

Luke Ehler, web developer

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I make websites.

More specifically, I work with academic, financial, and nonprofit organizations to assist them in communicating with their respective constituencies through strategic, brand-focused digital communications. I've worked full time as a full stack web developer for nearly a decade and have been actively engaged in every step of the process. This includes a wide array of tasks and deliverables, including the following.

Business development	Custom front end themes
Proposals	CMS implementation
Discovery interviews	Custom feature development
Content audits	Cross-browser and functional testing
Functional requirements	Content integration
Sitemaps	Asset preproduction
Wireframes	Training
Visual design	Documentation
Responsive review and consultation	Delivery
Content models	Client-facing ongoing support
Platform consultation	

At its core, I listen to fundamental requirements—both expressed and implied—and develop a mental model of the underlying structure. That model then becomes the basis for semantic, standards-driven, accessible HTML structure; highly customized CSS display properties; behavioral interactions through CSS, Javascript, and native browser behavior; and back end business logic via an extensible, community supported CMS or custom platform. Given the variation in needs and resources available to a wide range of organizations, I also often act as a technical liaison for third-party integration teams for those cases in which a technical partner is already engaged for development in a more specialized platform such as Sitecore, NetCommunity, or the like.

In the process of tackling those tasks, I've also taken on the role of technologist and advocate. I've discovered, evaluated, introduced, and modernized processes, ideas, and workflows. I have played a key role in introducing considerations that eventually became table stakes. This dates all the way back to fundamentals like structured content, version control, responsive design, semantic markup, accessibility reviews, preprocessing and project scaffolding, framework customization, static site generation, and behavioral language. Most recently, I've been evangelizing serverless architecture and headless CMS integrations for security, performance, and sustainability.

All of this has been accomplished, largely self directed, in a demanding, fast paced environment. In addition to the technical tasks required for everything from initial platform architecture through deployment and post-launch support, I have also taken on a great deal of project management throughout the development process and, in many cases, for years down the road. As a client facing position, this has involved juggling everything from platform sustainability, performance considerations, and usability reviews through less technical undertakings such as scheduling, budgeting, and training.

Skills

Underlying technologies and languages

Expert in **HTML**

Expert in **CSS**

Expert in **Javascript**

Expert in **PHP**

Expert in **SVG**

Expert in **LESS, SASS, and PostCSS**

Comfortable with **BASH scripting**

Tools and libraries

Expert in **Drupal and Wordpress**, including both native features and also custom theme and extension development

Comfortable with **additional CMS platforms**, including Joomla, Concrete5, etc.

Skilled in **Git and SVN**

Expert in **JQuery and Underscore/Lo-Dash** libraries

Expert in **Node and NPM** command line tools

Comfortable with **Node and Express** external services

Expert in **Grunt and Gulp** task runners

Expert in **Grunt-init and Yeoman** project scaffolding

Comfortable with **Metalsmith and Jekyll** site builders

Comfortable with **Backbone and Marionette**, Vue, and Ember front end frameworks

Comfortable with **Contentful and Prismic** headless CMS services

Comfortable with **Amazon AWS infrastructure**, including S3, EC2, Route53, Lambda, Dynamo, and aws-cli

Skilled in **Apache and Nginx** configuration and usage

Applications

Expert in **Adobe Illustrator and Photoshop** for asset production

Skilled in other **Adobe Creative Cloud** applications (InDesign, Animate, etc.)

Comfortable with **Sketch**

Expert in **macOS** (preferred)

Comfortable with **Linux** (preferably Debian-based)

Comfortable with **Windows**

Experience

Sametz Blackstone Associates

Sametz Blackstone Associates is a brand-focused communications consultancy and design firm with a storied history of serving arts & cultural nonprofits, academic research, boutique finance, and higher education organizations.

Senior Digital Media Developer

2014-2017

Digital Media Developer

2008-2014

As a full-stack developer, I took on two primary types of projects: those in which I was building and delivering a custom CMS implementation or those in which I was creating a front end framework to be implemented by an existing technical vendor. Other opportunities arose—including static microsites, intranet portals, and custom web applications ranging from single-page applications on up to a massive auction platform integrating with multiple existing systems—but were less common.

When building a complete CMS implementation in either Wordpress or Drupal, I was creating completely unique custom themes and extensions based upon feedback from the client and requirements derived from the investigation and information architecture phases—both of which typically occurred with my input and review. In addition to implementing the exacting visual standards and leading discussions on responsive and interactive behavior, I also introduced and implemented the practice of highly detailed structured content modeling. In breaking apart the disparate elements of the page into individual, systematized fields and educating the digital strategy team on those elements' use throughout the wireframes and the site itself, we developed a very strong, detailed, content-focused approach to structuring related content, page display, and the editorial process for the client. During these projects, I would not only take on a client-facing project management role during the development phase but also lead a small team of colleagues, when necessary and based upon availability, by distributing workload, reviewing, and integrating the various components into the project with an eye on maintaining the validity of the project's underlying content model and requirements.

