some remotely, some at our offices across different locations. We can proudly say that we've learnt something about running hybrid onboardings! To get ready for being a Silonaut, you will receive

a welcome email and a small Swag-package, delivered to your home address.

Your first day starts with a Welcome to Silopolis session where you learn about our company values, ways of working and the cultural cornerstones such as Learning Lab and Silo Social activities. After this, you will learn more about your daily work. For most of our employees this means the client project you'll be joining. During your onboarding period we also like to tell the world about your joining with our much-liked tradition of a social media welcome post.

Even though there are many things to learn and remember as a new employee, don't worry. The entire Silopolis crew is more than happy to help and support you. It's not possible to remember everything about your first days - what matters most is that you know you are not alone on your learning journey!



# Silo Buddy - Your first friend in Silopolis

Silo Buddy is your local guide to Silopolis, helping you feel at home. Silo Buddy is an important part of the onboarding, but not in charge of any formal practicalities. Anyone can become a Silo Buddy: the only requirement is willingness to meet new colleagues and to be there for a newbie.

Usually Silo Buddy takes you to lunch during your first days at Silopolis. A remote lunch is also an option! The purpose of the Buddy lunch is to get to know someone more personally immediately when you start. Maybe you have a shared interest for bouldering or self-made sushi?

"When I started, I was new to the city as well, so my Buddy helped me to find out personal things like a gym and lunch places nearby."

- PEDRAM GHAZI, AI ENGINEER





"We found a mutual interest in Esports, so I invited my newbie to an Esports event on the weekend."

- JOHN KRONBERG, SENIOR AI ENGINEER AND PEOPLE SPECIALIST

# Feel Good: Wellbeing & Community

# How we keep Silopolis healthy and happy

A fast-paced work environment can be a challenge for wellbeing. For us wellbeing is one of the key elements in our people strategy. It's embedded in our company culture and ways of working but in addition, we want to take care of Silonauts by offering various activities, trainings and benefits to boost wellbeing.

We see people as holistic beings and focus on three different aspects of wellbeing in our approach: physical, mental and social.

Keep reading to see examples of our wellbeing initiatives!



#### Silo Social

# Sports, board games, local & all-company events

We regularly organize joint activities across different locations. We have spent time together in running, skiing, cooking, tasting wines, mushroom picking - you name it. We also like to hang out by going to the gym, playing board games or just by having a beer together. Twice a year we've gathered the global team together for summer and xmas parties.

People in business roles come together with their teams and experts meet regularly at the offices to build bonds with each other and to discuss things outside everybody's daily project work. Getting to know each other's versatile backgrounds and work we do, helps in getting the most out of our community.

#### It's also up to you

Like many things in Silopolis, social activities also get organized in an organic way: typically as a result of a lunch conversation or someone posting a cool idea to our all-company #silo-social or one of the location specific slack channels. Silo Social activities are (most of the time) sponsored by the company.



#### Socializing remotely

Whilst we want to encourage Silonauts to attend social activities organized in the physical world - meeting colleagues face to face also has health benefits - we also have a very lively remote community which manifests itself in the weekly Virtual Team Lunch hosted and sponsored by Silo AI. There are also regular virtual coffee sessions, online gaming nights and other remote events where anyone can meet other Silonauts - also outside of their own location!



Silopolis is buzzing on Fridays!

Silo Fridays have become one of the cornerstones of our culture. Previously they meant gathering everyone back to their homebase to meet colleagues face to face. Now in the hybrid setting many attend the activities remotely - but the community spirit still holds strong.

Most Learning Lab activities (more on this later) take place on Fridays.

The real glue for the community is the hosted Virtual Team Lunches sponsored by the company. Be it competing in quizzes, sharing

answers to get-to-know-each-other questions or for example sharing monthly photos in the #silo-social channel, the Team Lunch followed by the weekly All-hands gathers us together as a team every week across all locations and settings.

# Taking care of your mind

In addition to our in-house services for mental wellbeing, we partner with Auntie to offer hassle-free online wellbeing coaching. You can for example find new recovery methods in Stressed Outpackage or improve your sleeping routines.

At Silopolis you are also encouraged to take care of your mental wellbeing by participating in our regular trainings on topics like impostor syndrome, recovery and psychology of happiness. If you want, you can also book 1-on-1 sessions with Silo AI's own Wellbeing Specialist. Those who have been dreaming of starting a regular meditation habit can drop in to our weekly meditation breaks - it's easy and so refreshing!



# Physical health

For laptop-heavy work, it's important to have work equipment that supports the ergonomics. Depending on your hybrid work choice, we offer an ergonomic work desk, chair and monitor either at one of our offices or in your home.

In our new Helsinki office, employees can also use the upstairs gym to have a break from work! Don't worry if you are not located in Helsinki - we also offer sports vouchers in all our locations to support the activity of Silonauts. If you are more of a fan of gentler movement, be sure to try our weekly virtual morning yoga class.

