

Contact

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Top Skills

Greenfield Projects

FinTech

Startup Development

Languages

Italian (Native or Bilingual)

Danish (Elementary)

German (Professional Working)

English (Native or Bilingual)

Certifications

Generative AI Leader

Google Cloud Certified Professional
Cloud Architect

Publications

Crossplane: the good, the bad and
the ugly

Simon Aquino

Principal Platform Lead | Engineering Manager | Forward Deployed Engineer | AI-Native Cloud Architecture (GCP/AWS) | Scaling High-Performance Teams

London, England, United Kingdom

Summary

I am a hands-on "Builder-Leader" and Forward Deployed Engineer with 15+ years of experience bridging the gap between technical architecture and organisational strategy. I specialise in transitioning engineering units from "startup chaos" to enterprise-grade maturity, delivering speed without sacrificing security.

Currently leading greenfield platform initiatives at Barclays, following a tenure at JPMorgan Chase where I scaled the Cloud Enablement unit from 3 to 50+ engineers. My focus is on building "Golden Path" platforms that reduce cognitive load for developers while ensuring rigorous compliance in highly regulated environments (FinTech/ GovTech).

CORE VALUE PROPOSITION

ORGANISATIONAL GROWTH & SCALE: I operate as a "Player-Coach" who builds high-performance cultures. I have a proven track record of growing distributed engineering units from scratch to 50+ headcount, not just by defining hiring strategies, but by embedding with the workforce. I drive autonomy through active mentorship, pair programming, and upskilling teams on modern DevOps practices.

STRATEGIC GOVERNANCE & DELIVERY: I architect rigorous automated security control implementations with delivery excellence. I combine this technical execution with commercial acumen, managing vendor budgets and partnering with C-suite stakeholders to align technical roadmaps with business value.

TECHNICAL AUTHORITY (HANDS-ON): I lead from the front with deep expertise in Cloud-Native systems. I remain hands-on with the stack (Kubernetes, Go, Python) to steer complex decisions, from distributed orchestration to AI infrastructure readiness. I champion

AI-native workflows (Vertex AI, Cursor, Antigravity) to modernise developer experience and accelerate delivery velocity.

TECHNICAL ECOSYSTEM

- LEADERSHIP & STRATEGY: Engineering Strategy, Team Scaling (3-50+), Executive Stakeholder Management, FinOps & Cost Optimisation, Tech Recruitment.
- CLOUD & PLATFORM: GCP (Professional Architect), AWS, Azure, Kubernetes (EKS/GKE), Internal Developer Platforms (IDP), Developer Experience (DevEx), Platform-as-a-Product, Crossplane, Terraform, ArgoCD, Istio.
- ARCHITECTURE & DEVELOPMENT: Event-Driven Architecture, High-Frequency/Low-Latency Systems, Microservices (Go, Python, Java Spring Boot), Domain-Driven Design (DDD), gRPC/REST.
- SECURITY & OPS: DevSecOps, Zero Trust Architecture, IAM, ISO 27001/NIST Governance, AI/ML Infrastructure Readiness, Observability (Prometheus, Grafana, Datadog).

LOGISTICS: Dual UK & EU National. Available for opportunities across the UK and Europe. Open to relocation.

Experience

Barclays

Principal Platform Consultant

October 2025 - Present (4 months)

London Area, United Kingdom

Serving as the Principal Technical Authority for a high-profile greenfield initiative within the Barclays Payments Incubator. I am architecting and engineering the division's new Internal Developer Platform (IDP), driving the shift from legacy delivery to Cloud-Native engineering through direct technical execution, mentoring, and partnering with delivery squads.

CORE RESPONSIBILITIES:

Greenfield Architecture (AWS/EKS): Architected the "Zero-to-One" technical roadmap for a scalable Internal Developer Platform on AWS and Kubernetes (EKS). I engineered the solution specifically to support critical, high-throughput payment rails, ensuring low latency and high availability.

