



Benno Willke was born in 1963 in Hildesheim, Germany. He studied physics at the University of Hannover and started his scientific career in the field of plasma physics in which he got his diploma degree in 1989 and his Ph.D in 1992. During this time he had his first contact with lasers which he used to measure photoionization cross sections of the Ba atom.

In 1993 he joined the field of gravitational wave detection and worked on laser stabilization and on the design of the GEO600 gravitational wave detector. In 1997 he was awarded a fellowship of the Humboldt foundation to work at Stanford University and Caltech on the stabilization of the laser source for the LIGO gravitational wave detectors. When he returned to Hannover in 1998 he organized and worked on the commissioning of the GEO600 detector. Since 1998 he is the chairperson of the Laser Working Group of the LIGO scientific collaboration and served on several executive and advisory committees. Currently B. Willke leads the development of the laser subsystem for the Advanced LIGO gravitational wave detector and works on experiments related to laser stabilization and to quantum noise in interferometry.