Aaron T. Grogg

Senior Platform Developer at Netbiscuits

aarontgrogg@gmail.com

Summary

Hi. My name is Aaron.

Born a few miles outside Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, I moved to Waianae, Hawaii just after the seventh grade, to San Francisco, California when I turned 21, spent four years just outside of Washington, DC, a little over six years in New York, New York, and, since December 2011, my wife and I have been living in Kaiserslautern, Germany.

I've worked with the web since 1998 and have a proven track record of clean, efficient, dependable products. I have an addiction to "what's new" and finding better ways to do something. I'm highly proficient in researching, testing, implementing, mentoring, and serving as a technology advocate.

Starting with clean, compliant, cutting-edge HTML, I add CSS to make it look right, then sprinkle a little JavaScript magic to make it dance.

I hand-code and focus on performance at all times. I always try to make IE happy, but am not afraid to let it look simpler, if that helps performance. JSON is a good friend of mine, we hang out a lot. I also like his friends Closure and OOJS. And when I want to really nerd-out, I spend time with Microformats.

I excel at WordPress and PHP, including custom-fields and -database interaction (check-out my Theme and Plug-ins below). I actually enjoy working with designers, back-end developers and third-party vendors. I'm also extremely well-versed in working on multiple projects simultaneously.

My world lately has centered around the mobile web, especially since starting to work for Netbiscuits, where I get to deal with nearly every device known to man. Needless to say, I have encountered my fair share of "challenges".

I also co-direct a non-profit interactive agency, UX Test Kitchen, providing award-winning agency-level services to other non-profits from around the world, for free. Yes, free.

When I'm not noodling with code, I can usually be found outside, hiking, biking, traveling, and/or just hanging-out and enjoying life with friends and family.

Thanks for visiting,
Atg

Skills & Expertise

MySQL
CSS3
JavaScript
jQuery
PHP
UI
UX
Ajax
Mobile Technology
JSON
WordPress
HTML 5
Mobile Applications
User Experience
User Interface
Mobile Development
Web Development
CSS
Agile Web Development
Mobile Devices
Skype
Git
Front-end
XHTML
Node.js
Grunt
LESS
GruntIcon
Web Applications
SEO
Web Design
Information Architecture
Tortoise SVN
SVG
CMS

Experience

Senior Platform Developer at   Netbiscuits

March 2012 - Present (1 year 5 months)

Launched in 2007, the Netbiscuits Cloud Platform was the first cloud-based platform for mobile web development, delivery and hosting.

As a member of this international, Agile team, my position as Senior Platform Developer continued my education in the world of mobile web development. With the literally thousands of devices that the Netbiscuits Platform supports, I have encountered more device inconsistencies than I could ever have

imagined. The good old days of IE5.1 vs. Netscape 4.7 seemed so tough, but certainly pales in comparison...

Coupled with a fantastic team of employees and focused and involved leadership, as well as the opportunity to live and intermingle with multiple cultures, Netbiscuits continues to be a tremendous growth experience for me, both personally and professionally.

Briefly:
• Lead developer on the upcoming Netbiscuits website, based on WordPress, including investigating open-source plugins, creating custom themes, incorporating best practices, and finding, developing and implmenting work-arounds for "finicky" devices
• Responsible for day-to-day support of the Netbiscuits products, including bug investigations and client-site issues
• Implement new features and fixes into products, often requiring coordination with other unit teams
• Assure all product features work cross-device, including all major tablets and smartphones
• When features do not work on a device, investigate possible solutions or work-arounds
• Communicate and coordinate with international team members, typically via Skype, but also via email and Jira
• Coordniate code repos via SVN and Git
• At all times remain focused on performance as much as possible
• Constantly keep abreast of latest advancements in technology and latest devices, exploring ideas and possibilities, investigating possible improvements or enhancements

Co-Founder / Director of Technology at UX Test Kitchen
April 2008 - Present (5 years 4 months)

UXTK is an interactive agency consisting completely of volunteers. Its staff comes from various agencies and companies - such as Razorfish, Time Warner, The New York Times, Harvard, and Sapient - in a collaborative effort to bring an agency-level presence to nonprofits.

UXTK was formed to address two needs: 1) The nonprofit community often lacks the means to hire high-end agencies, so their online presence often negatively impacts donations and services; 2) The user experience community is often limited by hesitant clients, ad requirements, SEO issues, etc.

Our services are completely free to the client, while still providing agency-level level expertise. Working for free allows UXTK greater creative flexibility, yet allows the client to address all of their needs without budgetary constraints. By combining these two needs, the non-profit community gets the service they need and deserve, and the UX community gets to break new ground where it might otherwise be impossible.