Golden Path Engineering: Designed and implemented "Golden Path" architecture patterns and automated compliance frameworks. I focused on encoding governance into the platform itself, transforming legacy constraints into a secure, self-service ecosystem.

Organisational Transformation: Leading the technical transformation of software units into Platform Engineers by operating as a "Player-Coach." I drive adoption through hands-on pair programming and technical mentorship, upskilling internal Tech Leads on platform strategy and Cloud-Native best practices.

Tech Stack: AWS, EKS (Kubernetes), Go, Terraform, Crossplane, GitHub Actions, Helm, Flux.

Haleon

Principal Consultant

April 2025 - September 2025 (6 months)

London Area, United Kingdom

Directed the delivery of a critical SAP ERP migration for Haleon, following a successful competitive tender won by Core Engineering Consulting Group (CECG). I mobilised and managed a squad of specialist consultants to execute the migration of business-critical financial systems.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS:

Consultancy Leadership: Led and managed a team of consultants from Core Engineering Consulting Group. I was responsible for the team's output, commercial deliverables, and ensuring the engagement was delivered within the strict timeline.

Critical Systems Migration: Orchestrated the end-to-end infrastructure migration of the internal SAP ERP platform. I navigated technical and organisational complexities to move legacy financial core systems with zero business disruption.

Stakeholder Management: Acted as the primary interface between the consultancy team and Haleon's senior leadership, managing risks, dependencies, and roadmap alignment.

Tech Stack: SAP ERP, Azure DevOps, GitHub, Cloud Infrastructure, Migration Tooling.

JPMorganChase

Engineering Manager, Accelerator Platform

April 2023 - April 2025 (2 years 1 month)

London, England, United Kingdom

Led the Cloud Enablement unit within the Strategic Growth Office (Startup Accelerator). Acting as the Technical Authority, I architected and engineered the firm's next-generation cloud platform, transitioning it from an experimental pilot to a firm-wide strategic solution.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS:

Enterprise-Scale Architecture (GCP/Kubernetes): Architected the firm-wide GCP foundation and Kubernetes ecosystem (100+ clusters). I designed and engineered automated control frameworks (aligned to NIST/ISO) to enable the secure, self-service delivery of data-intensive workloads for a 500+ employee department.

Force Multiplication & Scaling: Scaled the engineering unit from a seed team of 3 to 50+ engineers. I operated as a "Player-Coach," defining the technical operating model and embedding directly with squads to build a high-trust, collaborative engineering culture.

Innovation & Platform Engineering: Pioneered the adoption of Crossplane for Infrastructure-as-Code, collaborating directly with Upbound's engineering team to drive upstream feature improvements. I introduced GitOps workflows (ArgoCD) to reduce deployment friction and significantly improve developer velocity.

Technical Strategy & Alignment: Bridged the gap between technical execution and business goals. I regularly briefed C-suite executives on platform performance and roadmap progress, while managing multi-million pound vendor budgets to ensure commercial efficiency.

Tech Stack: Google Cloud Platform (GCP), Kubernetes (GKE), Go, Crossplane, Terraform, ArgoCD, GitHub Actions, Prometheus.

Deloitte

Infrastructure DevOps Lead - AWS

March 2021 - March 2023 (2 years 1 month)

Copenhagen, Capital Region, Denmark

Orchestrated the cloud infrastructure delivery for Denmark's critical Property Tax Platform (Vurderingsportalen), a national-scale digital service revolutionising property taxation. I operated as the Technical Lead within a complex, multi-vendor government environment, ensuring high availability and rigorous compliance.

CORE ACHIEVEMENTS:

Multi-Vendor Leadership: Orchestrated the infrastructure roadmap across 3 satellite teams (Core, Frontend, Backend), moving them from dependency to delivery autonomy. I mentored engineers to resolve their own infrastructure defects, significantly reducing bottlenecks.

Strategic Cost Optimisation (~70%): Identified and executed a high-impact infrastructure consolidation strategy. By simplifying legacy complexity and re-architecting resource consumption, I reduced monthly cloud operational costs by ~70% while preserving system functionality.

