

Avi Flax

Seeking Senior Software Architect Role*

avi@aviflax.com

+1-347-426-7814

White Plains, New York

I design, build, and operate **software systems and teams** that solve **real problems** and make a **positive difference** in the world.

I believe that **values matter**.

▼ More Values

I believe that diversity and inclusion are crucial *and* create rich, healthy, sustainable, productive communities (companies).

I believe that [DRY](#) and [the Rule of Three](#) apply to docs just as much as code.

I believe that people can only do great work if they are healthy, growing, supported, and respected.

I believe that all great processes have one thing in common: they are regularly reviewed and refined.

I believe that the only thing that matters about any technology is its potential to solve problems.

I believe that technology is a phenomenally powerful tool that we humans have at our disposal to solve problems — if we so choose.

I believe that we humans do some of our best thinking while *communicating* — so let's do more of that.

I believe that institutional/communal memory is critical to building sustainable organizations.

▼ Current Position

2016–Present

Principal Software Architect at [Park Assist](#)

- Facilitating the company's transition from execution phase to growth phase
- Increasing collaboration and cohesion of the engineering team
- Establishing roadmaps for all systems
- Designing, building, and operating:
 - streaming data pipelines conveying data from sites around the world to a central data center
 - stream data topologies using [Kafka](#) and [Kafka Streams](#) to effect high-throughput and low-latency data-centric applications
- Driving adoption of:
 - infrastructure-as-code, configuration management, and immutable infrastructure with [Terraform](#), [Ansible](#), [CircleCI](#), [AWS](#), and [Kubernetes](#)
 - consistent conventions around testing, documentation, code review, and continuous integration
- Operating services with [Terraform](#), [Ansible](#), [AWS](#), and [Kubernetes](#), [Datadog](#), [Slack](#)
- Defining and executing new approaches to:
 - engineering support
 - team structure
 - hiring
- Create a culture of caring about sustainability, documentation, and maintainability
- Introducing and championing new:
 - development tools: [GitHub](#), [Terraform](#), [CircleCI](#)
 - company-wide communication media: [Slack](#), [Discourse](#)
- Mentoring those new to software engineering

▼ Prior Experience

2015: Timehop

- Refactored a critical and complex system into a loosely-coupled stream-based system using Kinesis and Go ([slides](#))
- Designed and implemented sophisticated integration with Twilio for SMS-based signup
- Designed and implemented a large-scale data processing tool to process billions of records very quickly

2014: Thinkful

- Designed and implemented an event-driven system to automate Stripe subscription management

2013–2014: SFX Entertainment

- SFX acquired Arc90 in 2013 to be its internal app design and development group
- I initially adopted the title CTO, then recruited [someone amazing](#) to replace me and shifted to *Chief Software Architect*
- I helped design and build an ambitious new-from-the-ground-up streaming music platform and integrate it with existing products
- I helped shape the organization by helping craft its structure, practices, culture, goals, communication, and approach
- I recruited key personnel

2005–2013: Arc90

- Arc90 was a Web application design & development consultancy; it was acquired by SFX Entertainment in 2013
- Wore many hats: developer, architect, team leader, partner, director
- Worked with teams to design, build, and maintain sophisticated software platforms, including:
 - A Web/SOA insurance platform covering all key aspects of policy origination and management
 - A Web-based search engine and reference platform for engineers
 - An API at the heart of a new-from-the-ground-up news distribution platform for Reuters
- Conducted technical audits of clients' acquisition targets
- Helped manage the business as a partner
- Managed client relationships
- Invested much time and effort in recruiting and retaining exceptional team members
- Started practice of regular company-wide code review

2001–2004: ADP

- Refactored, enhanced, and maintained a sophisticated application for producing custom financial documents for on-demand printing

2001: Register.com

- Team lead position for large high-traffic auction site
- Responsibilities included designing, implementing, and maintaining features; and reengineering site technology and architecture
- Created new internal tools and development procedures

2000: RewardsPlus

- Maintained and enhanced a large-scale online employee benefits enrollment system for diverse clients with diverse needs

1998–2000: Words In Progress

- Developed requirements and specifications for high traffic websites directly with clients; crafted application architecture and database design

1998: Ideal Computer Strategies

- Worked with teams of designers, coders, and project managers to concurrently develop and deploy client websites with basic dynamic features

1997–1998: PCC Internet Design

- Founded and managed a small web design shop in Pikesville, MD providing full-service web design and development to small companies in the Baltimore area

▼ Examples

- My current (stalled) side project is [Omnia](#), a system to search multiple document silos at once. Warning: under construction!
- A prior (stalled) side project is [GitHub Digests](#), a system to aggregate GitHub notifications into daily email digests. (If you check it out, please keep in mind that it's only 10% built and I was new to Ruby!)
- Another prior side project was [Three Things](#); I published [a post](#) telling its story.
- I've been collecting [resources for learning stream processing](#) since August 2014.
- In 2013 I published [Resourceful](#), a Clojure library that provides a more concise and more RESTful alternative to declaring routes.
- My last major project for Arc90 was to build a new platform for reuters.com:
 - I created [a diagram](#) of the overall architecture of the “Reuters Next” platform
 - I was asked to review a draft of the API spec; I provided [these notes](#)
 - I developed [a document](#) to capture the culture and process of my team, so we could ramp new members up quickly and effectively
 - I determined that the API codebase I had inherited needed to be refactored, and wrote [this summary](#) to explain why
 - When I left the project I shared [my parting thoughts](#) with the team
- I sometimes perform technical audits of existing applications or platforms. Here's [one example](#); I can provide more extensive examples upon request.
- I sometimes write blog posts:
 - [Kafka Summit 2017 Talk Proposal](#)
 - [Strange Loop 2016 Recap](#)

I'd be happy provide more examples of my work, such as architecture diagrams and presentations, business analysis, code, etc. Just [get in touch!](#)

▼ Key Skills

- Problem analysis

- Software design, architecture, construction, deployment, and operation
- Deep expertise in the World Wide Web and HTTP
- Web API design & development
- Product design
- Data engineering
- Team/organizational leadership

See also [Additional Skills](#) below.

▼ Key Technologies

- [Amazon Web Services \(AWS\)](#)
- [Clojure](#)
- [DynamoDB](#)
- [Go](#)
- [Java](#)
- [Kafka](#)
- [Kinesis](#)
- [Kubernetes](#)
- [Lambda \(AWS\)](#)
- [Python](#)
- [Ruby](#)
- [Terraform](#)

See also [Additional Skills](#) below.

▼ Around the Web

- [Blog](#)
- [Twitter](#)
- [Bookmarks](#)
- [Instapaper](#)
- [Stack Overflow](#)
- [GitHub](#)

▼ Additional Skills

- Behavior Driven Development
- Browser APIs
- Business analysis
- [CoffeeScript](#)
- [CouchDB](#)
- [Datomic](#)
- DB Design
- Django

- Elasticsearch
- Flask
- Groovy
- Information architecture
- JavaScript
- Markdown
- MongoDB
- Node
- OmniGraffle
- PostgreSQL
- Restlet
- SQL
- Solr
- Stripe
- UX design
- XML/XSL/XSD/XQuery

▼ Hobbies

- [Auto racing \(autox\)](#)
- Cycling
- Hiking
- [Reading](#)
- [Video games](#)

Thanks!

Thanks for scrolling all the way to the bottom of my résumé! I appreciate your interest. At this point, you might want to get in touch. Please do!

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* Or something like that. I'm not hung up on titles; I'm more interested in [what I do](#). If you have a need in that ballpark, please get in touch!

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