

LUKE BLANEY BSc (HONS)

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Employment

- Financial Times: September 2021 - Present

Principal Engineer - Observability, Edge Delivery & Cyber Security

Working on the strategic direction in three key areas across the FT's technology department.

- Responsible for line management of 2 in-house engineering teams, plus the relationship with an off-shore 3rd party engineering team.
- Worked on vendor management of key suppliers within relevant domains and set the direction of the FT's relationships with them.
- Steering changes to the department's approach to tracking security risk with an aim to make it more outcome-focused.
- Analysis of how observability and security tooling is being used across the company and putting in place strategic plans for these, including end-of-life roadmaps for tools which give minimal value.

- Financial Times: September 2020 - September 2021

Principal Engineer - Cyber Security

Leading the engineering function of the FT's cyber security team.

- Acted as tech lead and line manager for engineers in the cyber security team
- Managed security incidents across all parts of the business and collaborated with the Operations team to improve incident processes.
- Took responsibility for shaping the team's roadmap and seeing projects through to completion.
- Contributed to group-wide strategy, ensuring security was well represented.
- Worked on the democratisation of security data, to enable engineering teams to make better decisions around their own risks, beginning with an aggregated view of vulnerability data.
- Advised on security related concerns across all the FT's engineering teams and throughout the wider company too.

- Financial Times: February 2018 - August 2020

Principal Engineer - Reliability Engineering

Running a new team, set up to improve reliability of systems and reduce duplication of effort across technology teams at the FT.

- Formed a brand new team whose members had backgrounds in a variety of different domains.
- Jointly led the team, taking on line management responsibilities for half its members.
- Supported engineers from other teams joining us on three-month secondments.
- Actively involved in the full recruitment process for new members of the team.
- Represented the Product & Technology department in planning the move of our company headquarters, working to ensure the 300+ people in our area could make the move seamlessly.
- Oversaw the delivery of several core technical tools, now used extensively across the company, including a monitoring aggregation platform, tech migration tracker and change management system.
- Worked with engineering teams throughout the department to build a clearer understanding of our estate (including bespoke software, enterprise systems and SaaS solutions)
- Liaised with procurement team for all suppliers under our cost centre. Handled renewals, ad-hoc licence increases and taking new contracts through the full procurement process.

- Financial Times: October 2016 - February 2018

Architect - Content

Worked on our Universal Publishing Platform, which delivers Content & Metadata from a range of editorial tools to our websites, apps and third-party B2B clients.

- Responsible for architectural decisions across a whole programme of work (6 development teams working in 2 countries)
- Collaborated with the Editorial Technology team to design and build TagMe - a tool enabling metadata management in the newsroom.
- Worked closely with stakeholders in Editorial and B2B departments, as well as developers using the APIs our platform provided.
- Successfully repositioned our relationship with an existing supplier so they'd take on operational responsibility for the software they were building. (Also carried out technical due diligence on the new arrangement.)
- Devised a framework for tracking progress on a multi-year project to decommission a suite of legacy software, in a way that made sense to both delivery managers and engineers.
- Took on line management responsibilities for integration engineers in our team.

I think my proudest accomplishment here was transforming a team heavily reliant on having an architect to one where engineers felt empowered to make their own architectural decisions.

- Financial Times: December 2015 - October 2016

Platform Architect - Operational Intelligence

Technical lead on a team responsible for observability tools used across the department (covering monitoring, metrics & log aggregation). We also introduced a new system for keeping track of the FT's technical estate, which provided automated runbook creation and monitoring management. My role included:

- System design, development and backlog prioritisation
- Upskilling a team from disparate backgrounds
- Collaborating with delivery to move the team to a kanban agile workflow
- Recruitment of junior developers
- Working with teams across the FT and third-party suppliers

- Financial Times: January 2015 - November 2015

Integration Engineer - Strategic Products

Led the migration of the FT's mobile apps to cloud-based infrastructure (primarily AWS) to facilitate the switch-off of physical kit in our datacentres. This involved:

- Adapting existing workloads to run on cloud
- Recruitment of a contractor to assist with the project
- Architecting & development of a cloud-native zero-downtime deployment pipeline

[Note: Officially, my job title did not change for this period. Included separately for clarity.]