Modernisation & Security: Eliminated high-risk technical debt by re-architecting the authentication layer. I replaced a brittle, custom NGINX solution with a managed AWS API Gateway pattern, improving security posture and maintainability.

GovTech Delivery: Streamlined the deployment process for non-production environments, reducing release times from weeks to hours to accelerate feedback loops for the wider programme.

Tech Stack: AWS (API Gateway, Lambda, EC2), Terraform, Python, Jenkins, Docker, Linux.

Microsoft

Principal Consultant - Azure

November 2020 - March 2021 (5 months)

London, England, United Kingdom

Engaged by Microsoft's Professional Services arm to lead the architectural recovery of a critical trading platform migration for the London Stock Exchange Group (Refinitiv). I acted as the technical bridge between the client's internal business units and Microsoft's core Product Engineering teams.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS:

High-Frequency Trading Acceleration: Rescued a stalled on-prem to Azure migration for a major currency/stock trading platform. By optimising the architecture for AKS (Kubernetes) and EventHubs, I resolved critical throughput blockers and condensed the delivery timeline from years to months.

Strategic Enablement: Led the delivery of the first fully automated development environment, successfully navigating complex political and security challenges to unlock developer velocity for the client.

Architectural Governance: Defined the Proof of Concept (POC) scope and established the "Golden Path" for Azure adoption, ensuring strict compliance with financial regulatory standards.

Tech Stack: Azure, AKS (Kubernetes), EventHubs, Azure Storage (Blob/File/NFS), Log Analytics, ADX (Kusto), Networking.

loveholidays

Lead Platform Engineer - GCP

March 2020 - October 2020 (8 months)

London, England, United Kingdom

Embedded within the core product teams of the UK's fastest-growing Online Travel Agency (Loveholidays) to accelerate their migration to Google Cloud. My primary mission was to treat the platform as a software product, writing custom tooling to solve scale and latency challenges.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS:

Performance Engineering (30% Faster): Diagnosed and resolved critical latency bottlenecks in the core search engine. I profiled Go and Java microservices to optimise memory usage and Kubernetes autoscaling triggers, achieving a ~30% performance increase in search response times.

Event-Driven Architecture (Go): Designed and developed a custom Go (Golang) library for real-time database synchronisation via Google Cloud Storage (GCS). This reduced data propagation latency from minutes to seconds, ensuring customers always saw up-to-the-second pricing.

GitOps & Modernisation: Architected a "Jenkinsless" deployment strategy, introducing Kustomize and GitOps patterns to replace slow-running legacy jobs and improve the developer experience.

Tech Stack: Google Cloud Platform (GCP), GKE (Kubernetes), Go (Golang), Java Spring Boot, Kustomize, Google Cloud Storage, GitOps.

eBay

Lead DevOps Engineer - GCP

June 2019 - March 2020 (10 months)

Berlin Area, Germany

Embedded within the Platform Team for eBay's Classifieds Vertical (Advertising Division), managing the central cloud platform that hosts high-traffic proprietary marketplaces across global markets.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS:

Global Cloud Transformation: Orchestrated the strategic migration of the Classifieds vertical to Google Cloud Platform (GCP), moving legacy workloads to a modern, containerised infrastructure.

Platform Standardisation: Architected standardised GKE (Kubernetes) workflows and deployment patterns. I consulted with distributed satellite engineering teams across Europe to enable rapid adoption and ensure consistent operational standards.

Tech Stack: Google Cloud Platform (GCP), GKE (Kubernetes), Docker, Terraform, CI/CD.

Deloitte UK

Lead DevOps Engineer/Consultant - AWS

March 2018 - April 2019 (1 year 2 months)

Copenhagen, Capital Region, Denmark

Deployed to the Danish Tax Authority (Skat) to lead the DevOps stream for a major European digital transformation programme. I was responsible for bridging the gap between Deloitte Denmark, Deloitte UK, and global satellite teams to deliver a secure, immutable AWS platform for property tax management.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS:

Delivery Velocity (Weeks to Hours): Revolutionised the environment provisioning process. By architecting an automated Immutable Infrastructure pattern (using Terraform, Packer, and Docker), I reduced the deployment time for complete environments from weeks to hours.

