

Welcome to uh this deep dive and uh today we're going to be looking at the career and skills of a software developer named David Watson.

Okay.

We're basing this deep dive on his resume.

Sounds good.

Yeah. And what struck me when I first saw this resume was this really unique blend of tech expertise

and artistic passion.

Yeah. That's not something you see every day.

Yeah. It's not every day you see a music school dropout turned successful software developer. It's definitely an interesting path and I think it speaks to the power of transferable skills. Yeah.

You know, on the surface, music and software development might seem like they're worlds apart.

Sure.

But when you look a little deeper, they both require a lot of the same things like creativity, pattern recognition, and a deep understanding of how to communicate effectively.

You know, it's interesting because David actually says that music and software are similar forms of communication.

Interesting.

So, I'm curious how you see those two fields connecting. Well, if you think about it, uh, composing music, you have to have a deep understanding of structure and rhythm.

Yeah.

And how different instruments kind of interplay,

right?

And writing code is really similar. You have to structure logic. You have to recognize patterns in data.

Okay.

And you have to be able to communicate not just with machines.

Oh, interesting.

But with humans, too.

Yeah. So, almost like those foundational elements of music theory

become a framework for these complex technical challenges,

right?

And and speaking of intriguing things, we can't just skip over his self-description.

Yeah.

Liinal amphibian sinx.

That's a new one,

right? It's not your typical resume blurb.

It's definitely unique.

What do you make of that?

Hm. Liinal makes me think of being on a threshold or like in a state of transition. Okay. And an amphibian that implies like adaptability, you know, being able to thrive in different environments.

Yeah.

And s usually refers to wisdom and experience. So, it seems like David really embraces change and is all about continuous learning and, you know, he brings all of this knowledge from all these different experiences he's had to each new challenge that he takes on.

So, not just comfortable with change, but maybe actively seeking it out.

Yeah. Maybe even drawn to those in between spaces where a lot of innovation happens.

That makes me think about his resume because it definitely reflects that, wouldn't you say?

Absolutely. His career trajectory is all over the place and good way.

Yeah,

he's held all sorts of different roles in tons of different companies from small startups to large corporations

and his roles have been just as diverse software engineer, product development lead, even an IT compliance officer.

Wow. So, he's really comfortable stepping outside of his comfort zone and adapting to all these new situations.

Totally. And he's not afraid to be a beginner. Yeah.

You know, to constantly learn new things and apply his skills in all these different contexts.

And if you look at technical skills. You can see that he's not afraid to just dive right in. He's proficient in all kinds of programming languages, frameworks, and cloud platforms,

right?

It's almost like he's constantly in that liminal space just exploring different possibilities and pushing the boundaries of what he knows.

Yeah, that resonates with me a lot.

Yeah,

I think he's challenging this idea we have that we have to specialize in just one thing in tech,

right?

You know, it really begs the question, is it more valuable to be a specialist who has this like super deep knowledge in just one area or a generalist who can kind of move between all these different skills.

Interesting.

And you know there are benefits to both.

Yeah, for sure.

But David's career definitely highlights just how much potential there is for someone who takes a more adaptable and multiaceted approach.

It's almost like he's building this mental toolbox filled with all these different skills

and he's ready to tackle whatever challenge comes his way.

Exactly.

But I you know there's more to David than just code.

Oh yeah, for sure. Yeah,

he's really passionate about reading and writing and running. He even dreams of running coast to coast while writing books.

Wow, that's some serious ambition.

So, what does that tell us about him?

I think it shows that he's committed to being well-rounded.

You know, recognizing that there's so much more to life than just what's on the screen.

Yeah.

And that having interests outside of work can actually fuel creativity.

Yeah.

Provide you with these new perspectives on your professional challenges.

Mhm.

And even help prevent burnout,

right?

You know, it seems like David understands that it's super important to nurture your whole self

and not just your technical abilities.

So, it's almost like he's finding inspiration and energy.

