

Kris Ellery

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Principal Software Development Engineer with 16+ years of experience specializing in front-end development and design systems. Expert in optimizing web performance, enhancing core web vitals, and scaling design systems that serve millions of users daily. Proven track record in leading teams and driving organization-wide technology adoption, resulting in improved developer experience and application performance.

Technical Skills

Design Systems, JavaScript, TypeScript, React, Next.js, Vue, HTML, CSS, styled-components, Panda CSS, Tailwind CSS, Vite, Webpack, Rollup, Monorepos, Turborepo, NPM, Accessibility, Web Performance, Core Web Vitals, INP, Git, JSON, REST API, GraphQL, CI/CD;

Experience

Principal SDE, Design Systems at Zillow

Dallas, TX • Aug '22 - Present

As the technical lead on the Design Systems team of 5 engineers, I spearheaded the development and enhancement of Zillow's internal UI library, leveraging React.js and TypeScript. My role was pivotal in advancing web performance for applications serving millions of daily users.

NextGen UI Library Transformation: Successfully led the near-complete refactoring of 96 components to TypeScript and Panda CSS, replacing styled-components with a more efficient build-time CSS solution. This transformation significantly improved core web vitals by double-digit percentages and reduced CPU utilization.

Organization-wide Technology Adoption: Influenced the entire engineering organization to transition from styled-components to Panda CSS after securing pilot approval from the CTO and senior technical leadership. Currently at ~10% adoption with golden path page implementations prioritized.

Performance Optimization: Developed a package that unblocked the main thread, facilitating quicker frame painting and reducing Interaction to Next Paint (INP) scores across multiple teams to below the 200ms threshold.

Developer Experience Enhancement: Established a robust foundation using pnpm, workspaces, Vite, Vitest, TypeScript, and GitLab CI, resulting in a more maintainable system that enables engineers to write less code while achieving better UI consistency.

Senior UX Engineer, Design Systems at Zillow Group

Dallas, TX • May 21 - Aug 22

In my role as a Senior UX Engineer on the Design Systems team, I focused on the lifecycle of UI components, leveraging React.js and styled-components to deliver solutions that were visually appealing, functional, and accessible.

Component Development and Enhancement: Led the development, maintenance, and testing of various design system components, ensuring they met high standards of reusability and accessibility.

Performance Optimization: Conducted thorough web performance audits for the design system component library, identifying and addressing Core Web Vitals, scripting, and rendering bottlenecks.

Roadmap Creation: Synthesized audit findings into a strategic roadmap, outlining essential updates and optimizations, thereby guiding the continuous improvement of our design system.

Collaboration and Support: Actively participated in weekly office hours, providing expert guidance to software engineers on the implementation of design system components and best practices.

Senior Front-End JavaScript Engineer at Cofense

Dallas, TX • Sep '17 - May '21

At Cofense, my role as a Lead UI Engineer centered around creating technologies to help users combat phishing attacks effectively. My work spanned across multiple facets of front-end development and design, with notable achievements including:

Front-End Leadership: Led the creation of PhishMe and Threat Intelligence platforms using Vue.js and TypeScript, focusing on robust front-end architecture, feature planning, and meticulous code reviews. Ensured smooth API integrations by working closely with backend teams.

Design System Development: Developed an internal design system with over 60 custom components, enhancing UI consistency and developer efficiency. Managed packaging with Rollup and distribution via a private NPM registry, significantly streamlining project workflows.

Build Tools Overhaul: Modernized internal build processes by adopting contemporary tools and practices (Vue, ES2015+, TypeScript, etc.), transitioning the legacy codebase towards a more modular, efficient, and maintainable structure.

Collaborative Product Strategy: Partnered with product owners to map out feature roadmaps and design specifications, emphasizing user-centric design and accessibility. My collaborative approach ensured projects met all milestones with optimal quality.

Senior Interactive Developer at Public Hawkeye

Charlotte, NC / Dallas, TX • Nov '13 - Aug '17

At Hawkeye, a leading advertising agency renowned for blending data, creativity, and technology, I played a crucial role in driving innovation and excellence in web development. My tenure was marked by leadership in developing sophisticated web solutions and contributing to high-profile projects:

SPA Development Leadership: Spearheaded the creation of single-page applications for Magnolia AV (BestBuy), utilizing Ember.js and related technologies. My collaboration with backend teams ensured top-notch API integration and application performance.

Web Standards Advocacy: Translated complex designs from Photoshop/Sketch to semantic, standards-compliant web pages for global brands like Best Buy and Capital One. My commitment to precision and quality consistently delivered projects that exceeded expectations.

Process Optimization: Formulated and implemented front-end development guidelines and automation practices, significantly enhancing project efficiency and team productivity with tools like Node and Gulp.

Industry Recognition: Earned the 2014 and 2015 WebAwards for Outstanding Achievement in Web Development, highlighting my expertise, creativity, and dedication to web excellence.

Front-end Web Developer and UI Designer at RedVentures

Charlotte, NC • Apr '12 - Nov '13

At Red Ventures, a leader in digital consumer solutions, I significantly contributed to enhancing user experiences and fostering business growth through innovative design and development. My role was instrumental in several high-impact projects:

Live-Chat Platform UI: Designed and developed the user interfaces for a proprietary live-chat platform, encompassing an admin panel, sales agent interface, and client chat plugin. My work boosted customer satisfaction and conversion rates through intuitive design and seamless functionality.

Interactive Game of Thrones Map for HBO: Engineered an interactive map featured on Time Magazine's website, driving significant SEO value and engaging fans globally. This project highlighted my ability to merge creative design with technical execution.

Data-Driven Design Optimization: Utilized analytics and A/B testing insights to refine web designs, significantly improving user engagement and conversion rates across paid and organic channels.

Dashboard Development: Created real-time monitoring dashboards, SEO tools, and domain ranking interfaces, enhancing businesses' ability to track and optimize their digital footprint efficiently.

Information Technologist at Michigan State University

East Lansing, MI • Dec '09 - Apr '12

In my role supporting Michigan State University's engagement and fundraising initiatives, I developed impactful web solutions that fostered strong connections with students, donors, and alumni. My work was pivotal in enhancing the university's digital presence and supporting its mission through:

Scalable Web Solutions: Engineered robust online giving and event registration platforms using jQuery, ColdFusion, MSSQL, and Authorize.net, significantly enhancing the fundraising process's efficiency and reach.

Engaging Web Design: Crafted user-centric websites and web applications, focusing on visual appeal and usability to provide meaningful experiences for the university community. My dedication to accessible design principles ensured these platforms were welcoming to all users, boosting engagement and support.

Professional Recognition: My contributions were acknowledged in University Business publications and highlighted at the CASE conference for higher education, underscoring my commitment to excellence and the positive impact of my technical and creative skills on the university's objectives.

Education

Michigan State University

BA in Telecommunication, Information Studies, and Media
College of Communication Arts and Sciences

Specialization in Information Technology
Broad College of Business

Personal Background & Interests

Born and raised in Poland, I came to the United States on an athletic scholarship as a competitive swimmer, eventually becoming a U.S. citizen after 16 years. My wife and I own and operate horse stables in Texas. As an automotive enthusiast, I still enjoy driving my manual M3. I have a passion for travel, with Rome being my favorite destination.