- Financial Times: December 2011 - December 2014

Labs Developer - FT Labs

In this role, I gained experience with the full stack of web development technologies, from using bleeding-edge browser features in the FT's HTML5 Web App, through to server management and configuration using tools like Puppet, Varnish and Apache.

- Worked on the original incarnation of FastFT, a realtime news service. This included a customer-facing frontend, an API and bespoke CMS for editorial users.
- Led FT Labs' internal tooling workstream, which focused on infrastructure improvements and developer experience (including deployment, live error collection and monitoring aggregation). My role involved engineering, architectural decisions and co-ordinating the work of others in this area.
- Following a cyber attack in 2013, I architected, helped engineer and coordinated roll-out of a tool to put multifactor authentication in front of all of the FT's staff-facing tools.

- Assanka: November 2010 - December 2011

Web Developer

Worked on various web projects for a range of clients, doing both backend and frontend work. Backends included Wordpress, an in-house framework and vanilla PHP. Frontend javascript varied from simple jQuery-based interfaces, to large object-orientated systems which utilised many HTML5 features. Assanka was acquired by the Financial Times at the end of 2011 and was later rebranded "FT Labs".

Talks & Panels

- **Panel: Building security into your engineering workflow — LeadDev 2021**
Moderated an online panel about improving cyber security across engineering organisations.
- **Panel: Observability Strategies for Distributed Systems — InfoQ Live 2020**
Discussed approaches for observability when using microservices at this one-day online conference.
- **Monitoring All the Things: Keeping Track of a Mixed Estate — QCon London 2020; Continuous Lifecycle 2020**
Spoke about effectively monitoring the tech estate of a company which uses a variety of different technologies and monitoring approaches. Was also on a panel about the value of microservices at the QCon event.
- **Panel: Standardisation and autonomy in our tech choices — Engine Room, London 2019**
Discussed the value of consistency versus local optimisation in our technical approaches at the FT's internal tech conference.
- **Panel: Do we only measure things that are easy to measure? — Engine Room, London 2017**
Chaired a panel discussing the use of metrics in tech and product decisions at the FT's internal tech conference.
- **Creating a multi-factor authentication solution — Varnish Summit & Awards, Los Angeles 2016**
Spoke about how the FT used varnish to protect our estate with MFA and tackle phishing attacks. Also collected the Varnish Innovation Award at the same event.
- **Panel: Page Load Performance — Edgeconf, London 2014**
Discussed performance best practices when using cutting edge web technologies.
- **One VCL to rule all our environments — Varnish User Group, Berlin 2013**
Spoke about the consolidation of our caching and routing logic across environments using puppet.

Education

- Edinburgh University: 2006 - 2010
BSc (Hons) Computer Science and Physics
A joint degree, with an emphasis on Computer Science, covering specialist areas such as Distributed Systems, Multi-Agent Semantic Web Systems, Computer Security and Communication & Networking. My Honours project used Semantic Web technologies to provide data for a Semi-Automatic Guesstimation system.

Publications

A Single-Significant-Digit Calculus for Semi-Automated Guesstimation
Jonathan Abourbih, **Luke Blaney**, Alan Bundy and Fiona McNeill
IJCAR 2010

- Lagan College, Belfast: 1999 - 2006
 - **A-levels:** Maths (A), Irish (A), Physics (B), Chemistry (C)
 - **GCSEs:** Maths (A*), Science (A*A*), Irish (A*) + 1 A, 4 Bs and 1 C.

Previous Work Experience

- Edinburgh University Students Association, Entertainments Crew - **Lighting Technician:** 2007 - 2010
- BBC Irish Language department - **One week's Work Placement:** Summer 2009
- J Sainsbury plc - **Customer Services Assistant:** May 2005 - Dec 2005
- Andor Technology Ltd. - **One week's Work Placement:** February 2005
- Queen's University Belfast Media Services - **One week's Work Placement:** June 2003.