# Learn & grow: Learning Lab Framework

# Learning is in our DNA

We get kicks out of exploring and learning new stuff. Most learning takes place in the daily work context in various client projects. In addition, we take pride in organizing plenty of additional activities to foster collective and individual learning. We've already mentioned our value Keep Learning and its embodiment Learning Lab. Let's dive deeper into what it means.

Learning Lab builds itself on top of our best quality – our expertise and our understanding of the needs of AI related work – and helps us share knowledge and learn together. Learning Lab is a must-see for your stay at Silopolis!

# Learning Lab consists of the following areas:

- Workshops on topics such as self-leadership, feedback skills or wellbeing themes
- On-demand 1-on-1 sessions like Talent Coaching or discussions with Auntie professionals
- Research, embodied in our monthly Research Club gatherings
- Project & Tech Discussions to pick the brains of other Silonauts working on similar areas
- Self-learning, fostered by self-development budget and using time between client projects for competence development



"Learning lab offers a great opportunity to both share my knowledge and get insights from others."

- KIMMO SÄÄSKILAHTI, LEAD SOFTWARE DEVELOPER



# SILO LEARNING LAB - Learning Services Framework

	WHAT?	WHY?	HOW?
RESEARCH	Research Club	Sharing academic research topics and papers	On a monthly basis on Google Meet/@HKI office
WORKSHOPS	Friday Workshop	Training on important skills for all Silonauts, such as communication and self-leadership	Monthly session in Google Meet
1-ON-1 SESSIONS	Talent Coaching	Personal development and growth plans	On-demand, led by Expert Leads and Team Leads
	Mentoring	In-depth mentoring on technical or human skills topics	On demand, Expert/Team Lead organise a person to provide mentoring
	Auntie Discussions	Support with e.g. self-leadership skills	Booking an Auntie check-in session
PROJECT AND TECH DISCUSSIONS	Project Learnings Expert Weeklies	Learnings and key takeaways from different projects Rotating topics on technologies, project leadership and client work	Friday All-hands in Google Meet Weekly in Google Meet
SELF-LEARNING	Expert Growth projects Self-development benefit	Tech strategy aligned skills development Individual learning interests	In-between client projects Allocated budget for self-learning
FEEDBACK	Personal feedback	Feedback on strengths and improvement areas  Alignment of work and ability to improve as a team	Employee-led feedback request in Teamspective  End/mid project reflection sessions
	Project reflections	Alignment of work and ability to improve as a feam	End/mid project reflection sessions



# Workshops

Monthly Workshops are built around learning essential skills to successfully navigate around Silopolis.

Sometimes topics are targeted more to our expert roles, but often the themes are relevant to all Silonauts regardless of the role. Some previous Learning Lab Topics include:

- Design in AI Systems
- Smooth project collaboration
- Communicating in challenging situations
- Mental health at work
- Impostor syndrome
- Version control and code review

Workshops are typically held on Friday mornings on the last week of the month and are hosted by either an external coach or one of our internal experts. The sessions are open for everyone interested in the topic, if your client work schedules allow.

Learning Lab workshops are always organized in Google Meet and most often also recorded, so it's possible to learn new things wherever you're located! The dates and details for the workshops are shared in our internal newsletter Silo Insider, on Slack and via a calendar invite.

# 1-on-1 sessions

# On-demand sessions to support your personal development goals

In addition to your regular Growth Discussions, you can book 1-on-1 Talent Coaching session with your Expert Lead or Team Lead to support your professional and personal development.

Also the Auntie service provides many opportunities for personal development. We encourage all our new employees to try the Auntie check-in, which can be followed by a 5-session package to support self-leadership, team leadership or just getting to know yourself better!



# All-hands

#### Weekly company-wide meeting

On Fridays we connect through a company-wide All-Hands meeting in Google Meet, which takes place just after the weekly Virtual Team Lunch.



Topic of the Allhands presentation vary from company updates to project learnings from different client projects. If you have something to share with the entire team, feel free to suggest taking the stage!

# Feedback

# Hunger for feedback is the secret for growth

We don't want anyone to get lost in Silopolis. In our organization, all Silonauts are encouraged to reflect on their work and ask for feedback. And provide it for others!

We use a tool called Teamspective that allows us to facilitate peer feedback with the aim to know where we shine and where we have room for growth. The tool also offers a way to praise our colleagues who have helped us or done otherwise great work. Praises are shared in our #silo-feedback Slack channel.

Teamspective is also used to stay on the pulse on the wellbeing and satisfaction of our employees. Regular pulse surveys measure things that are crucial for a healthy company culture, employee engagement and wellbeing. The results are transparent to all Silonauts.

We are happy to have you at Silopolis and hope you enjoy it here!

# SILOAI

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