CHRIS ASHTON

Full-stack Software Engineer

chris AT ashton.codes · London, UK · ashton.codes · ChrisBAshton · chrisbashton

EXPERIENCE

Developer
Government Digital Service

📅 April 2019 – Present

- 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 lead 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.
- Independently developed a deep knowledge of GOV.UK architecture, which I documented and presented at a department-wide meeting: https://docs.publishing.service.gov.uk/manual/architecture-deep-dive.html
- Took the initiative to simplify infrastructure and cut costs by migrating hosting of a static site from S3 to GitHub Pages, and the corresponding 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.
- Started the *frequent11y* newsletter, collating hundreds of resources for over 115 subscribers and the cross-government accessibility community.
- 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

- Devised and implemented an abstraction strategy to deliver Visual Journalism content across the BBC apps, web and third-parties.
- Regularly created multi-lingual, full-stack applications for the web and the BBC apps, covering high profile events to tight deadlines.

SUMMARY

Experienced full-stack web developer, with a focus on Ruby on Rails.

I am a creative, pragmatic and organised individual with a proven history of leading teams, currently working for the Government Digital Service.

Passions: a11y · perf · standards

Values: diversity · flexibility · autonomy

Enjoys: bouldering · cooking · singing

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 review, March 2020

🏆 **Conference speaker**
Spoke at Paris Web 2018

🏆 **Smashing Magazine contributor**
Published a series of articles on smashingmagazine.com

🏆 **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

📅 Sept 2011 – June 2015

1st class, with Honours; BCS-accredited

AAB (A-Levels), B (AS Level)
Lampeter Comprehensive School

📅 2003 – 2010

13 GCSEs (11 at A*/A)

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

👥 Talks

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

📘 Books

- Clarke, Jill (2020). *Software Developer*. **I was asked to provide a section to the Case Studies chapter: 'The Road To Being An Experienced Developer'.** United Kingdom: BCS, pp. 156–157.

📄 Articles

- *I Used The Web For A Day On A 50 MB Budget* (July 2019). URL: https://smashingmagazine.com/2019/07/web-on-50mb-budget/.
- *I Used The Web For A Day On Internet Explorer 8* (Mar. 2019). URL: https://www.smashingmagazine.com/2019/03/web-on-internet-explorer-ie8/.
- *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/.
- *How BBC Interactive Content Works Across AMP, Apps, And The Web* (Mar. 2018). URL: https://www.smashingmagazine.com/2018/03/bbc-interactive-content-amp-apps-web/.
- *I Used The Web For A Day Using A Screen Reader* (Dec. 2018). URL: https://www.smashingmagazine.com/2018/12/voiceover-screen-reader-web-apps/.
- *I Used The Web For A Day With JavaScript Turned Off* (May 2018). URL: https://www.smashingmagazine.com/2018/05/using-the-web-with-javascript-turned-off/.
- *I Used The Web For A Day With Just A Keyboard* (July 2018). URL: https://www.smashingmagazine.com/2018/07/web-with-just-a-keyboard/.
- *High-Impact, Minimal-Effort Cross-Browser Testing* (Feb. 2016). URL: https://www.smashingmagazine.com/2016/02/high-impact-minimal-effort-cross-browser-testing/.

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`

GitHooks.io - horizontally scalable, hosted webhooks platform. Allows developers to write and share GitHub webhooks.

`LAMP` `AWS Lambda` `EC2` `Node` `GitHub API` `OAuth` `Composer`

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

`Cucumber & Ruby` `PHP` `SQL` `PDO`

Secretary - automatic quality assurance editorial checks for WordPress posts. Built to be extensible and config-driven.
wordpress.org/plugins/secretary/

`WordPress` `YAML` `SVN` `Open-source`

3D Solar System - solar system written in WebGL.
chrisbashton.github.io

`WebGL` `JavaScript` `HTML5` `CSS3`

REFEREES

References available upon request.