Yeah.

From all these diverse pursuits and then that feeds back into his work.

Exactly.

Yeah. And speaking of inspiration, there's this one last thing on his resume that I really want to unpack.

Okay.

This three circle ven diagram that he mentions.



Oh, yeah.

What's that all about?

Well, he's talking about the intersection of ideas prototypes and products. And it's such a simple visual, but it speaks volumes about how he approaches problem solving.

Interesting.

And you know, it reminds me of Arthur C. Clark's famous third law.

I've heard of that one.

Any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic.

Oh, yeah. Yeah.

And it seems like David is applying that concept to his work.

How so?

Well, he starts with ideas,

the realm of imagination and possibility, the magic.

Then he moves to prototype. types,

okay,

where those ideas start to take a more tangible form and finally to products where the prototypes are refined and brought out into the world.

So taking those sparks of inspiration and turning them into real world solutions.

Exactly. And it's a really powerful model for understanding the process of innovation.

Yeah.

It shows just how important it is to embrace both the creative and the practical sides of software development.

You know, that really makes you think about your own circles of meaning.

It does.

How do your passion and skills and aspirations all intersect and how can you use those intersections to create work that's both fulfilling and has a real impact.

Yeah, that's a good question.

Well, we've covered a lot of ground just in this first part of our deep dive into David Watson's resume.

We have

we've seen how this unique blend of his experiences,

his embrace of liminality

Yeah.

and his commitment to being so well-rounded all contribute to this really impressive career he's built.

Absolutely.

But there's still so much more. to explore.

Oh yeah, I definitely in the next part we're going to delve deeper into his actual work experiences. Okay. The companies he's been a part of and all the different projects that have shaped his journey.

All right. Well, stay with us as we continue to kind of unravel this fascinating career of David Watson.

Sounds good. Welcome back to our deep dive into the career of David Watson.

All right. So, let's jump back into David's impressive work history.

Okay.

It's not just a list of jobs. It's like a road map for how to really navigate the tech world and stay ahead of the curve.

It really is.

What are some of the things that stand out to you?

Well, his recent freelance work definitely catches my eye.

Yeah.

Since 2020, he's been working as a freelance software generalist.

Okay.

And it's really fascinating to see how he's been using this model to work with a variety of clients,

including some pretty big names like Carnegie Mellon University and Caterpillar.

It is interesting that he made that shift to freelancing.

Yeah.

Do you think that reflects a larger trend that we're seeing in the tech industry,

I think. So, we're definitely seeing a growing number of tech professionals opting for freelance and contract work.

Yeah.

It offers a level of flexibility and autonomy that's really appealing, right? Especially in a field that's constantly evolving.

It makes sense that someone like David, who seems to thrive in those liinal spaces,

would be drawn to freelancing

because it allows him to constantly adapt and apply his skills to different projects and challenges. and his work with these really high-profile clients.

Yeah.

Shows his expertise across a bunch of different technologies. So, for example, at Carnegie Mellon's Entertainment Technology Center,

Mhm.

he worked as a senior member of technical staff.

Wow.

And he was utilizing his deep understanding of C++ Linux and Kubernetes.

Okay.

And then at Caterpillar, he provided consulting services helping them leverage those same cutting edge technologies.

Very cool.

And actually speaking of Caterpillar,

Yeah. His previous full-time role there as a software engineering specialist involved some pretty innovative work, right?

It did. He played a key role in assembling sensor storage for their edge network

using Python Mo and Postgress School.

So, not only working with all these different technologies,

right?

But understanding how they can all be integrated to create these effective solutions.

Exactly.

It sounds like he was working at the forefront of edge computing

which is becoming so essential in today's interconnected world.

It is

his work at Caterpillar really shows that he can anticipate and adapt to these technological shifts.

Yeah.

Which is so important for anyone who wants to build a lasting career in

Absolutely. And before Caterpillar

Mhm.

he had a senior engineering role at Rent Jungle.

