

Alda Vigdís Skarphéðinsdóttir

aldavigdis@aldavigdis.is

www.aldavigdis.is

General technical skills

Programming languages

- **High proficiency (5+ years):** Ruby (Rails, Sinatra), PHP (WordPress, vanilla), JS, JSON, Bash, XSLT
- **Medium proficiency (2+ years):** PowerShell, Elasticsearch, Docker
- **Have worked with:** Angular, React, Python, C# ASP.Net MVC, Adobe ExtendScript, Microsoft PowerBI
- **Currently learning:** Kubernetes, TypeScript, Laravel, new OOP features in PHP 8.

Approach to software development

I am not tied to specific tools and generally try my best to pick the best ones out of my toolbox for each assignment, no matter if they are produced using PHP, Ruby or even C# if required; depending on the appropriate design patterns. I emphasise lightweight and accessible frontends, responsive backends and getting impressive results on time and on budget.

As a software consultant I work from the point of view of making professional tools for facilitating other people's work and that requires high standards of communication and deep collaboration efforts. Most of my roles and consultancies have been performed in a remote capacity, with on-location work as required or requested.

System operations and DevOps

In addition to the above, I have worked on CI/CD pipelines and other DevOps-oriented tasks such as performance monitoring using various tools such as Github Actions, Gitea, Drone, Docker, Travis, CircleCI, Heroku, AWS Elastic Beanstalk, Logstash, AppSignal, New Relic etc.

I am a skilled system administrator in the Linux/Unix space and have among other things performed security and privacy analysis, solved database performance issues in MySQL/MariaDB and Postgres, identified email delivery issues in addition to typical everyday server administration and installation.

Furthermore, I have set up and managed cloud infrastructure and currently maintain a build-it-yourself Docker image for running WordPress in a Kubernetes cluster, including the relevant documentation.

Other

I am highly knowledgeable when it comes to modern web standards; be it HTML 5 and its JS APIs, SVG and CSS (including animation work), WCAG 2 or HTTP/2 and 3's low level features.

Furthermore, I am a confident technical writer, strive to provide first class documentation (using tools such as YARD or API Blueprint, or just plain English) whenever there is capacity for it and can confidently step

into a project to analyse and document a system as an external auditor on a short term assignment or for a long term role.

Relevant employment history

Independent consultant

Full-stack web developer 2009 onwards

Mennsk Consulting (2021–2023): For the past two book seasons, I built, migrated and supported a Ruby on Rails system for Iceland's traditional Christmas book catalogue that is delivered in print to every home and now online. This included migration and sync with an ageing legacy system, data entry and reporting facilitated using ActiveAdmin, a lightweight and snappy web frontend using a traditional Bootstrap/Sass process in addition to dependency-free JS libraries, JSON endpoints for Microsoft Excel and a reworked XML-to-InDesign print process facilitated by Microsoft PowerShell and XSLT. The project is hosted on Heroku and uses storage buckets and a CDN hosted at GCS. It has been nominated to the Icelandic Web Awards for 2022 in 3 categories, with results to be announced by the end of March 2023. The public facing portion is available at bokatidindi.is and its source code is available at github.com/FIBUT.

1984 Hosting (2019–2021): Development of a migration plugin for WordPress (incl. backend, UI, WP CLI interface, extensive documentation and DevOps environment using Drone and Gitea) for the largest web hosting provider in Iceland; in addition to upper tier technical support, particularly regarding privacy, security and performance using tools such as New Relic; and communication and advice regarding the hosting infrastructure itself in addition to liaison with 3rd party vendors.

Automattic inc. (2018–2019): At Automattic, I facilitated accessibility and UX improvements in the new React based WordPress Gutenberg editor in an hourly capacity; and then worked on several Gutenberg blocks that were included with Jetpack as well as internal backend services, contributed further to the WordPress core, blogged internally and externally about development processes and provided technical support for various Automattic Products such as WordPress.com, Jetpack and Gravatar in full-time capacity.

United Nations Association of Iceland (2018): As a step back into making websites, I created a content rich website, which is used as education material in primary schools and secondary schools for UNA Iceland. A relatively low budget led to an emphasis on content and accessibility above design as well as lowering future costs and resulted in a migration from a proprietary CMS to WordPress. The public facing portion is available at un.is.

