

Henry Cooke

Technologist, developer, interaction designer.

skype: [prhns1.henry](#) // me@prehensile.co.uk // [@prehensile](#)

In the decade-plus that I've been working in digital, I've made websites, games, 3D environments, toys and mobile apps. I've experimented with digital storytelling (resulting in a [BAFTA nomination](#)), language processing, binaural audio, Twitter bots and edge-cases of computer vision and speech recognition. I've also done a lot of design, concepting and pitching and have lead the odd technical team. Way back in the mists of time I trained in video & audio production and I'm fairly handy with a soldering iron.

I speak semi-frequently about the things that I've made and what I've learned by making them; most often at [Dorkbot](#). Recent appearances include [Bees in a Tin](#), [Hack Circus](#) and [Playful](#). In September 2014, I exhibited work at [The New Sublime](#), part of Brighton Digital Festival.

More information at prehensile.co.uk and my [Linkedin profile](#).

Skills

Expert in Python, Objective-C/Cocoa Touch for iOS and Actionscript. Skilled in HTML/Javascript/CSS, with some C++ (mostly openFrameworks), Java & Processing. Comfortable hacking with web-facing APIs and fluent in XML, JSON, OAuth, REST etc. I know my way around a *nix command line, and frequently tinker with VPSs in various parts of The Cloud. Familiar with Arduino and basic electronics; Raspberry Pi, Docker and Kubernetes are my current favourite things.

Recent Work

BBC R&D For the last 18 months or so, I've been working in the Internet Research and Future Services department of [BBC R&D](#). The project itself isn't yet public, but my work on it has ranged across prototyping iOS apps, helping to define a scalable cloud infrastructure for content analysis and experimentation with generation and interrogation of knowledge graphs.

Pastcards A recent side-project, [Pastcards](#) is an idea that was too good not to implement. Partly a reaction to the ephemeral nature of social photos, partly a way to get nice surprises through the post. I have written in detail about the motivations for the project on [Medium](#).

Greatest Hits

[Launchball](#), a game with over 10 million plays... [Malcolm Tucker: The Missing Phone](#), the first app to be nominated for a TV BAFTA... a contribution to Björk's [Biophilia](#), the first app to be inducted into MoMA's permanent collection... a [giant talking throne](#) for Kensington Palace... a (very) [short story generator](#) in collaboration with [Dora García](#)... a [pareidolic bot](#) which looks for almost-faces in The Cloud... consulting on creative technology for theatre companies [Nigel & Louise](#) and [Coney](#)... the [Mimeomorphs](#), a collection of Twitter bots which learn language from a human mentor... conference talks about [mysterious radio stations](#) and [empathy at scale](#).

Employment History

Freelance, August 2009 - present When Flash's wave finally broke and rolled back, I followed my nose to iOS as the next platform where interesting things were happening.

I spent the next few years working as an iOS developer with a heavy involvement in the creative side of my projects. A good deal of this work was for [Agant](#) and [Faber](#), but there were also jobs for [Touch Press](#), smaller companies and arts organisations as well as the odd Flash job for advertising and design agencies.

I spent a good chunk of 2012 and 2013 working for [W12 Studios](#) on an extensive user experience design project for a major tech company, and towards the end of 2013 I worked on a few prototyping projects and founded [East London Kinetics](#) with [Tim Burrell-Saward](#). 2014 saw more prototyping work for [REACT](#) and [BBC R&D](#), further development of ELK and public airings at [Playful](#), [Bees in a Tin](#) and [Hack Circus](#) (as a speaker) and [The New Sublime](#) as an exhibiting artist.

[Preloaded](#), December 2006 - August 2009 I moved to Preloaded in 2006 where I spent an enjoyable few years making games and online experiences. My biggest success was [Launchball](#), a physics puzzle game which has been played over 10 million times, installed at the Science Museum, projected 70ft high onto the side of the Shell building and won Best of Show at SXSWi in 2007. I left in 2009 as Technical Lead, having recruited the Flash team which would notch up further successes. During my time at Preloaded I worked on projects for clients like the BBC, Tate Modern, Bacardi, MTV and Cadbury's.

[Tonic](#), December 2004 - December 2006 I cut my agency teeth at Tonic, my first London job. Most of my work was producing Flash microsites, and I quickly progressed through projects of increasing ambitiousness and scope. It was here that I learned to produce high-quality work under agency deadlines and when I really started to learn the craft of creative development.

[Codemasters](#), 2001 & 2004 I worked for Codemasters either side of my degree in their fledgling Online Marketing department, making banner ads, microsites and webgames in Director and Flash. A dream job for a kid straight out of school who liked making things with computers, and a solid base for the next few years of making digital marketing things.

Education

BA (Hons) Media Production, University of Lincoln, 2001 - 2004 When the time came to go to University, I'd already been writing code for a good few years and I wasn't sure how much I got from studying for a Computer Science degree. I'd enjoyed making short films and videos at GCSE & A-Level, and I felt that spending some time studying media theory would be useful in a screen-based culture in a way that English Literature would have been in a print-based culture. Back in the early 2000s 'convergence' had yet to become a buzzword (and even longer until it'd be a footnote), but I had an inkling that understanding how time-based media worked would be a useful skill to go alongside the programming I already knew and was continuing to teach myself. The critical theory and production skills I learned at Lincoln have been consistently useful and evolving bits of my toolkit ever since.