Okay.

Which was later acquired by Real Page.

Wow.

What I find really interesting about this role is his focus on leadership and team dynamics.



He led these weekly retrospectives that were all about improving the team's communication and velocity and just their overall effectiveness.

It's a good reminder that technical skills alone aren't enough,

right?

Being able to collaborate effectively and lead a team is crucial for success,

especially in software development where projects often involve multiple people with all sorts of different skills and perspectives.

David's commitment to fostering a strong team environment is really clear in his approach.

It is.

It's not just about writing code. It's about creating this whole culture of collaboration and continuous improvement

and you can see that focus on collaboration in his experience at Wbridge Health too

where he actually led a design team through the development of an Ember SPA MVP and he was working really closely with Mayad design.

So again showing that ability to work with designers, product managers and all these other stakeholders to really bring a product to life.

He understands that successful software development needs that holistic approach.

Yeah.

One that involves clear communication and collaboration across different disciplines

and his work at hire and esquire shows that he's got the skills to manage those complex projects and improve code quality.

Yeah.

As VP of engineering, he led a team through a major redesign and refactoring of their legacy Django system.

It's like he can take these existing systems and make them better, more efficient, more userfriendly.

And then his experience at Forever shows his agility and ability to prototype solutions really quickly. Right.

In just 2 weeks, he prototyped a full stack cloud application.

Oh, wow.

That really helped the company gain some market traction.

That's impressive.

It's like he thrives in those fast-paced, high stakes environments

where innovation and adaptability are key. And it's interesting to see how his experience with Smash,

okay,

where he was writing conversational text systems

connects back to his interest in communication.

I see that

this was way back in the early days of chatbot technology, right? And he was already exploring how technology could be used to facilitate communication and build relationships.

He was ahead of his time.

He even supported large text campaigns for the Pittsburgh Steelers and Miller course.

Wow.

So, you can see he really understood how to reach a wide audience using these emerging technologies.

That's really cool.

It is amazing to think about how far chatbot technology has come since then.

Yeah.

And it's clear that David has always been interested in how technology can be used to enhance communication and connection. Absolutely.

And that thread kind of runs throughout his whole career.

It does.

From those early days of writing conversational text systems to his more recent work building these complex software applications.

You know, it's a good reminder that our passions and interests can weave their way through our careers in really surprising ways. It's not always about following a straight path, but recognizing those connections and allowing those threads to guide us.

When we look back at all of these experiences,

Yeah.

the thing that stands out to me is David's willingness to embrace new challenges

and constantly push the boundaries of his knowledge.

Definitely, he's not afraid to learn new technologies or dive into something completely unfamiliar.

It's really inspiring to see how he's combined that adaptable mindset with this deep understanding of these core principles like collaboration and communication and problem solving.

Yeah.

To build this really successful and multifaceted career.

Absolutely. And as we head into the final part of our deep dive,

okay,

we'll explore the roots of this approach going all the way back to his early experiences and that really pivotal transition from music school to the world of software development.

So stay tuned to discover how those early experiences really shaped his unique approach to technology. Welcome back to the final part of our deep dive into the career and mind of David Watson.

We've traced his journey from music school dropout to freelance software generalist uncovering a wealth of exper experience and a truly unique perspective along the way.

And now we're going all the way back to the beginning.

Okay.

To that interesting line on his resume.

Mhm.

From technique to technology. A computer science award before music school led to a computer programming internship afterward.

It hints at this fascination with technology that actually predates his musical pursuits.

It's interesting. Even before he went to music school, he was recognized for his tech skills. So, it seems like he's always had this aptitude for logical thinking and problem solving.

Yeah. And this dual interest in both art and technology has always been a part of who he is.

Definitely.

It makes you wonder what made him go to music school in the first place.

It does.

What are your thoughts on that?

Well, maybe it was the allure of creativity. You know, the desire to express himself through music. Or maybe it was the challenge of mastering an instrument, right?

