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Open Source Lead at the Government Digital Service. Technical architect, leader and software developer with over 10 years' professional experience. International speaker and writer. Particular interest in making things open, making things simple and making things available to everyone.

Open Source Lead at Government Digital Service
(October 2016 – date)

A team within the Cabinet Office, leading the digital transformation of government

First person appointed to this newly created role, I aim to improve the reusability of open government code and help government make more code open. See my [blog post about my objectives as Open Source Lead](#) for more information.

In my first few months in the role, I have:

- started **building a community** around government open source. Our first meetup had 90 attendees from over 10 different government organisations
- produced **clearer guidance** on open source, for example on security concerns
- begun **user research** into how reusability of government code can be improved

Technical architect at Government Digital Service

(April 2012 – date, as a technical architect since September 2014)

In my most recent hands-on TA role I led delivery of the first phase of [a PaaS for Government](#):

- **team leading** built an entirely new 15-person team, including recruitment, setting in place working practices, handling poor performance and building a strong, supportive culture
- **set clear direction** after analysing a wide range of sometimes conflicting user needs
- **sharing vision** by speaking at conferences, including [keynoting VelocityEU](#), and writing several posts about the decision-making process on the GDS blog
- **collaboration** created a cross-government hosting and infrastructure community to share knowledge and built close ties with US Digital Service and Australia DTO
- **openness** contributed to, and supported the team in contributing to, Open Source projects
- **champion best practice** across GDS (e.g. my pull request [guidance](#) and [explanation](#))

Previous projects as technical architect at GDS include being TA on the GOV.UK website, responsible for the technical oversight of six product teams and an infrastructure team.

Alongside these roles I have line managed and mentored in the tech community:

- been senior in the GDS technical line management community, leading on line management process, developer culture and diversity initiatives
- line management responsibility for between 4 and 15 staff at a time, encouraging them to take on line management themselves and developing them
- led on the first phase of building a career development matrix for developers at GDS (written up here: <https://gdstechnology.blog.gov.uk/2015/07/24/a-career-path-for-technologists-at-gds/>)
- led on recruitment, including interviewing, chairing panels, improving process and also talking externally about GDS

As a **senior developer** at the Government Digital Service (April 2012 – September 2014)

- led development of GDS's only Open Source project, vCloud Tools, now in use by government departments and industry
- tech lead for discovery phase of rewrite of central government's licence application service
- performed web operations on the Infrastructure & Tools team, supporting GOV.UK

Speaking

I am regularly invited to speak at conferences around the world. Recent talks I have given include:

[Open sourcing Government](#), GOTO, Berlin, 14th November 2016

An introduction to coding in the open and its benefits and challenges

[Operations: A developer's guide](#), FFConf, Brighton, 6th November 2015

A clear introduction to web operations to help developers understand the context and be better

[A PaaS for Government](#), Keynote at VelocityEU, Amsterdam, 29th October 2015

Why we want to build a Platform as a Service and how we are going about it

Writing

I am an excellent communicator and published author. I have written several posts on the [GDS technology blog](#), the [GDS blog](#) and the [Government as a Platform](#) blog, and I also write on [my own blog](#). I have written a chapter about DevOps at GDS for the book *Build Quality In*. 70% of royalties from this book go to Code Club.

Conferences

I serve on several conference programme committees. In 2015-16 I have been on the committees for [O'Reilly Software Architecture](#) 2016, [Velocity EU](#) 2016 and [Continuous Lifecycle London](#) 2016. I manage the website for [SPA \(Software Practice Advancement\) conference](#).

Other interests

I have participated in three [/dev/forts](#), week-long development working holidays, and I have volunteered for [IT Can Help](#), a charity offering free computer support to disabled people.

Previous employment in technology

Java designer/developer at Corelogic Ltd

(March 2008 – March 2012)

SME producing one of the main case-management systems for social services

Various projects including redesigning and rewriting one of the key components of the application for consistency, increased functionality and improved user experience, and developing a prototype for the next version of the application, as well as spending several months on production support.

Application developer at Atos Origin

(November 2005 – February 2008)

International IT services company with revenues of over €8 billion and 78,000 staff

Worked on various projects including production support for a multi-million pound project for Defra and team leading for a multi-million pound project for VOSA.

Previous career

Prior to working in IT I had a career in publishing, including editorial and production at a company that publishes books for dyslexic children, and freelance proofreading and copy-editing. I also worked as a volunteer advocate at Scotland's only maximum-security hospital.

Education & qualifications

Heriot-Watt University

MSc IT (Software Systems) with Distinction

Edinburgh University

MA honours degree Mental Philosophy. Class: 2.1