

AJ Bowen

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Summary

I'm a GoLang/Python/+ software engineer with a taste for ops.

My path so far has led me to some degree of competency in:

- French, Spanish, Russian, German, and a bit of Haitian Creole
- the federal student aid industrial complex, Medicare, running shoes, labor law, genealogy, forensic analysis of collections of old photographs, linguistic and anthropological cogitation, mysteries in general, brains, lockpicking, hydroponic gardening, crocheting, boating, Raspberry Pi, blues and jazz piano, humans and other animals
- **Linux**, **Docker** and friends, **AWS**, **Golang**, **Python**, **Ruby**, **APIs**, **CLIs**, **DNS**, **git**, **SQL**, and various other tools useful in the perpetual pursuit of making the machines dance.

I enjoy finding a good reason to experiment with tools I haven't used before. Particularly interesting past tasks have included writing scripts to deploy hordes of clustered EC2 VMs for Docker orchestration workshops, connecting multiple data services together into a useful CLI for colleagues in support, and automating my own job wherever possible, which is how I started coding in the first place.

Though I can appreciate a well-designed abstraction, I love learning more about the lower level aspects of the systems we rely on. I'd be especially excited to dig more into networking, filesystems and kernels.

For more, run: `$ curl cv.soulshake.net`

What I'm Looking For

I am looking for a primarily **remote role**, though I am willing to travel as needed.

My ideal team:

- is at least 50% distributed (*though offices in Berlin, Paris, Montreal, Toronto, Kansas City, NYC, or San Francisco wouldn't hurt*)
- is diverse, or working hard to get there
- has a demonstrated commitment to empowering their people to evolve
- has a strong open source presence
- is working on something of value to the world

Professional Experience

Solutions Engineer, Convovox

Convovox is an open source solution with the mission of making it easy to deploy production applications in containers.

My primary responsibilities were to:

- guide clients through the process of converting their application code and infrastructure to **12-factor**, **Docker** and **AWS**
- create example applications to illustrate best practices and common patterns

- provide on-call support
- create great **documentation**

I learned **Go** in order to make considerable **code contributions**, including dynamic bash autocompletion, support for new AWS regions, and various bugfixes and incremental improvements.

Tech lead, Voteraide

The Voteraide project (**mytiller.com**) aims to provide a direct line between constituents and their elected officials.

As a senior engineer on this project, I:

- learned **Ruby on Rails** from scratch to address failures in the application
- developed continuous integration, testing and deployment processes
- automated manual processes of retrieving & transforming voter registration data
- identified and proposed solutions to bottlenecks and shortcomings in the previously testless, manual deployment workflow

Technical evangelist, **Gandi.net**

After a year in support, I accepted a promotion and relocated to San Francisco to focus on building Gandi's presence in the US. Job responsibilities included:

- **developer advocate**: both online and in person (at tech conferences and industry events), I helped existing and prospective customers to make the most of Gandi's products (domain names, SSL certs, hosting, and the corresponding APIs) and communicated their feedback to our technical team
- **partnerships**: nourished collaborations with like-minded companies and projects
- **localization**: managed technical and marketing communications (product releases, newsletters, outages)
- **documentation**: made significant contributions to our documentation
- **special projects**: wrote example apps and CLI tools to help the support, marketing and corporate teams with manual tasks
- **communications**: helped shape Gandi's voice via our blog posts, newsletters and social media interactions, organize events and manage our supported projects

Internally, I worked with engineers, product managers and support to improve Gandi's APIs, web interface, documentation and open source presence.

Support I, **Gandi.net**

My starting role at Gandi was entry-level support: troubleshooting and explaining issues relating to **domain names**, **DNS**, **SSL certificates** and **Linux hosting**. My curiosity and interest in this role led me to specialize in more technical hosting issues, while helping to hire, train and mentor new employees. My French language and community-related skills led me to move to San Francisco to take on an official evangelism role in 2013.

Previously

I've worked in call centers, kitchens, offices, stores and classrooms in 3 countries. I try to improve any system I find myself a part of.

Technical Experience and other skills

Docker orchestration workshop admin

Over the past two years, I've co-delivered Docker workshops at major industry conferences like OSCON, LinuxCon, QCON, and more. I developed **open source automation scripts** to deploy the hundreds (sometimes thousands) of EC2 VMs used during each workshop. These scripts have been adopted by others for running their own workshops at conferences and companies around the world.

Technologies used: **Docker**, **Python**, **POSIX shell** to allow Linux and OSX portability, **AWS EC2**, **HTML** and **CSS** (to generate printable instructions bearing dynamic connection information).

Programming Languages

I really, really like automating things and developing internal tools to help my colleagues be more efficient. My primary toolbox includes, but is not limited to:

- **Golang**: Backend, infrastructure, APIs, CLIs
- **Python**: Django, API clients, contributions to the **Gandi CLI**, various side projects (listed below)
- **Ruby**: Contributed heavily to a Rails project at Voteraide
- **Shell scripting**: bash is my first love and shell of choice.

Projects

Among the recent side projects I've worked on:

- **Fonos**, an open source Sonos clone using Raspberry Pi
- **Startup Threads CLI**: Order t-shirts from the command line
- **click**: Easily (if not foolhardily) run desktop applications in containers
- **cv.soulshake.net**: View my resume on the command line via `curl`
- **Hacker Typer, demo edition**: A fun hack to avoid making typos during live demos

Research

I have a fondness for solving mysteries, which has manifested itself in a passion for genealogy, private investigations, security research, legal research and stubborn bug hunting.

Activism

I became involved in activism in 2012 thanks to the Occupy movement, which appealed to me due to its horizontal nature. There, I learned how to organize without leaders, handle delicate media situations gracefully, encrypt my communications, create partnerships with unexpected allies, and create maximum impact with limited resources.

I recount a part of this experience, and how it can be leveraged to improve the efficiency of meetings in traditional business organizations, in the talk **Your Meetings Are Unbearable**: Cheat codes from Occupy (delivered at DevOpsDays Minneapolis in 2016).

Education

2010

BA, Anthropology; University of Kansas

BA, French, (honors); University of Kansas

2007

DEUG Traduction (Associates Degree in Translation), Université Catholique de l'Ouest (Angers, France)

Additional skills

- Human Languages:
 - English (native speaker)
 - French (full professional fluency)
 - Spanish (conversational)
 - German (elementary)
 - Russian (survival)
 - American Sign Language (beginner)