Alex Birdsall

FULL STACK WEB DEVELOPER

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I care about solving problems and I hope to build beautiful, logically interesting things, working in a team that cares about ethics, collaboration, simplicity, and user experience.

Jul '24–present

Artisan

python
FastAPI
postgresql
DigitalOcean
docker
typescript
react

I am currently working as a full-stack developer at Artisan, a pre-series-A startup automating sales outreach. I've worn many hats, working on every part of the stack to quickly ship a wide variety of projects to production, from designing and building complex new features (including outreach through external services, requiring custom authentication as well as complex scheduling, rate-limiting, and error handling logic), to handling cloud infrastructure issues, database modeling and performance optimization, and working on the react UI.

Aug '22–Mar '24

Airbyte

typescript
react
cypress
python 3
java
GCP cloud storage
GCP firebase auth

At Airbyte, I worked on a variety of projects in a primarily frontend role. I consistently worked to improve code quality in the company's react web app; shipped the UI for a DBT cloud integration on an extremely tight schedule; restructured the cypress end-to-end test suite and rewrite its build system to allow better code reuse and type safety; and expanded the feature set of Airbyte's Connector Builder, including both improvements to its complex and dynamic editing UI, and backend updates to both its java server endpoints and the python low-code connector CDK which parses user-authored connector definitions.

Feb '20–
May '22

typescript
rails
elixir/phoenix
vue/nuxt
cypress
redis
GCP BigQuery
AWS Redshift
AWS Lambda

Indiegogo

As a full-stack developer at Indiegogo, I helped rewrite the legacy checkout UI from angularJS to vue; implemented a new suite of Cypress integration tests, improving speed, cost, reliability, and DX. I personally designed and implemented a total rewrite of the advertising metric system campaigners rely on after a facebook policy change; this required significant code changes, high-volume async job processing, and close coordination with nontechnical stakeholders both internal and external. I played a key role designing and building a new product to help campaigners manage inventory, shipping, and communication. The site significantly outperformed the main Indiegogo website while minimizing the learning curve for other devs.

Jul '17–Oct '19

typescript
scala
angularJS
frontend builds
react
A/B testing

SigFig

Working primarily as a frontend engineer at a digital wealth management startup, I helped redesign the build system of a large whitelabeled typescript app to use ES2015 modules and manage dependencies with npm or yarn; I converted thousands of files to the new system during the migration. I personally refactored the build system to remove its gulp dependency, dramatically simplifying configuration work. I also designed the frontend A/B testing API and rewrote its integration with a 3rd-party assignment backend, using a more modular design to decouple internal code from the idiosyncracies of that vendor. I helped launch a new typescript/react frontend application, including work on its Scala REST API.

Aug '16–Jun '17

ES2015
build scripts
browser
caching

Legal Information Institute, Cornell Law

Cornell Law School picked up the Lawfetcher project, rebranding it as RIO (Read It Online) and hiring me to maintain and expand it. I refactored and completed test coverage of the domain logic; wrote code to parse a broader set of citation types and link to more sources; converted the build process to transpile modular ES2015 application code and tests; and implemented a filename fingerprinting system to manage browser caching, enabling both frequent, iterative code deployment and efficient loading.

The Emoji Dictionary

Jan '17–Jun '17

php 7
Apache
build scripts
SEO

As a consultant, I did freelance work for The Emoji Foundation's crowdsourced Emoji Dictionary. The work focused on human-readable URLs, rewriting database queries and building indexes for clarity and efficiency, and other SEO and performance fundamentals, as well as extracting shared templates and refactoring old code for better semantics and maintainability.

Flock

Jan '16–July '16

Rails 4
Middleman
SCSS
encryption &
authentication

As software engineer for an HR and compliance startup, I worked with the entire stack from stylesheets to server ops. I maintained statically-built marketing sites as well as its Rails app. I personally implemented secure and user-friendly integrations with TraxPayroll and Greenhouse.io, which involved complicated data mapping, multiple forms of encryption, and, at times, working with out-of-date and contradictory documentation.

Lawfetcher

Aug '15–
Dec '15

JavaScript
regular
expressions
browserify

A freelance project in collaboration with Emeritus Prof. Peter W. Martin of Cornell Law. A free tool for legal writing, it semantically parses US legal citations and programmatically builds direct links to the full text in various free and subscription services.

Magoosh

Jan '15–Mar '15

MySQL
Rails 3
CoffeeScript
HAML
Bootstrap

I worked a contract job with Magoosh, a leader in online test prep based in Berkeley. I shipped new features in their Rails app, including auto-tagging for support tickets, an instructor dashboard, an in-house A/B testing library, and a photo upload system.

Jul–Sept '14

Programming &
web
fundamentals
git & *nix CLI
Ruby & Rails
JavaScript,
HTML, & CSS

Dev Bootcamp

An immersive 19-week web development program. Over the final 9 weeks alone, I worked over 1000 hours at the San Francisco campus in an intensely collaborative environment that emphasized hands-on learning, empathy, communication, and problem-solving.

**Nov '12–
Jun '14**

Portland Community College

While working as an art teacher, independently pursued interests in Statistics and Computer Science. Where I discovered how much I enjoy programming.

Class of '08

Cornell College

B.A. in English, minor in Music. Received 2007 Winnifred Van Etten Award for Creative and Scholarly Excellence.

Though seemingly unrelated, my studies centered on an interest in how human expression exists within and is influenced by logically analyzable systems like syntax, music theory, or grammar. I have found this to be surprisingly good preparation for the work of programming.