

Jack Desert

jackdesert@gmail.com

Redwood City, CA

(208) 366-6059

“make the Web fun to use”

Startup Experience

Flywheel, Redwood City CA

Ruby Engineer, July – Dec 2013

Unearthed a mountain of technical debt in a distributed, component-based architecture using Riak/RabbitMQ/EventMachine/Ruby/Rspec/Postgres/Node while also developing shiny new features. Consistently coaxed the desired functionality using **test first** with each component, and adding whatever new message types were required along the way. Notable accomplishments include:

- Building a robust, customizable geo-aware fares calculator, all the way from researching available technologies (PostGIS) to writing concise queries (Squeel)
- Creating the concept of an expected vehicle type, so that additional messaging could be provided to the app if the responding vehicle was something other than a taxi
- Providing our fraud prevention team with Ruby methods to show clean and dirty users based on whether they had a blacklisted credit card

Got really comfortable with mocks, stubs, and let(). Kept asking **why**.

John McNeil Studio, San Francisco

Full Stack Rails Developer, Feb - July 2013

Led a team of developers in launching a database-backed showcase of what JohnMcNeilStudio is all about. Initially my role was in architecting this

Rails/JavaScript/Haml/Sass/Postgres/Rspec site and flushing out the admin dashboard pieces, but as the launch timeline was foreshortened, things got a little more exciting. First the upper management needed to be persuaded to launch a quality subset, or MVP, of what was originally planned. Then task triage was required to ensure that the most important, foundational pieces were built first. More developers were acquired, most of them junior.

Through a combination of test-driven development, standardized Git workflow, and ad-hoc pair programming, this team was coached toward quality code and a consistent Git workflow. Learned the art of stabilization, or “being the glue”.

H Engage, Boston, Massachusetts

Full Stack Rails Developer & Interaction Designer, Jan 2012 – Dec 2012

Scrambling in a fast-paced startup environment to deliver a quality user experience through a social media website. Helping to decide which features are most important to develop, then implementing those in our Rails/MongoDB/Postgres/CoffeeScript/Haml/Sass/Rspec stack. “Design first” became my mantra at the beginning of each sprint, unlocking my team from the history of how our site currently worked. Thus we moved on more quickly to clean, revised aesthetic and new vision. Gained a true appreciation for design, a quality mentoring in Rails, and became great friends with jQuery.

Jack Desert

jackdesert@gmail.com

Redwood City, CA

(208) 366-6059

HealthTalker, Newton, Massachusetts

Ruby on Rails Developer, Jul 2011 – Nov 2011

Leveraged Rails to provide rapid content and functionality changes for a multi-lingual word-of-mouth advertising campaign. Challenged existing practices in search of a consistent, streamlined approach to meeting client deadlines. Honed my skills in Ruby, Rails, Haml, Sass, and Git. At the same time I was volunteering as a sysadmin setting up EC2 instances with Nginx, Capistrano, Rails3.1, and MySQL. Learned to ask for change.

Appalachian Mountain Club, Boston, Massachusetts

Full Stack PHP & Javascript Developer, May 2011 – Mar 2012

Volunteered—full time at first, part time later—to make incremental user experience improvements to a trip registration system started by the hikers and backpackers of the AMC. Through collaboration with the two project managers, we approached each new feature with a “lowest hanging fruit” approach. By the end, the aesthetic was much cleaner, we had friendly URLs, and in general the site was much more intuitive to use. All this was in a Linux/Apache/MySQL/PHP/Javascript/phpUnit/Jasmine/Watir stack. Eventually I prototyped a Ruby on Rails version of the same system, with lots of AJAX goodies to make it snappy without so many page refreshes. Learned that I am not the user.

Before That, in Massachusetts and Idaho

Long Time Learner, 2002 – 2011

Spent two years programming in MatLAB to simulate the effects of ocean noise on a directional sonar sensor, followed by two years developing signal processing routines to implement the same sensor in the C language on an embedded DSP, followed by a couple years teaching myself databases (Postgres) and scripting languages (Python, Ruby, PHP, JavaScript), after which I decided to come back in the world of Internet, where I have found my home.

Portfolio

See the projects I'm most proud of at JackDesert.com

My GitHub account is github.com/jackdesert

Education

Master of Science, Signal Processing and Mechanical Engineering, Dec 2004
University of Idaho, Moscow, Idaho