Henry Cooke

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Creative Technology, Research & Development

Tinkerer, prototyper, committed generalist, Glue person, consensus-builder, facilitator. Occasional futurist. Data science lab assistant. AI whisperer.

In over two decades working in creative technology, I've developed a good nose for emerging technologies and their potential for professionals and the public.

I have led successful teams both technical and cross-disciplinary — the latter is where my heart is. I've done a lot of design, concepting, and pitching and I am trained in video & audio production.

I've created websites, games, 3D environments, mobile and desktop apps, interactive stories, art installations, and many prototypes in both software and hardware. In one memorable case, I built a giant talking throne for a Christmas event in a Royal Palace. I've experimented with digital storytelling, natural language processing, spatial audio, machine learning and made art from edge-cases of speech recognition and computer vision.

I put these skills to use as an independent creative R&D consultant, helping clients understand emerging technology through research, strategy and hands-on prototyping.

Professional skills

Trained Agile Project Manager, Product Owner, and Mental Health First Aider. Skilled facilitator and workshop leader. Empathetic leader, communicator and consensus-builder. Adept at working with creative, management, and engineering colleagues on their own terms, and fostering communication between disciplines. Glue person. Engaging public speaker and precise and thoughtful writer.

Technical skills

Expert in Python and skilled in JavaScript, both client and server-side. Proficient in HTML & CSS, with some C++, Java, Processing, and C#. I can usually pick up whatever stack is most useful for the job at hand, and I have extensive experience in the use and development of LLM-based tools to extend my skills.

Former iOS and Flash developer. Comfortable using and developing APIs and fluent in JSON, REST, OAuth, XML, etc. I know my way around a command line, and frequently tinker with virtual machines in various parts of The Cloud. Familiar with AWS, Azure, Heroku, etc. Regularly work with Raspberry Pi, comfortable with Arduino and intermediate electronics. I'm competent with a soldering iron.

Career history

A timeline of my career and selected projects is available at prehensile.co.uk/timeline

The Freelance Years, Round Two
2025 — present

I left the BBC at the end of 2024, and I've been working as an independent creative technology research & development consultant since. I help my clients to understand emerging creative technologies through a mix of strategy, facilitation, and hands-on prototyping projects.

The BBC Research & Development Years
2016 — 2024

I joined BBC R&D in 2016 as a Creative Technologist & Producer.

As a producer, I designed and led exploratory projects around emerging media technologies, most notably voice assistants and spatial audio. As a technologist, I built prototypes on my own and other projects to get a practitioner's feel for technologies and their possibilities.

As a researcher, I published guidelines and papers communicating the findings of our projects. I spent my last few years as Lead Foresight Researcher, building futures and foresight practices around the organisation and publishing very well-received foresight reports.

The Freelance Years
2008 — 2016 (or so)

In 2008, my instincts were leading me to the creative possibilities opening up on the iPhone. I went freelance as a creative technologist working on projects in Flash and iOS, including the first app to be nominated for a TV BAFTA and Björk's *Biophilia* 'app album'.

This time was also marked by artistic collaborations. Highlights include work with Dora Garcia and Crystal Bennes, and experimental theatre projects leading to The Body at the Barbican in 2015 — "a seat-shaking, soul-searching techno-futurist experience" which won that year's Oxford Samuel Beckett Theatre Trust Award.

Sometimes these threads came together. In 2013, I collaborated on a magical talking throne for a Christmas event at Kensington Palace, and in 2019 I investigated audience-tracking technologies for legendary immersive theatre company Punchdrunk.

The Design Agency Years
2004 — 2008

I started my London agency career in 2004, making Flash microsites and games. I learned the craft of creative software development during these years, and gained an education in agency-standard visual design. I joined Preloaded in 2006, where I made Launchball — which racked up over 10 million plays and won a slew of awards, including Best in Show and Best Game at SXSWi 2008.

Education

BA (Hons) Media Production, University of Lincoln
2001 — 2004

I was already a good coder by the time I left school, and didn't think I'd get much out of a Computer Science degree. I was enjoying making short films and videos, and made a bet that media production would be a useful skillset to go along with

the programming I already knew.

The critical theory and production skills I learned at Lincoln have been consistently useful and evolving bits of my toolkit ever since.