Cory Johnson

PROVEN FOUNDER & CTO · SOFTWARE ARCHITECT · EFFECTIVE BUILDER · HANDS-ON LEADER

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Summary

Repeat (Co-)Founder, CEO & CTO. Proud polymath and autodidact. Most recently Founder & CTO at Blockstars (previously Playpad / Drive.FM). Have grown Engineering, QA, and Ops departments from Zero to One in multiple startups in early hire, first employee, and founding roles. 15+ years of diverse engineering experience with specialties in low-level debugging, performance optimization, high-scalability architecture, management & hiring, culture building, and leadership development.

I thrive on tackling the hardest problems - the ones others give up on. Credited author on multiple software- & hardware-focused patent applications including acoustic echo detection / cancellation techniques, wearable devices, and more. PR contributor with successful merges to multiple large open source projects (e.g. React Native, node-webrtc, AudioKit). Equally comfortable operating in a command line interface environment or a GUI - fan of Vim, iTerm, and VS Code alike. Not afraid to question, debug, and possibly repair the hardware if all other possiblities have been ruled out. Always interested in learning and improving - whether an entirely new framework or simply a small optimization to the development environment.

Skills

Programming Languages	TypeScript / JavaScript, SQL, C++, C#, Rust, Kotlin, Python, Swift, Java, PHP
Frameworks · Platforms · APIs	React, React Native, Cloudflare Workers, Docker, PostgreSQL, ESP-IDF, Solana, WebRTC, Unity3D, AWS
Tools · Utilities · Editors	VS Code, Platform.IO, Xcode, Android Studio, Vim, Git / GitHub, CircleCI, Jenkins, NPM

Experience

Blockstars (previously Drive.FM)

FOUNDER & CTO *(Blockstars - Solana NFT Music Game)* (TYPESCRIPT, CLOUDFLARE, REACT, RUST, UNITY3D, C#)   *Apr. 2021 - Apr. 2023*

- Architected the *Blockstars* game's backend and Solana NFT metadata system.
- Oversaw all game development across client, backend, and internal tooling / services for both technical and non-technical disciplines.
- Personally implemented, released, and iterated on *Blockstars'* Solana (Metaplex) NFT metadata and corresponding Token Program(s) (i.e. contracts), including initial launch, pivot to "1-for-1 Airdrop", "ROL Currency Airdrip" (streaming token payout), and numerous other novel ideas / first-time features in the ecosystem.
- Personally implemented "NGMI" in-game feature, one of the first and only non-"Candy Machine" Metaplex NFT minting mechanisms on Solana. Optimized Solana transaction structure to fit burning of an old token, minting of a new token, and granting of additional flags / metadata on existing tokens all within a single idempotent transaction which players can safely and seamlessly execute from their own wallet client-side.

FOUNDER & CTO *(Drive.FM)* (REACT NATIVE, TYPESCRIPT, KOTLIN, POSTGRESQL, C++, PYTHON, HEROKU)   *Feb. 2018 - Apr. 2023*

- Architected the *Drive.FM* mobile game's React Native-based client and Kotlin- and Postgres-based backend services.
- Oversaw all technical leadership, hiring, and management.
- Personally invented and implemented a novel proprietary (patent-pending) algorithm for variable acoustic latency detection and microphone compensation, including native libraries for both iOS and Android.
- Personally developed and maintained all revenue platform interfaces (subscriptions, billing, etc.).
- Debugged (and submitted PRs for) core React Native repo(s) fixing various low-level platform bugs and memory management issues.
- Debugged (and submitted PRs for) open source node-webrtc library involving low-level Napi memory management concurrency bugs.

Sol *(Sol Reader)*

CO-FOUNDER, CTO (C++, ESP32, ESP-IDF, PLATFORM.IO, REACT NATIVE, TYPESCRIPT)   *Apr. 2021 - Jan. 2022*

- Coordinated and led electronics (hardware / firmware), optics, and software development efforts.
- Executed integration and debugging of new (first bring-up) electronics prototype packages.

Rocket Games **(acquired by Penn National Gaming)**

DIRECTOR OF ENGINEERING *(Cross-Platform Casino Portfolio)* (KOTLIN, TYPESCRIPT, C#, JAVA, SWIFT, PYTHON)   *Jan. 2017 - Oct. 2017*

- Led engineering organization through successful acquisition & earnout by Penn National Gaming ($77M+).
- Oversaw full-stack architecture and development of new cross-platform casino gaming portal from inception through live maintenance (React, TypeScript, NPM, Kotlin, Heroku, PostgreSQL, Redis).
- Oversaw successful completion and deployment of new cross-platform WebGL / HTML5 slot machine engine (C#, Bridge.NET, PixiJS).
- Directed continued iteration / growth of existing backend services, including numerous third-party and internal (Penn National) server-to-server integrations as well as creation of predictive customer intervention service.