UN Monitoring Mechanism for Syria (2014–2016): The UNMM was a small and independent group of UN officials, an organ of the Secretary General's office and replaced OCHA's role of monitoring humanitarian shipments being transshipped and crossing the Syrian border from neighbouring countries. My interest in logistics paid off and resulted in an extensive Ruby on Rails application using NVD3 and UI based on ActiveAdmin. The biggest unexpected challenge came in the form of non-existing technical infrastructure specific to the UNMM itself, which necessitated the use of the UN's central ICT facilities, which by itself was a learning experience about highly secure hosting environments.

UNRWA: (2013–2015): UNRWA needed a specialised survey and reporting system about security and sensitive issues of a similar nature. The solution came in the form of an offline-first tablet app built using

Cordova, SQLite and AngularJS, which synced with a backend and reporting system built using ASP.Net MVC and Microsoft SQL Server, with data being fed into a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet via PowerQuery for further processing such as monthly reports. This project led to various challenges when it came to internal technical skills and infrastructure and resulted in a temporary relocation to Lebanon for a majority of the project.

Kosmos&Kaos (2012): Provided web development and animation design services at the most progressive web design studio in Iceland. Clients included WOW Air and the Blue Lagoon Resort and Spa, which received multiple Icelandic Web Awards that year.

Further details, references (i.e. recommendations) and whitepapers are available on request to prospective clients and employers, but NDAs and professional standards of non-disclosure may apply, especially in terms of wholly security, privacy or HR related projects, none of which are listed below.

Seatris AI, Berlin

Senior Ruby Backend Developer April 2018 – June 2018

Was brought in to help overcome certain development obstacles as a Ruby on Rails developer. I amended workflows and documentation; and drastically improved the Rspec and Capybara based test suite.

POSPulse (24Insights GmbH), Berlin

Backend developer August 2016 – June 2017

My role was mostly related to the development and maintenance of data models and JSON API endpoints in Ruby on Rails using JSONAPI::Resources as well as location matching and other features using Elasticsearch, Chewy and PostGIS. I also revamped many documentation and style enforcement efforts in using the Ruby Style Guide, using Travis, YARD, Overcommit and Rubocop to maintain compliance.

Later on, my responsibilities included work with external app developers and screening, interviewing and training of job applicants and new recruits.

Aklamio, Berlin

Ruby on Rails Backend developer January 2016 – April 2016

My role was mainly related to API consumers and web scraping service workers for a Ruby on Rails system used for affiliate marketing. I also supported the in-house blog which was driven by WordPress.

Verðandi, Reykjavík

Software developer, technical lead November 2012 – August 2013

At Verðandi, I started by taking over a social media promotion and raffle management system written in PHP, which was then transitioned to Ruby on Rails. This system was later used to determine social media activity based on market segments.

I also worked on several raffle and promotion apps, acting as frontends for the system mentioned above and trained junior developers to use it as time passed. Clients included banks such as Landsbanki as well as international brands like Microsoft and Pepsi.

In addition I produced Various WordPress and static websites including annual reports and animation projects using SVG and CSS techniques. Clients for those projects included the Federation of Icelandic Pension Funds and the National Grid.

Public Speaking

Make your Gutenberg blocks accessible (and also web accessibility 101)

WordCamp Vienna, April 2019

Provided a talk on accessibility for those getting into Gutenberg block development. The talk went into the basics of web accessibility, the importance of the semantic web and how those techniques can be used to develop Gutenberg blocks.

Education

Keilir, Keflavik Airport

Autumn 2010 – Summer 2011

Preliminary studies

BHS, Reykjavik

Spring 2006 – Spring 2008

Multimedia design (unf.)

Media technology (unf.)

FVA, Akranes

Autumn 2002 – Spring 2005

Electronic Technology (Unf.)

General Electrical Studies

General Studies

Language skills

Icelandic Native speaker

English Fluent

German Basic knowledge

Scandinavian Languages Basic knowledge

Volunteer Work and Activities

I have helped manage and run communities and spaces for most of my life. When I have time and capacity, I have also run tabletop RPG games and ran English-speaking queer meetups until recently.

I was a part of the group who authored the Transgender Flag Emoji proposal to the Unicode Consortium. After being embraced by WhatsApp, Facebook and other vendors prior to Unicode's approval. It was finally included in version 13 of the Emoji standard.

I have been an active participant in the open source community for a long time. For example, my earliest WordPress contribution dates way back, with the container attribute for `wp_nav_menu()`.

As I strive to be a good open source citizen, I have recently contributed code fractions to various open source projects in my own time and as a part of my paid roles such as to the Icelandic Mac keymap in `xkeyboard-config` and `patterns for php-malware-scanner`.

I maintain a handful of Ruby gems available at rubygems.org/profiles/aldavigdis and have other work available on my Github profile at github.com/aldavigdis.