

# CHRIS ASHTON

## Full-stack Software Engineer

✉ [chris AT ashton.codes](mailto:chris AT ashton.codes)



📍 Cambridge, UK

🌐 [ashton.codes](https://ashton.codes)

🔗 [ChrisBAShton](#)

## EXPERIENCE

### Senior Developer

#### Government Digital Service

📅 June 2021 – Present

- Currently leading an informal team responsible for rolling out Continuous Deployment and improving developer tooling.

### Developer

#### Government Digital Service

📅 April 2019 – May 2021

- Led a stream of work to reduce application errors across GOV.UK by over 90%. Introduced alerting so that new issues can be quickly fixed.
- Regularly work on a number of Ruby on Rails applications: fixing bugs through TDD, upgrading dependencies, adding new features backed by user research, and contributing to GOV.UK Design System components.
- Use Icinga alerts, Grafana dashboards, Kibana logs and Sentry errors to debug issues on production. I've led on incidents, using DevOps techniques to monitor disk space and processes on machines, and Rails console to query PostgreSQL / MongoDB records with ActiveRecord.
- Work in agile, multidisciplinary teams that adopt a mixture of scrum and kanban, and have worked with stakeholders to write Trello cards.
- Simplified infrastructure and cut costs by migrating a static site from S3 to GitHub Pages, and its build job from Jenkins to GitHub Actions.
- Proactively paired with new developers on my team, and was designated the 'buddy' to a new joiner. I now line manage an apprentice developer.
- Co-ordinated an audit of all GOV.UK repositories, archiving 27 legacy repos to reduce the overhead of keeping dependencies up to date.
- Sifted CVs and took part in phone interviews for several developer roles. Wrote article about working at GDS, subsequently used for recruitment.

### Acting Technical Lead

#### BBC, Articles

📅 Nov 2018 – April 2019

- Led the delivery of v1 of the new BBC article renderer: an isomorphic React single page application and shared component library.

### Senior Software Engineer

#### BBC, Visual Journalism

📅 Feb 2017 – Oct 2018

- Recruited and trained a global team. Line managed and mentored several developers, allocating projects aligning with their goals.
- Upgraded legacy tech stack to pure Node/NPM and Webpack (including bespoke plugins). Migrated deployment pipeline to AWS.
- Volunteered as "Accessibility Champion" and improved standards.

### Web Developer

#### BBC, Visual Journalism

📅 Feb 2016 – Jan 2017

## SUMMARY

*I am a creative, organised and pragmatic full-stack web developer, specialising in Ruby on Rails, HTML, CSS, JavaScript and Accessibility.*

## ACHIEVEMENTS



#### Graduated top of university class

Awarded *Best Bachelor Degree in Computer Science* out of approx 80 people



#### 'Exceeded' rating

Achieved highest rating in GDS end-of-year reviews in 2020 and 2021



#### Conference speaker

Spoke at Paris Web 2018



#### Smashing Magazine contributor

Published a series of articles on [smashingmagazine.com](https://smashingmagazine.com)



#### Run the *frequent11y* newsletter

To date, I've distributed almost 400 accessibility newsletters to hundreds of subscribers.



#### Best Contributor of the Year

Awarded at the BBC News Developer Awards 2015



#### BBC Symphony Chorus

Have sung in several televised Proms since joining in 2013

## EDUCATION

### B.Eng. in Software Engineering

#### Aberystwyth University, Wales

📅 Sept 2011 – June 2015

#### 1st class, with Honours; BCS-accredited

Technologies used: Java, C++, C, Haskell, Python, Ruby, PHP

Key modules: Advanced Computer Graphics, Agile Methodologies, Machine Learning, Computer Vision, Data Structures & Algorithms

AAB (A-Levels), B (AS Level), 13 GCSEs (11 at A\*/A)

[Lampeter Comprehensive School, Wales](#)

- Devised and implemented an abstraction strategy to deliver Visual Journalism content across the BBC apps, web and third-parties. Wrote about this on *Smashing Magazine* and spoke about it at *Paris Web Conf*.
- Regularly created multi-lingual, full-stack applications for the web and the BBC apps, covering high profile events to tight deadlines.

## Test Engineer

### BBC, Visual Journalism

📅 July 2015 – Jan 2016

- Led the maintenance of a screenshot testing tool (Wraith). Hand-built a BDD framework in Node. Set up Docker test suites on CI.

## Founder

### Webdapper Ltd

📅 Aug 2014 – Present

- Founded my own company whilst at university. To date, I've planned, designed and developed over 10 websites for clients.

## Trainee Web Developer

### BBC, Visual Journalism

📅 July 2013 – Aug 2014

- Developed the *Commonwealth Games* feature, which was televised on BBC Breakfast. I also took the initiative to translate it to Welsh.
- Templated the 'datapic' format. Blog: <http://bit.ly/1wT6XTz>

## PUBLICATIONS

### 📰 Newsletters

- *frequent11y newsletter*. (2019 - Present) Daily, weekly, fortnightly and monthly newsletters distributed to a large cross-government accessibility community and hundreds of independent subscribers. URL: <https://ashton.codes/subscribe-to-frequent11y/>.

### 👤 Talks

- "Publishing content to multiple platforms" (2018). In: *Paris Web Conf*: <https://vimeo.com/295213010>.

### 📖 Books

- Clarke, Jill (2020). *Software Developer*. Case Studies chapter: 'The Road To Being An Experienced Developer'. BCS, pp. 156–157.

### 📄 Articles

- *I Used The Web For A Day...* (series, 5 articles, 2018-19). URL: <https://www.smashingmagazine.com/author/chrisbashton/>.
- *What I like about being a developer at GDS* (Aug. 2019). URL: <https://technology.blog.gov.uk/2019/08/14/what-i-like-about-being-a-developer-at-gds/>.

## PROJECTS

**StudentMunch.com** - food review site, using structured data markup to show as reviews in search results. Built as a Progressive Web App on top of AMP.

Service Workers   AMP   Offline first  
PWA   PRPL pattern   Structured data

**peepshowquot.es** - fan website for Channel 4 sitcom *Peep Show*: a searchable directory of gifs for every quote.

React   NodeJS   Jamstack  
AWS Lambda   Serverless

**SmartResolution.org** - online dispute resolution platform with plugin support for AI-driven resolutions. Awarded the Best Major Project prize at university.

Cucumber & Ruby   PHP   Composer  
SQL   PDO   LAMP

**Secretary** - automatic quality assurance editorial checks for WordPress posts. Built to be extensible and config-driven.

[wordpress.org/plugins/secretary/](https://wordpress.org/plugins/secretary/)

WordPress   YAML   SVN   Open-source

**3D Solar System** - solar system written in WebGL.

[chrisbashton.github.io](https://github.com/chrisbashton)

WebGL   JavaScript   HTML5   CSS3

## REFEREES

References available upon request.