We recently launched our first client site, Rise | A Community Services Partnership (http://rise-community-services.com/).

Briefly:

• Work with clients to determine their needs and find the best solution for their situation
• Work with diverse UXTK team on all aspects of client project: Information Architecture, design, user experience testing, branding, host set-up, development, documentation, and client-training.
• Hand-code W3C-, standards-compliant, accessible HTML, advanced CSS, and unobtrusive JavaScript
• Incorporate site into WordPress custom themes and find plugins to satisfy client needs
• Implement web and SEO optimization techniques
• Implement progressive enhancement methods for CSS and JavaScript
• Work on various projects and sites simultaneously

Freelance Web Developer at Aaron T. Grogg
November 2011 - February 2012 (4 months)

During my transition from New York City to Kaiserslautern, Germany, I was able to continue working for a short time with Time Inc and a couple other freelance projects. The beauty of the virtual office...

With my established experience in HTML5, CSS3, JavaScript/jQuery, WordPress/PHP/MySQL, and lately focusing more on Webkit- and tablet-oriented development, I have been dealing with the challenges the various devices and OS versions bring to projects. It has been a great learning experience and one I hope to continue!

Briefly:
• Coordinate client contact, including Skype calls, emails, phone calls, and project deliverables
• Establish and restrict project scope
• Define short- and long-term goals for myself and my projects, being sure to meet deadlines
• Estimate project time frames, requirements, and costs
• Issue proposals, write contracts, and invoices
• Follow-up on payments, if necessary
• Communicate virtually with clients and team members, when necessary, to assure project was still on target and proceeding as expected
• Deliver final product on time, as requested, including deliverables, launch, and fixes & updates

Tech Lead, People.com at Time Inc.
June 2007 - November 2011 (4 years 6 months)

I began working for Time on a six-month contract. After the six months, they offered me a full-time position as a senior developer. Accepting the position at Time was a tough choice because it meant leaving the world of server-side code behind (ASP and SQL Server at this point) and focusing solely on front-end technologies (Time uses Vignette for the content-management, with TCL as the code, and they have a team of dedicated Vignette developers).

As much as I loved working with server-side code and databases, I felt the world of front-end technologies had the greatest growth potential, and therefore I felt I could make a greater impact focusing on that area.

The two best parts of working for Time are the people with which I am surrounded and the fact that I learn

something new nearly every day; I continue to grow as both a person and a professional. The biggest struggle I face is trying to bridge the gap between standards-compliant code and business requirements on our websites. Where possible, all the latest standards are followed, but certain business practices make 100% compliance impossible.

Briefly:
• Hand-code W3C-, standards-compliant, accessible HTML, advanced CSS, and unobtrusive JavaScript
• Implement web optimization techniques
• Implement progressive enhancement methods for CSS and JavaScript, including jQuery
• Implement IE work-arounds when necessary
• Use XML/JSON for interactive data sources
• Implement advanced JavaScript/jQuery
• Create modular scripts for use site-wide and cross-domain
• Work hand-in-hand with designers, back-end developers and third-party developers
• Coordinate with third-party services
• Work on various projects and sites simultaneously
2 recommendations available upon request

Web Developer at Bank of America
June 2005 - June 2007 (2 years 1 month)

I worked for the now-sold prime brokerage department within Bank of America (BofA). All prime brokerage clients were entitled to free website design, development, hosting, and maintenance; our three-man team included our supervisor, a designer, and me as the developer. In addition to developing client sites, maintenance was a constant task.

I soon found ways to automate these processes as much as possible, greatly freeing our time for more advanced development while also improving turn-around time and ensuring data integrity by removing the "human touch".

When I learned that BofA was selling the prime brokerage department, I recognized I was ready for the next level of learning. Up until this point, I had been more-or-less "the development guy" and I was eager to work in a team environment where I could share knowledge with like-minded developers and continue to learn.

Briefly:
• Implemented advanced CSS and JavaScript techniques
• Automated monthly performance page updates
• Developed dynamic investor statement pages
• Combined server-side variables with CSS for dynamic page structure and content
• Introduced log-in-based access levels
• Developed conference registration website for Capital Introduction team
1 recommendation available upon request

Web & Software Specialist at National Academy of Sciences
May 2002 - June 2006 (4 years 2 months)

While in college full-time, I was hired as a part-time Production Assistant (helping manage the conference registration process for the Transportation Research Board (TRB): printing names badges; printing and spray-mounting conference signs; maintaining the third-party registration website; managing conference registration data).

