

Adam Van Lente

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About Me

I am a software engineer & entrepreneur who is motivated by opportunities to build things from scratch. In my career I've helped build products, teams and companies from the ground up. I am at my best in situations where there is a clear goal, few plans for how to achieve it, and wide latitude regarding how to do so.

I enjoy working on small teams in a fast paced environment. I am passionate about solving problems where Engineering, Product and Business Strategy intersect.

Skills overview

I work with these technologies frequently

- Javascript & Node, including common libraries and frameworks
- CSS, including pre-processors like SASS and LESS
- Databases such as MySQL, PostgreSQL & NoSQL
- Source control using Git and Perforce
- OSX/Windows/Ubuntu, Android and iOS
- Unix command line
- Adobe Creative Suite, primarily Illustrator and Photoshop

I work with the following technology less frequently

- Python
- PHP
- Objective-C
- Java/Scala
- Phonegap/Cordova and their ilk
- Cloud hosting services such as Digital Ocean and AWS

Non technical skills

- Stakeholder & Team management (product, design & engineering)
- Product management (roadmaps, backlog grooming, engineering sprints)
- Product strategy
- Experience communicating with boards, executives and external stakeholders
- Business strategy discussions and planning

Currently

I am currently Product Owner of Applications at Yieldmo, an AdTech startup in New York City backed by Google Ventures, Union Square Ventures, and Time Warner.

I came to Yieldmo to build an Application called "Ad Builder". Yieldmo sells Ad Formats, which end up serving on 2 out of every 3 mobile devices in the US (as of 2015). When I joined the 60 person team in May 2015, there was no easy way for internal or external users to build and traffic Ad Formats within our network. With the support of design and engineering at Yieldmo, we launched the first version of Ad Builder in August 2015, allowing all Yieldmo users to build and launch their custom advertisements.

Over the course of the next year the Yieldmo team doubled in size. As we adjusted to that growth, I ended up taking on the task of defining the product vision for not just Ad Builder, but a suite of roughly a dozen applications. This meant reducing my focus on writing software, and spending more time communicating with stakeholders and the company in general.

In this role my responsibilities ranged from interviewing, coordinating technical initiatives, building and socializing roadmaps, managing stakeholders and cross functional projects, and most of all building a strategy for our team and products. The most rewarding part of this role - and my time at Yieldmo - is the amazing team I've been able to work with and learn from.

Recent Projects and Experience

Below is an overview of where I've been over the past 5 or so years, omitting my current role as described above.

Google Maps

For a little over 2 years I contracted at Google in Mountain View, CA. In late 2012 I was approached to fulfil a one month contract, with the objective of touching up the interface on some web based mapping software. When my work was complete, I was asked to stay on to design a UI for a separate product, for which no interface currently existed.

This project lasted roughly 10 months; its goal was to bring a command-line tool to the browser by leveraging a REST API that was being built by the team. I had several responsibilities in this role; I shipped a ton of javascript, worked tirelessly on

interface prototypes, designed images and icons, met with varying levels of the decision making team, shipped a bit of Python, and helped shape the API that drives this product.

As time went on, I focused on feature requests for application. Bringing a command line tool to the browser made the product accessible to many different skill levels, so there was a natural influx in feature requests.

Urban Mapping, Inc

Urban Mapping is a San Francisco based company that licenses data, and offers an API to access said data. I spent 6 months with Urban Mapping between 2013-14, helping them rebrand some of their product offerings. Urban Mapping had reached out to me based on some of my freelance work, and offered me a brief contract to do a facelift on several aspects of their web properties. Though this was a contract position, I still went through a technical interview process.

This project involved digging into a complex API and gaining a customer's perspective of its capabilities. My next move was to lead the re-design of the Developer API Documentation website. This task included balancing the pros and cons of all available frameworks, refactoring a great deal of javascript and writing a lot more. I also rewrote a bit of Python powering the API, and stumbled my way through writing some bash scripts used for testing.

After the Developer portion of the site had been redesigned, tested and launched, I mounted an effort to create a new customer facing website for the company. The primary concerns with the current site were that performed poorly on mobile devices, it was difficult for others to edit and it did not match the (newly created) Developer site. During the course of this project, I again wrote a great deal of javascript, a bit of Python, and created many icons, logos and prototypes using Adobe Illustrator.

When my work was complete at Urban Mapping, I had successfully redesigned and launched two different web properties. I was offered a permanent role with the company, which I declined upon receiving an offer to return to Google and enhance the products I had helped build there.

West by Midwest, Inc

West by Midwest is a corporation I launched in late 2012 to handle consulting & freelance work. I have had the opportunity to build a few single-page web apps for companies, based on my knowledge of the Google Maps API (as well as other mapping APIs). These have ranged from simple store locator apps, to data

visualization demos, to complex apps with user specific data displayed on the map.