Global Technical Coordination: Managed the backlog and technical roadmap for three distributed engineering teams. I acted as the primary synchronisation point between development, infrastructure, and the Scrum Master to ensure architectural alignment.

Infrastructure-as-Code (IaC): Led the transition to fully scripted infrastructure. I replaced manual configuration with Python-based release scripts and CloudFormation/Terraform bootstrapping, ensuring 100% reproducibility across environments.

Tech Stack: AWS, Terraform, Packer, Docker, Python, Jenkins 2.0, CloudFormation

Element.

Senior Software Engineer (DevOps/AWS) & Team Coach
March 2017 - February 2018 (1 year)
Berlin Area, Germany

Joined as the founding DevOps Engineer for a high-growth InsureTech startup (backed by FinLeap). I was responsible for architecting the greenfield AWS foundation to support the company's rapid expansion from seed stage to market scaling.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS:

Greenfield Architecture: Built the complete cloud platform from scratch on AWS, leveraging the full serverless and container ecosystem (Lambda, DynamoDB, SQS/SNS) to support a microservices-based insurance engine.

Interim Leadership: Following a period of hyper-growth and team splitting, I stepped up as Interim Team Lead. I shaped the engineering strategy, established early operational rituals, and mentored the team to ensure knowledge continuity.

Polyglot Engineering (Full-Stack): Operated as a true "DevOps" bridge, actively contributing to Java backend and React frontend codebases to resolve application-layer bugs and performance issues. Developed internal tooling in Go, Python, and Ruby.

Immutable Infrastructure: Established modern deployment patterns early, using Terraform, Packer, and Ansible to create immutable build pipelines, ensuring security and consistency across environments.

Tech Stack: AWS (Lambda, EC2, SQS/SNS, DynamoDB), Terraform, Packer, Ansible, Docker, Jenkins, Go, Python, Java, React.js.

HM Revenue & Customs

Senior DevOps Consultant

February 2016 - February 2017 (1 year 1 month)

London, United Kingdom

Deployed to the Core WebOps team for HMRC (Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs), working on the hyper-scale digital tax platform. I played a central role in designing and securing the multi-cloud infrastructure that serves millions of UK citizens during peak filing windows.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS:

Multi-Cloud Resilience: Engineered a fully multi-active platform designed to operate seamlessly across AWS, Azure, and UK Sovereign Cloud providers (Skyscape/Datacentred). This ensured zero-downtime availability for critical national services.

Technical Steering & Strategy: acted as a key influencer within the WebOps function, chairing architectural forums and leading organisation-wide tech talks to define the roadmap for containerisation and infrastructure scaling.

Security Hardening: Owned high-priority security epics, implementing rigorous hardening standards across the Linux and Docker estate to protect sensitive citizen data.

Open Source Innovation: Active contributor to the open-source ecosystem. I developed bespoke internal tooling in Go and Python to solve unique government-scale challenges and contributed upstream fixes to community tools.

Tech Stack: AWS, Azure, OpenStack, Docker, Scala Microservices, Puppet, Ansible, Terraform, Go, Python, ELK Stack.

KPMG UK

DevOps Engineer - TechSolutions (Assistant Manager, Advisory)
August 2015 - February 2016 (7 months)
London, United Kingdom

Member of the TechSolutions Advisory practice, responsible for engineering the cloud infrastructure for KPMG's Data & Analytics capabilities. I focused on building secure, multi-tenant Big Data platforms to serve KPMG's global audit and advisory clients.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS:

Big Data Cloud Platform: Architected a multi-tenant, high-scale AWS infrastructure to host the Hortonworks Data Platform (Hadoop/HDP). This enabled secure, isolated data processing environments for client engagements.