I soon recognized several areas where we could improve efficiency and recommended solutions that changed their previous processes. After completing my two-year degrees, I was hired full-time as a Web & Software Specialist.

I left NAS knowing that web development was my career now. I was passionate about "making things work better" and "making computers do the work" as much as possible. My wife and I decided to move to NYC and I was eager for the next step in my learning.

Briefly:
• Developed static HTML templates for conferences, including 10,000+ attendee Annual Meeting
• Converted third-party form-driven registration process into template-based HTML, customizable registration process
• Created stand-alone ASP/database-driven online registration process for no-fee conferences
• Overhauled and streamlined Annual Meeting VIP invitation and registration process
• Integrated web-based database with MS Office for reporting and data distribution

General Manager at Touchstone Hotel
August 1998 - September 2001 (3 years 2 months)

Hired as General Manager to oversee a comprehensive re-branding and re-modeling project, I was also asked to improve sales, focusing especially on the international market. When I was told they did not yet have a website, I bought Elizabeth Castro's HTML 4.0 and started reading. With my first <font> tag I was hooked... :-)

Within three months we had a fully-functioning website, including an online reservation page. Coupled with additional online connections, such as Expedia, Travelocity, etc., sales soared.

Briefly:
• Interviewing, hiring, training, firing
• Accounts receivable & payable
• Sales & marketing
• Forecasting, budgeting, PNL Statement
• In charge of day-to-day hotel operations
• Manage team of 9 staff members

Volunteer Experience

Co-Founder / Director of Technology at   UX Test Kitchen
April 2008 - Present (5 years 4 months)

See Experience section for complete details.

Publications

Aaron T. Grogg | Thoughts, Findings, and Rants…
Self-published blog
Authors: Aaron T. Grogg

What started as a personal blog has evolved into a collection of posts regarding interesting and cutting-edge technology that I feel is worth tracking and sharing with the tech community.

In addition to my Today's Readings series, I also publish tips & tricks I encounter or discover, as well as updates to my various personal projects.

Projects

Responsive Test Environment
February 2013 to Present
Members:Aaron T. Grogg

A site I developed to help test multiple screen-sizes in one browser window with only one refresh; you choose the URL to test, you choose the breakpoints, make a change, click one refresh button, see the results in all your breakpoints at once.

Practical CSS3
August 2011 to Present
Members:Aaron T. Grogg

A site I developed that shows you how to create several of the most commonly requested design effects using nothing but CSS (well, almost nothing but CSS), including fallback methods to make it all work cross-browser.

Facebook Timeline Image Fix
February 2013 to Present
Members:Aaron T. Grogg

Fixes the way Facebook's Timeline annoyingly crops images. Save as a Bookmarklet, click once, scroll forever, see all the images, as they were intended to be seen...

WordPress Theme: HTML5 Boilerplate
August 2010 to Present
Members:Aaron T. Grogg

A WordPress Theme I developed based on HTML5 Boilerplate and the Starkers WP Theme; a great Parent Theme for any new Child Theme!

WordPress Plugin: HTML5 Boilerplate
April 2011 to Present
Members:Aaron T. Grogg

A WordPress Plugin I developed based on HTML5 Boilerplate; add H5BP upgrades to any existing Theme, but only the parts you want.

WordPress Plugin: Navigation Menu IDs & Classes
September 2011 to Present
Members:Aaron T. Grogg

A WordPress Plugin I developed to reduce extraneous classes and add unique IDs to navigation menus.

WordPress Plugin: Add Custom Post Type Slugs to Admin Body Class
February 2012 to Present
Members:Aaron T. Grogg

A WordPress Plugin I developed to add a class to the Edit Post/Page body element that reflects the type of the Post/Page being edited, in slugified-form.

WordPress Plugin: Add URL Slugs as Body Classes
February 2012 to Present
Members:Aaron T. Grogg

A WordPress Plugin I developed to add classes to the body element that reflects the current page's URL, in slugified-form.

Education

Pace University
BS, Computer Studies, 2006 - 2007
Activities and Societies: Graduated with Distinction
  1 recommendation available upon request

Montgomery College
Two Associates degrees, Simultaneously: Information Systems; Web Technologies, 2002 - 2004
Activities and Societies: Phi Theta Kappa

Languages

English   (Native or bilingual proficiency)
Spanish   (Elementary proficiency)

Honors and Awards

2010 W3 Award, Nonprofit category, Silver

UX Test Kitchen, for the complete rebranding and launch of the Orphaned Starfish website:
http://www.orphanedstarfish.org/

2010 W3 Award, Photography category, Silver

UX Test Kitchen, for the complete rebranding and launch of the Orphaned Starfish website:
http://www.orphanedstarfish.org/