Lead Developer *(Mobile & Web Casino Portfolios)* (C#, KOTLIN, HAXE, JAVASCRIPT, OBJECTIVE-C, JAVA, PYTHON) *Jun. 2015 - Jan. 2017*

- Drove initial architecture & development and directed ongoing iteration on core backend infrastructure services, including migration off of Parse onto our own stack (Heroku, Kotlin, Undertow, PostgreSQL, Redis).
- Assigned primary technical responsibility / stakeholder for our largest hit product, *Viva Slots Vegas*.
- Helped lead initial architecture & development of completely new web slots engine / technology stack (Haxe, OpenFL) to broaden the funnel on Facebook Canvas apps, with successful launch in two calendar weeks.
- Oversaw and maintained scaling of build system and various mission-critical native plugins (e.g. payments integrations, player identity / data persistence), decision-making on new third-party integrations, and engine updates for our portfolio of Unity products.

Principal Software Engineer *(Mobile / Web Unity Games)* (C#, JAVASCRIPT, OBJECTIVE-C, JAVA, C++) *Jun. 2014 - Jun. 2015*

- Successfully executed on company goals of early adoption & early launch of Unity IL2CPP build (iOS 64-bit support) and first-in-market WebGL support, involving significant low-level debugging, manual engine fixes, and collaboration with Unity team.
- Drove significant engine improvements including build size / bytecode optimizations, asset memory footprint improvements, native memory usage tracking, push notifications, initial Amazon platform integration, and more.
- Led implementation of Parse backend for asynchronous matchmaking & corresponding client plugin for *Reckless Rivals* racing game.
- Sole developer on bingo line of products (*Bingo Gem Rush* / *Bingo World Rush*) including initial architecture and prototyping all the way through final product launch and maintenance.

Slingworks

Founder, CEO / CTO *(Cellar Night)* (PHP, ANGULARJS, MYSQL, BASH, HTML / CSS) *Oct. 2013 - Jun. 2014*

- Responsible for all architecure and code written in *Cellar Night*, a responsive-design wine inventory management app on native iOS, native Android, and web (IE 9+ compatible).
- Set vision, managed conflict, analyzed market opportunities, and made final calls throughout product development cycle.
- Integrated Nginx, PHP (Phalcon Framework), AngularJS, MySQL, Elasticsearch, AWS (EC2, RDS, S3, Route53, SES), and Objective-C / Java solutions to deliver a full-stack application to consumers.
- Recruited and led a cross-disciplinary team of 4 reputable and experienced PMs, designers, and business developers for entire lifecycle of a bootstrapped company.

Zynga

Principal Software Engineer *(Solstice Arena)* (C# (UNITY3D), C / C++, RUBY, PYTHON) *Apr. 2013 - Oct. 2013*

- Drove architecture, middleware decision-making, and implementation for Steam platform port and network stack rebuild projects.
- Responsible for numerous full-stack / ops tasks.

Principal Software Engineer *(Divisional Tech Group)* (PHP, AS3, C / C++, RUBY) *May 2012 - Apr. 2013*

- Responsible for overseeing architecture on new features for multiple products, implementing novel solutions to scalability / performance problems, and primary owner for multiple studio-level OKRs.
- Reduced load across a key server array by ~25% and build times by ~73%

Senior Software Engineer *(CastleVille)* (PHP, AS3, C / C++, RUBY) *Dec. 2011 - May 2012*

- Drove architecture / implementation of & became go-to expert on multiple gameplay systems during transition of new product to HQ.
- Gave regular presentations to educate other engineers in the organization on architecture, firefighting / debugging, industry, etc.

Software Engineer *(Mafia Wars)* (PHP, JAVASCRIPT, HTML, CSS) *May 2011 - Dec. 2011*

- Built multiple game features and drove emergency upgrade / firefighting effort for core dependencies on production environment.

Independent Development *(Unreleased Title)*

Self-Employed (C++, PYTHON) *Aug. 2009 - May 2010*

- Developed a multithreaded game engine architecture using Irrlicht 3D, Boost Python, and Havok Physics with UDP-based client-side predictive networking.

CCP Games *(World of Darkness)*

Associate Programmer (Intern) (PYTHON, C++, SQL) *May 2009 - Aug. 2009*

- Developed new server- / client-side gameplay systems and completed various general UI, database, and documentation projects.

Indiecisive Games *(Audiball)*

Co-Founder / Lead Programmer (C# / XNA, HLSL) *Jan. 2008 - Apr. 2009*

- Developed engine architecture, gameplay / UI code, and HLSL post-processing effects for an Xbox Live Indie Games launch title.

EA Mythic *(Warhammer Online)*

Software Engineer (Intern) (C / C++, JAVA, SQL) *May 2008 - Aug. 2008*

- Implemented server-side gameplay persistence and realtime data migration to RealmWar website.
- Worked across full stack of RealmWar website and Warhammer Online PC MMOG.

Education

Georgia Institute of Technology *Atlanta, Georgia, USA*

B.S. IN COMPUTATIONAL MEDIA *Aug. 2007 - Apr. 2011*

- Graduated with Highest Honors: 3.82 GPA (4.0 Computer Science GPA)