Bespoke Automation Tooling: Co-developed a custom orchestration engine using Ansible, Puppet, and Ambari. This automated the complex provisioning of clustered Big Data services, reducing setup time and configuration drift.

Hybrid Infrastructure & Security: Managed the security hardening and consolidation of on-premise Big Data infrastructure, ensuring strict compliance with KPMG's client data protection standards.

Agile Process Transformation: Partnered with the Product Owner to overhaul the team's delivery methodology. I successfully migrated the engineering unit to Scrum/Kanban, significantly improving velocity and workload visibility.

Tech Stack: AWS, Big Data (Hadoop/Hortonworks), Ansible, Puppet, Ambari, Python, AWS CLI, Linux (RHEL/CentOS).

Web Technology Group (WTG)

DevOps Consultant (contract)

July 2015 - August 2015 (2 months)

London, United Kingdom

Engaged to design and build a secure automated monitoring infrastructure for the UK Home Office. I operated with full autonomy, managing the project lifecycle from architectural design to final handover.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS:

Delivery Excellence (2 Months Early): Delivered the complete automation platform in just 5 weeks, beating the initial project timeline by almost two months.

Hybrid Cloud Architecture: Developed a versatile "write once, deploy anywhere" codebase capable of provisioning resources across both AWS and self-hosted VMware vSphere environments without code duplication.

Infrastructure as Code (Puppet): Architected a modular, configuration-driven Puppet 4 codebase following Role-Profile patterns. I enforced strict data-logic separation (using Hiera) to ensure maintainability and scalability.

CI/CD & Automation: Built a self-bootstrapping Jenkins pipeline to automate testing, RPM packaging, and orchestration, enabling a "zero-touch" release process.

Performance Recognition: Due to the exceptional speed and quality of delivery, I was immediately offered the Lead DevOps role for a subsequent multi-million pound Home Office programme.

Tech Stack: Puppet 4, AWS, VMware vSphere, RHEL/CentOS, Jenkins, Bash, Sensu, ELK Stack, HAProxy, Grafana.

Government Digital Service, Cabinet Office

Web Operations Engineer, Gov.uk verify

May 2014 - June 2015 (1 year 2 months)

London, United Kingdom

Part of the Government Digital Service (GDS), tasked with designing and operating the virtual infrastructure for Gov.UK Verify, the UK Government's federated identity assurance platform. I worked within a high-security DevOps environment to ensure the availability and integrity of citizen data.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS:

Critical National Infrastructure: Engineered and maintained the secure infrastructure underpinning the UK's digital identity gateway, ensuring 24/7 availability for millions of citizens accessing public services.

Infrastructure as Code (IaC): Led the automation of the entire software lifecycle. I managed configuration management (Puppet/Ansible) and automated build processes to provide Continuous Integration across secure testing environments.

Security & Compliance: Operated in a "Security First" environment. I tuned infrastructure performance to meet rigorous government security standards, ensuring the integrity of sensitive personal data.

Technical Strategy & Open Source: Actively contributed to the team's technical direction by drafting change proposals and owning major epics. I championed Open Source contribution, releasing internal tooling on GitHub to the wider community.

Tech Stack: Private Cloud (vCloud Director/vShield), Puppet, Ansible, Ruby, Python, Go (Golang), Jenkins, Elasticsearch, Linux.

DigitasLBi
Systems Engineer
August 2012 - May 2014 (1 year 10 months)
London, United Kingdom

Part of the Managed Services division for a global marketing technology agency. I was responsible for the end-to-end operation of the company's Data Centre and Private Cloud infrastructure, providing 24/7 hosting and application support for UK and Northern European clients.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS:

Data Centre Operations (Physical Layer): Managed the full hardware lifecycle, from designing and racking new ESXi server clusters to maintaining HP P4300 Lefthand storage nodes. I ensured the physical reliability of the compute estate.

Private Cloud Administration: Architected and administered the VMware vSphere (4.1/5.1) Private Cloud. I led a critical migration project to upgrade the virtualisation infrastructure, ensuring zero data loss for client applications.

