Profile

Seasoned software engineering lead, with decades of experience across a wide variety of technology sectors. My journey began as an apprentice developer, working on form oriented data-entry and database software for small and large enterprises. From there I progressed to lead roles through enterprise software, pivoting into internet startups just around the exact moment in time that web commerce for business was emerging as a viable path in the UK.

I have been lucky enough to work on the core team early British internet success stories – I was part of the early IMDb.com developer team, which got me a role within amazon.com right back in their early years. I was lead database architect at Last.fm, the pioneering machine-learning fuelled algorithmic streaming radio service, a key member of their operations team. I was principal platform engineer at Wonderbly.com, the award-winning personalised children's book publishing platform.

Inbetween all of these, many other, less headline-grabbing roles across a range of different companies, from tiny single-digit headcount startups, to international corporations. For the past six years I was working at the European SaaS cloud provider Platform.sh, starting as one of their tiny cloud engineering squad, and moving all the way to VP as they scaled up the engineering team. Recently I've stepped away from that as a focus shift, and have been working with smaller scale start-ups once again, working on the Finxone fintech smart "no-code app platform.

Skills

I've worked on a broad range of software systems, mostly but not exclusively web and internet focused. Particular focus areas have been interactive and social content, content management systems, commenting and forum systems, publishing and digital typographic content, scaling data systems. Example technology components I've worked with as a contributor to production systems would be Ruby/Rails, Scala, Java, C/C++, SQL databases, particularly Postgresql, common lisp, JavaScript, Python, Objective-C. I'm more commonly associated with "back-end" engineering work and teams than I am "front-end" - although I've done enough desktop and web client work to reasonably call myself "full-stack", in a modest sense. I have a good track record of onboarding and learning fresh stacks and systems. I'm great in a team.

These days, I typically find I bring the most value as an engineering manager, or leader, working at director level or above, than as a hands-on contributor, although I can still engage as a developer when required, and where it's useful. My deep technical roots and years of experience at many levels combine to give me excellent "empathy for the role", something I find is fundamental to building the essential, honest, rapport between a lead and engineering reports. I'm a great people manager, particularly for engineers, not just a "guy in a suit" manager.

As a leader, I lean more towards collaboration, team-building, facilitating, inspiring and mentoring work than I do to architecture and strategy planning, although I've done both in my history. As a lead I've extensive experience leading teams of developers and managers across small to medium sized organisations, start-ups to scale-ups.

Experience

Finxone Ltd
2024-, *Principal Engineer*
Working on *everything*, but primarily infra/ build/ deployments in the operations team of a novel fintech platform startup.
```
Stack: Azure,k8S,helm, go, postgresql, Typescript,
node, docker
```

Platform.sh
2023-2024 - *VP Tooling & Imaging*
Created new division for support engineering with a focus on tools build automation and containers
2022- 2023, VP Engineering Excellence
Running new engineering division focused on engineering craft, quality, culture, practice
2021-2022 Director Ops & Eng. EMEA
Running a regional core engineering zones, line manager for engineers, including managers and leads
2020-2022 Director of Engineering, core
First specialist engineering manager role in the organisation, as we scaled up engineering.
2018-2020 Cloud Engineer, core team
Feature developer on cloud orchestration system. Built performant, fixed-overhead content decoding for front edge WAF. Designed & built fixed-overhead upgrades for our managed Postgresql service.
```
Stack: Go, Python, Java, Postgresql,LXC, linux, lisp
```

Synthace Ltd.
2018 – Senior Software Engineer
Worked on UI features for antha lab automation in-browser IDE,custom query engine for data on the backend, and data export and parsing from biotech automation robots over serial lines.. Mentoring junior team members
```
Stack: Go, Docker, Kubernetes, Redux, Polymer.js,
Chrome, Windows, linux, Python, antha
```

Wonderbly.com (lostmyname ltd.)
2016-2017 – Principal Engineer
Senior developer on digital publishing platform team. Built compositing pre-press and web renderer for personalised books and other products. Also an OpenGL nano-renderer enabling simplified GL pipelines to run in the cloud without redress to GPU hardware. Coaching and mentoring other developers.
```
Stack: Go,Scala,Java,PDF,C++,OpenFrameworks, TrueType
```

Makeshift.io/Wrangler.io
2014-2015 – Tech lead.
Technology lead for startup, software and infrastructure. Built asynch query engine Rails middleware, a client/server protocol and a heroku plugin. Ran the tech team.
```
Stack: Heroku,Ruby,Rails,JavaScript,ansible,C,go,
Postgresql,lisp,vagrant.
```

Last.fm
2010-2013, Database architect
Main databases and scaling infrastructure in at Last.fm, the awesome scrobbling social music streaming site. Ops lead for databases. Lead team to redesign authentication back-end after legacy system suffered a password breach.
```
Stack: Postgresql, Varnish, C, linux,
memcached, PHP
```

Logical Bee
2007-2010, Director of everything
Logical Bee was my own tech company building audio recording software for Mac platforms.
```
Stack: OS X, MIDI, CoreAudio/AU, Objective-
C,lisp
```

Future Publishing Ltd.
2007-2010, consultant developer
Worked on the in-house publishing and asset management systems. Bespoke desktop layout application and large binary object management.
```
Stack: Java, perl, Solaris/Oracle, C, PHP,
linux
```

Amazon.com
2002-2006, SDE
IMDb team. I invented and ran the imdb message boards. Also other parts of core web platform. DBA.
```
Stack: apache, mod_perl, C, Postgresql, Unix,
linux
```

Sift plc.
1999-2001, Developer
Startup, web platform. Ported RDBMS to Postgresql.
```
Stack: perl, mod_perl, Postgresql, PHP, linux
```

ADSW plc.
1997-1999, Applications Developer
MIS/Data for windows desktops, client/server.
```
Stack: Windows, Oracle, Gupta, C, Java, linux
```

Mountfield Software Ltd.
1995-1997, Analyst Programmer
corporate desktop data entry/ analytics software.
```
Stack: Windows, Unix, C, Gupta, informix,
oracle
```