I have also been hard at work developing iPhone apps. In 2014, I launched my first iPhone app, called Ghit (GitHub Issue Tracker). This leverages the issues layer of the Github API to offer iPhone users a simple way to interact with their issues on the go. To date, I've received over 5,000 downloads, and maintain thousands of daily active users - all without any promotion.

These are just some of the projects I've been working on lately. A more up to date list can be found at adamvanlente.com, and you can view some of my code at github.com/adamvanlente.

My Business

One of my biggest accomplishments has been running a small business for 7 years. Throughout college and after graduation, I nurtured a fledgling, bootstrapped t-shirt company called RetroDuck.com. The business celebrated its 13th anniversary in January 2016. RetroDuck sells custom and retail apparel online, as well as in our store across the street from Michigan State University in East Lansing, Michigan.

In 2010, I established a goal of making RetroDuck a "stage 2" business; one that could survive if I wanted to move on to new challenges. Until that point, the company required my daily attention, and would have imploded if something happened to me. After many months of false starts and house cleaning, I left all daily responsibilities to an incredibly competent staff. I check in occasionally with my Management, Marketing, Customer Service and Production teams, and help craft long-term goals for the company. Currently, my primary involvement with the company is in creating software solutions to our business problems, and enhancing those I've already put in place. Below are some highlights of my time running RetroDuck:

- Established operating procedures for all departments (2003)
- Developed Marketing and Sales departments (2005-2008)
- Oversaw the company through two periods of 100%+ growth (2007/2009)
- Managed development of Flash-based t-shirt design software (2006-2007)
- Built and refined software to manage all customer interactions including art approval, correspondence, payments, scheduling and data analysis (2011-2012)
- Managed all financial tasks for the company (2006-2012)

Education

Holland High School

Graduated 2001

Active in Theater State Championships, 2001

Independent studies in Music Theory

Michigan State University

Graduated 2006

B.A. in English, minor in Philosophy

Activities & Distinctions

Rotary Club of East Lansing (2006 – 2012)

Active member of East Lansing, MI service organization. Board Chair for Press Relations & Administration (2008- 2012). Responsible for New Member Orientation.

Capital Area Local First (2007-2009)

Founding member and past board member of local Non-Profit Organization dedicated to promoting local shopping, services and activities. Web: CapitalAreaLocalFirst.com.

Grand River Connection

Member of Greater Lansing young networking group. Past member of the Special Events committee. Web: GrandRiverConnection.com

Impression 5 Science Center (2011-2012)

Member of Communications Committee. Here, I contributed to a team that helps structure the PR/Social Media message for a popular area children's science center. I wish I had this place growing up! Web: impression5.org

ing Magazine, LLC

In 2007, I co-founded on campus magazine for Michigan State University students. Our original concept was that we could leverage our connections within the university to put a magazine directly into student mailboxes - which would be incredibly valuable to advertisers, and give us an immediate circulation of around 20,000 copies. Once we negotiated a contract, we carried the distinction of the only student-run magazine in print on a regular basis, as well as the only student-run magazine with these distribution rights. In 2007, the company operated with an

unpaid, 20+ person staff for 16 months under my co-management. We negotiated partnerships/ sponsorships with various businesses and City departments in the Greater Lansing area. The magazine was sold around 2009, and has since been absorbed into Michigan State University's writing department.

Top 10 Over the Next 10: 2010

Received "10 Over the Next 10" award in the 2010 competition. This is a contest held by the Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce along with the Grand River Connection. It named 10 business leaders under the age of 35 in the Greater Lansing area that would be most influential over the next 10 years.

Hobbies & Strengths

I am a very self-motivated individual. I am comfortable with multi-tasking, team participation or leadership, and with quick problem solving in difficult situations. I come from a family of teachers, and love finding ways to simplify difficult concepts.

Aside from the technical skills listed above, I have many hobbies. I enjoy composing songs on the guitar and piano, and recording with a variety of different instruments. I enjoy endurance sports such as cycling & running. Reading has always been a love of mine; I prefer historical non-fiction, but often get wrapped up in a novel. My love of movies has given me a vast collection of completely useless trivia.

When I'm not improving on one of these hobbies, I like to travel, and do things outside of my comfort zone. It is very easy to do the same thing every day, and every so often I need to expand my boundaries a little bit. Sometimes that means travelling to an unfamiliar country, or sometimes it is simply visiting a new restaurant down the block. Regardless, all of the important things in my life have happened because I was willing to step outside of my comfort zone, take a risk, meet new people or learn new things.