Adam Van Lente

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About Me

I am a full stack software engineer, working on contract at Google in Mountain View, CA. This is my second stint at Google - I am currently refining a user interface I designed in 2013-14 for a Google Maps for Business product.

I am also an entrepreneur. I started my first web design business in high school, and currently co-own a 12 year old business. In my seven years of managing this business I learned a great deal about building teams, making the most of my resources, and solving problems quickly and effectively.

Currently, I am preparing to make a move to New York City, where I hope to find a long term opportunity. I am interested in companies that have great products, strong vision and leadership, and who allow their team members plenty of room to grow.

Please read about my skills and experience below, stop by my personal web site at adamvanlente.com, and check out my code at github.com/adamvanlente.

Skills overview

I work with these technologies frequently
- Javascript, including most libraries and frameworks. Lots of Node.js
- CSS, including pre-processors like SASS and LESS
- Databases such as MySQL, PostgreSQL & MongoDB
- Python and its standard library, as well as PHP
- Objective-C, including various frameworks
- Source control using Git and Perforce
- Cloud hosting services such as Digital Ocean and AWS
- OSX/Windows/Ubuntu, Android and iOS
- Comfortable in the command line on Unix based operating systems
- Adobe Creative Suite, primarily Illustrator and Photoshop

Currently

For the better part of the last 24 months, I have been contracting 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've had several responsibilities in this role; I've 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. I've also had great opportunities to lend a hand to other teams at Google where my experience or expertise was needed.

Currently, I am working hard to build requested features into the existing product. Bringing a command line tool to the browser has made the product accessible to many different skill levels, so there has been a natural influx in feature requests.

As development winds down on this product and it enters a maintenance phase, I am again on the search for an exciting, challenging opportunity in a fast paced environment.

Recent Projects and Experience

My experience in software has generally been with small, focused teams, though the products I've worked on have been used by hundreds of thousands of users all over the world (even in space). Below is an overview of where I've been over the past 5 or so years, omitting my current role as described above.

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 ton 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 (WXMW) is a corporation I launched in late 2012 to handle contracting & freelance work. Though it is largely a company established to make contracting easier, I have undertaken some exciting side projects since its inception.

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. I've received a great response from users of Ghit, and have seen over 1,000 downloads without any advertising or promotion whatsoever. I am currently developing a suite of travel related apps, based on my experiences traveling (as well as my travel goals).

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 - though a lot a of my projects are private - you can view plenty of public code at github.com/adamvanlente.

My Business

Perhaps my biggest accomplishment 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 12th anniversary in January 2015. 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)

I love talking about RetroDuck, the lessons I learned there, as well as other businesses I have started. Please feel free to ask me about the story of RetroDuck.

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.