John Unger

john.josef.unger@gmail.com | (540) 435-2452 | github.com/john-unger | linkedin.com/in/john-j-unger

Summary

I care about software that serves people. I am a software engineer with a focus on backend. I design scalable services, set reusable standards, and grow teams. With 7+ years of experience and a B.S. in Computer Science + MBA, I connect architecture decisions to business outcomes. I thrive in collaborative environments, share knowledge freely, and continually refine systems—and teams—to raise the bar. Focus: distributed systems · API design & governance · caching · data ingestion/normalization · GraphQL/REST · AWS · CI/CD · observability & reliability

Skills

Languages: Java, Python, Kotlin, TypeScript/JavaScript, SQL, C
APIs & Platform: GraphQL, REST, API governance, caching, data ingestion/ETL, templates/golden paths
Cloud & DevOps: AWS (EC2, S3, Lambda, IAM, Translate), Docker, Kubernetes, GitHub Actions, CI/CD
Data & Storage: PostgreSQL, MySQL, MongoDB, Redis, Brightspot/Dari
Practices & Tools: observability, release engineering, build/deploy automation, Git/GitHub

Experience

Brightspot — Senior Software Engineer *Jan 2022 – Present · Remote*

- Shape backend architecture and API conventions across the Amazon program (often 6+ concurrent projects), with patterns adopted across Shipping & Freight, Jobs, and Design and recognized as stable, profitable references.
- Lead CMS backend delivery across ~40 custom projects, powering **132 live sites in 2024 (+32% YoY)** and supporting **$2.9M ARR (+19% YoY)** and **$3.5M services revenue (+9% YoY)**.
- Serve as lead backend engineer for **Amazon Jobs** and **Griffin Media**, and as primary backend contributor for **Amazon Science, Amazon About, Buy with Prime**, and additional properties.
- Improve reliability & DevEx through release/branch/environment automation, **UAT branch workflows**, GraphQL schema warm-ups, and resolution of org-wide build failures; automate Jira workflows (**+25% ticket throughput**).
- Implement secure, scalable integrations (analytics, SEO, content automation, AI-assisted workflows) and refactor legacy services to reduce technical debt and improve scalability.
- Mentor engineers and interns (including an all-intern feature shipped end-to-end); partner with product/program leads on scope, prioritization, and resourcing; document standards/templates so repeatable features ship in **hours, not days**.

Vistashare LLC — Application Programmer *2018 – 2021 · Harrisonburg, VA*

- Built features with Django and RESTful APIs; refactored legacy flows and optimized queries to reduce load times by **~60%**.
- Developed and maintained an automated end-to-end Selenium testing framework for parallel/distributed runs.
- Led functional design sessions to improve UI/UX and translate business requirements into technical solutions.

Selected Projects

Amazon Jobs – Global Careers Platform @ Brightspot
- Acted as tech lead (1,000+ commits, 2022–2025); led migration to a modern Brightspot stack while preserving SEO/feature parity and improving performance and reliability.
- Designed an **Ownership Group** model for delegated CMS permissions and workflows, giving global teams flexible content ownership and governance instead of a rigid hierarchy.

Griffin Media – Live News & Broadcast Platform @ Brightspot
- Delivered 400+ commits in 2025 across Weather API middleware (with provider failover), election data ingestion, external app (Whiz) rendering, and live video delivery (ViewNexa), making the platform more resilient and responsive to live events.

Amazon Buy with Prime – AI-Assisted Services @ Brightspot
- Developed AI-assisted backend services to enhance merchant/content workflows around Buy with Prime, integrating internal ML APIs with existing Java/Python services and implementing strict guardrails/fallbacks so AI outputs never block flows.

ATEM A/V Tooling (Wireless Tally + Switcher Control) @ Crosslink
- Built Arduino-based integrations with Blackmagic ATEM switchers to read live/preview state and send IP commands, driving wireless RGB tally lights and enabling programmatic switching from custom hardware interfaces.

Education

Master of Business Administration (MBA) — The Master's University, 2023
B.S., Computer Science (Minor: Mathematics) — James Madison University, 2017

Volunteering

Media Consultant / Operator — Crosslink Community Church (2011–2020)
Operated and maintained A/V systems; troubleshot issues live; trained and mentored new volunteers.