Honing a craft that needs both technical precision and artistic sensibility.

It's interesting to think about how those early experiences in music could have influenced his approach to software development.

Yeah.

You know, he sees code as a form of communication,

right?

A way to express ideas and create something beautiful and functional.

Mhm. It's almost like music provided the foundation for his work in tech.

Yeah. And even though he ultimately left music school,

right,

it doesn't seem like it was a wasted experience.

Not at all.

It seems like all those lessons in creativity and discipline and communication

have continued. to inform his work.



Absolutely. It's a great reminder that all our experiences Yeah.

even the ones that seem totally unrelated to what we're doing now

can shape our skills and perspectives in ways we don't even realize.

Yeah. It's all about connecting the dots.

It is

and recognizing the value of all those diverse influences.

For sure.

Speaking of connecting the dots, let's jump ahead to his time at Coobbind.

Mhm.

This Linux tools startup he co-founded back in 2003.

Wow.

This seems like a pivotal moment for him. Yeah.

A chance to combine his entrepreneurial spirit with his passion for technology

and the fact that they got worldwide press and an idea foundry fellowship

really speaks to the potential of his vision

and it's here that we see his early commitment to open-source software

which he describes as a social contract

okay

he even points out his first FOSs contribution

emphasizing the importance of community and collaboration in tech

it seems like this focus on collaboration and knowledge sharing is a recurring theme throughout his career.

It's like he sees technology as a way to empower others and contribute to a larger good.

Exactly. And that leads us to his time at Wellspring Worldwide. Okay. Where he was a big advocate for shifting towards this S sur culture and DevOps practices.

Interesting. So these approaches prioritize automation and monitoring, right? And continuous improvement.

Yeah. And they emphasize collaboration between the development and operations teams.

That seems like a natural fit for someone with his background.

It does.

In open source and his commitment to collaboration.

Definitely, he was ahead of the curve in recognizing how important these practices are.

So, he wasn't just building software, he was building this culture of excellence

and continuous improvement.

It's amazing to see how his approach has evolved from those early open-source contributions to leading the implementation of S and DevOps.

It shows his dedication to lifelong learning.

Absolutely.

And his ability to adapt to the constantly changing demands of the industry.

Yeah. He's always trying to find new ways to improve

both on his own and as part of a team.

As we wrap up this deep dive into David Watson's career,

yeah,

what are some key takeaways our listeners can apply to their own journeys?

I think one of the biggest lessons is to embrace liminality,

be willing to constantly learn and adapt.

Yeah. David's career is definitely not a straight line and he thrived in those moments of change, taking on new challenges and expanding his skill set.

Exactly. Be comfortable with uncertainty. and be willing to learn and adapt as the tech world changes.

Don't be afraid to explore different things.

Step outside your comfort zone and build a diverse set of skills.

Yeah. And another takeaway is the power of connecting those seemingly unrelated experiences.

Right. Like David's background in music, his entrepreneurial ventures, and his deep understanding of technology all came together to build this unique and successful career.

It's about recognizing that every experience, even the ones that seem totally unrelated, yeah, can actually inform our work and give us valuable insights.

Embrace those diverse interests and let those threads connect and strengthen our overall approach.

And finally, I think it's about finding meaning where your passions and expertise intersect.

David's work isn't just a job.

It's not.

It's an expression of his values, his creativity,

and his desire to make a positive impact.

He found that sweet spot where his skills, interests, and purpose all come together.

It's a great reminder that we can all shape our own career journeys.

We can

embrace our unique experiences and find that place where our passions and expertise converge.

David Watson's story is a great example of what's possible.

It is

when we embrace liminality, connect the dots, and do work that aligns with our values.

We encourage you to check out David's work. Maybe take a look at his GitHub profile or connect with him on LinkedIn.

Yeah. And as always, we'd love to hear your thoughts on this deep dive.

What resonated with you? What insights you carry forward. Until next time, keep diving.