Network Engineering: Configured and troubleshooted the physical network layer, managing Cisco switches, routers, firewalls, and load balancers to maintain connectivity for high-traffic digital products.

Incident Management (24/7): Operated on a high-availability rota, acting as the primary responder for critical outages. I authored incident reports and documented root cause analyses (RCA) to drive continuous service improvement.

Tech Stack: VMware vSphere (ESXi), Cisco Networking (Switches/Routers/ASA), HP Storage (P4300/Lefthand), Linux (RHEL/CentOS), Windows Server, Load Balancers.

Yammer, Inc.

IT Infrastructure Engineer (temp)

June 2012 - July 2012 (2 months)

London, United Kingdom

Engaged to support critical infrastructure operations during Yammer's acquisition by Microsoft. I assisted with the technical complexities of the office relocation and systems integration during this high-profile transition.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS:

M&A Infrastructure Support: Facilitated the technical integration of IT systems during the Microsoft acquisition, ensuring operational continuity for the engineering teams during a period of rapid change.

Identity & Fleet Management: Administered server-side infrastructure including MacOS X Server and Open Directory (LDAP), ensuring secure identity management and device compliance via Casper (Jamf).

Asset Management: Managed internal IT inventory and support workflows to handle the increased headcount and equipment demands of the scaling organisation.

Tech Stack: MacOS X Server, Open Directory (LDAP), Casper Suite (Jamf), Shell Scripting, Hardware Support.

University of Bristol
Casual IT Staff
October 2011 - June 2012 (9 months)
Bristol, United Kingdom

Provided frontline technical support to the University's academic staff and student body while completing my Master of Engineering degree.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES:

Front-Line Technical Support: Diagnosed and resolved hardware, software, and network connectivity issues for a diverse user base (Windows, Mac, Linux).

Stakeholder Communication: Acted as the first point of contact for IT queries, translating technical concepts for non-technical users to ensure rapid issue resolution.

Skills: IT Service Management (ITSM) · Customer Support · Troubleshooting · Communication.

Google
Corporate Operations Engineer
June 2011 - September 2011 (4 months)
Dublin, Republic of Ireland

Summer internship within Google's Corporate Operations Engineering group. I balanced operational IT support with software engineering, building internal tooling to automate office operations.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS:

Engineering Excellence (Python Readability): Awarded Python Readability status—a rigorous internal certification granting the authority to review and

approve Python code commits for other engineers. This recognised my adherence to Google's strict code style and architectural standards.

Internal Tooling Development: Led a project team to develop a custom Python/Django web application on Google AppEngine. The tool automated the management of reception desk machines, streamlining visitor flows.

EMEA Operations: Managed the 'Interrupt Shift' at the Dublin TechStop, resolving complex IT issues for Google's engineering workforce across the entire EMEA region.

Process Optimisation: Used 3D modelling techniques to redesign the physical TechStop layout, improving service efficiency and flow for internal employees.

Tech Stack: Python, Django, Google AppEngine, Linux, Internal Google Tools.

Google

Desktop Support Intern

June 2010 - October 2010 (5 months)

London, United Kingdom

Summer internship within Google's London operations. I split my time between frontline technical support and software engineering, contributing to internal security tooling.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS:

Security Software Development (Python): Dedicated 20% of my time to developing an internal Google web-based security application on App Engine. Collaborated remotely with the New York engineering team to ship 9 new features and resolve critical bugs within a single month.

Operational Excellence (4 Peer Bonuses): Awarded 4 Peer Bonuses from colleagues for exceptional service quality in troubleshooting complex Linux, Mac, and Windows workstation issues.

Infrastructure Operations: Assisted in the critical upgrade of the Aarhus office's main storage filer and conducted a full physical inventory of the Data Centre network infrastructure.

Tech Stack: Python, Google App Engine, Linux, Windows 7 Migration,
Hardware Support.

Education

University of Bristol

Master of Engineering (MEng) Hons, Computer Science and
Electronics · (2008 - 2012)