When working with a third-party technical partner (typically when an entrenched platform was outside of our specialty area), the focus shifted to ensuring that implementation proceed as smoothly as possible without direct oversight. Though arguably just a portion of the work done on a CMS development project, this introduced additional challenges, without having direct control over the final public results. Fault tolerance became a vital aspect of that deliverable—trying to ensure that even if implemented poorly the results still display as intended.

I was promoted to acknowledge and officially endorse my role in leading projects through the development phase, mentoring the digital media team, advocating updates to the team's workflow, and enhancing the company's offerings as a whole. In this capacity, I further expanded our CMS offerings by modernizing our Wordpress-based offerings, built highly customized Drupal instances to exacting business requirements and design specifications, and worked on sustainable, repeatable front end frameworks for implementation by enterprise-level technical consultants. During this period I further consulted throughout the entirety of the project life cycle—not only implementing the technical deliverable, but taking an active role in business development, discovery, information architecture, and the visual design stages.

Recent projects on which I was the lead developer include the following clients.

Global MIT
Gordon Brothers
Gordon Brothers Finance Company
MIT.nano
MIT Museum

New England Development
Northeastern University College of Computer and
Information Science
Olin College of Engineering
Sarah Lawrence College

I've worked with a number of other organizations over the years, in both lead and supplemental roles. Clients with whom I engaged in the lead developer role for at least one project are indicated **in bold**.

Abrams Capital Investments
Atlanta Symphony Orchestra
Boston Center for the Arts
Boston College Center for Retirement Research
Bridgespan Group
Celebrity Series of Boston
Charles Sterling Group
Chorus America
Corporate Design Foundation
Dana Hall School
Harvard Graduate School of Arts and Sciences
Harvard Medical School Alumni Association
**Harvard Medical School Office of Resource
Development**
Harvard Museum of Natural History
Harvard University Libraries
Harvard NeuroDiscovery Center
Keystone Partners
League of American Orchestras

McGovern Institute for Brain Research at MIT
MIT 2030
MIT Capital Projects
MIT Center for Real Estate
MIT Energy Initiative
Mount Ida College
National Fire Protection Agency
Neponset River Watershed Association
New American Paintings
Parexel
Project Bread / Walk for Hunger
Provincetown Art Association Museum
Skinner Auctioneers
Suffolk University
Tudor Group
Vermont College of Fine Arts
Wellington Management
Worcester Polytechnic Institute

Art Plus Technology / NEPS LLC

Art Plus Technology (acquired and absorbed by NEPS LLC ~2007) was a design and development firm specializing in transactional communications for financial services.

Production Specialist

2000-2008

At Art Plus Technology I helped create variable data transactional communications for investment, insurance, health care, and retirement industries. Though initially hired exclusively for prepress print production, I quickly grew into the role of production designer (iterating upon and implementing creative design work by the lead designer) and eventually into the role of developer of design-focused variable-data print applications.

My primary responsibilities included extending existing designs to include a vast array of variations and creating design mechanicals for the development team. In doing so, I was responsible for systematization of the brand-focused design language unique to each individual client and task.

Within this role, I worked within the financial, retirement, and healthcare industries on projects for a number of large clients, including the following.

ADP
Ameriprise Financial Services
Cigna
Fidelity

KeyBank
Massachusetts Financial Services
SunLife of Canada
T. Rowe Price

Freelance

For a number of years, I also took on web development projects during my own time as well. I did so primarily by partnering with a wide range of designers on smaller projects.

Various Projects

1999–2012

My first fully-featured web application (before the phrase "web application" was even in common use) was a custom self-managed PHP platform created in 2000 for a psychologist. The application allowed end users to administer a MBTI-style examination and the results were then parsed through a series of rules, defined by clinical results. Though largely used by the academic community, the primary focus was as a part of the hiring process. HR managers from a several large institutions were using the results as a factor in evaluating potential management-level hires. Though dated by today's standards, it served as an active platform for over a decade and formed a core part of his practice. It also served as my primary introduction to creating functional specifications from business requirements, identifying fringe cases, and working closely with clients to explain and clarify the impact of technical considerations.

Later, I had made a number of designer contacts who were eagerly searching out technical resources for implementation. In my time outside of the office, from 2009 to 2012, I took on a number of projects ranging from art installations to portfolios and, largely, smaller client sites created in Concrete5, Drupal, and Wordpress. While I enjoyed working closely with a wide array of designers, I had to start declining to take on additional work and finally elected to focus on my full time position.

Education

Like many others in the field, I'm primarily self taught through practical, hands-on experience. I've always found that, for me, pragmatic real world requirements reinforce learning any new skill.

Boston University

Aerospace Engineering

1992–1994

Attended but never completed a degree program.

Meetups and Conferences

Various

2004–2015

I've attended An Event Apart, Boston PHP, jQuery Conference, Roost, and various other industry events and conferences with some regularity.

References

References are available upon request.