2010 Communicator Award, Nonprofit category, Gold

UX Test Kitchen, for the complete rebranding and launch of the Orphaned Starfish website:
http://www.orphanedstarfish.org/

2010 Communicator Award, Nonprofit category, Gold

UX Test Kitchen: http://uxtestkitchen.com/

2010 Communicator Award, Structure & Navigation category, Gold

UX Test Kitchen, for the navigation and structure of the UXTK website:
http://uxtestkitchen.com/

2010 Communicator Award, Websites - Charitable Organizations / Non-Profit, Silver

UX Test Kitchen, for the complete rebranding and launch of the Orphaned Starfish website:
http://www.orphanedstarfish.org/

2010 Communicator Award, Websites - Charitable Organizations / Non-Profit, Silver

UX Test Kitchen, for the complete rebranding and launch of the Rise website:
http://rise-community-services.org/

2009 Davey Award, Navigation category, Silver

UX Test Kitchen, for the navigation and structure of the UXTK website:
http://uxtestkitchen.com/

2009 W3 Awards, Navigation/Structure category, Silver

UX Test Kitchen, for the navigation and structure of the UXTK website:
http://uxtestkitchen.com/

2009 W3 Awards, Nonprofit category, Silver

UX Test Kitchen, for the complete rebranding and launch of the Rise website:
http://rise-community-services.org/

Interests

Reading, writing, hiking, biking, camping, photography, traveling, drumming, learning, and of course, tinkering around the web...

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Linked in

4 people have recommended Aaron T.

"For the past 4 years Aaron has been a dependable, hard-working developer, a creative problem solver, a constant learner and a strong team player and resource. I've depended on Aaron to not only take on our most complex and ambitious projects but to also make smart, reasonable decisions in the day-to-day maintenance and growth of our sites. I very strongly recommend Aaron."

— **Joshua Hoeltzel**, *Director of Front End Technology, Style & Entertainment Group, Time Inc.*, managed Aaron T. at Time Inc.

"Like many managers in any kind of organization, I always cared to see valuable qualities in the workplace, to make my work and my colleagues' work more interesting. Aaron is one of those rare people who's willing to work very creatively, long hours, or, under pressure, when values matter to him and his company. It's quite easy to measure Aaron's success - he focuses on task completion, not time spent, and always delivers the project on its promise. In shared-responsibility environment, Aaron never isolates himself from the project processes. He's the developer who can be brought in to answer specific requirement questions, and then you can rely on him until what needs to be done is delivered. In other words, he's not a small part of a bigger picture - he's the leader and the active doer. I often ask Aaron for input. He's so remarkably good at IA and UX, that whatever he builds, he always aims it to be as solid and usable application as it can only get. If you need a feedback, Aaron will provide a useful one that will not only heighten motivation, but will actually help creating the best web product. On development side, Aaron's one of those highly talented front-end engineers with valuable qualities necessary to build usable web: Dom scripting, unobtrusive JavaScript, semantic markup, microformats, accessible web, cross-browser compatibility and knowledge of server side languages all complete a picture of a true developer I've been privileged to work with. Much to learn from, too much to lose."

— **Alla Gringaus**, *Web Technology Fellow, Time Inc. Information Technology*, managed Aaron T. indirectly at Time Inc.

"I worked with Aaron for about 3 years while at Bank of America. Aaron's attitude towards his work and his pride in his job performance makes him a very dependable asset. Aaron also has the analytical skills to diagnose problems and devise viable solutions. Aaron is well organized which allows him to stay focused during frenzied periods which in turn proves his ability to work well under pressure. Aaron's interpersonal and communication skills allowed him to develop productive working relationships with both clients and staff. Aaron is a great addition to any team. Not only would I recommend Aaron for employment without reservation, I have since hired Aaron as a consultant."

— **Richard Hradek**, *VP, Banc of America Securities*, managed Aaron T. at Bank of America

"Aaron T. Grogg was a model student, who provided tremendous expertise in the area of Web design and Web technologies. His greatest strength, in my opinion, is his willingness to help others. This is especially true of his aid to non-profit organizations. He looks for no reward for all of the many hours that he spends working on Websites for charitable organizations. He's exited about technology and I can always rely on him for information about the latest technologies on the market to help out one of our clients. Aaron got his grade some time ago but I know that I can call upon him at any time to speak at one of our events or to help out someone in need. He's a reliable friend!"

— **Darren Hayes**, *Lecturer & CIS Coordinator, Pace University*, taught Aaron T. at Pace University

Contact Aaron T. on LinkedIn