

Robert de Forest

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Idealist seeks real-world experiences by which to claw ever closer to a world in which humans collaboratively refine rather than re-invent wheels, to the benefit of all.

A Few Of My Favorite ...

Modes	Languages	Technologies	Roles
Communicative	CoffeeScript	GNU/Linux	SysOps
Collaborative	JavaScript	NodeJS	SysEng
Cooperative	Bash	TCP/IP	DevOps
Curious	C	AWS	

present to 2025	VCA Animal Hospitals Solutions Engineering <i>Product Manager, QA Lead, System Architect, Engineering Lead</i>	<p>I am product manager for a skunkworks project to improve VCA employee satisfaction with AI. Our current mandate is to learn about AI tech and how to integrate it with existing systems. I represent the customers (our employees) and provide guidance to the engineers based on my decades of experience. I also research LLMs specifically and how to use them safely.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Will deliver in Q1 2026: An LLM-based text interface in front of ServiceNow and other internal web applications to increase employee satisfaction.
2025 to 2018	Self Sabbatical	<p>I had a family loss in 2018 and took some time to focus on my health and reset. In 2025 I rejoined the workforce. My personal growth during my time off has already paid dividends in my new job. I'm developing stronger emotional intelligence and communication skills and improving my work-life balance practices.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Successfully navigated a difficult life transition- Returned to workforce with renewed focus and energy
2018 to 2015	Amazon.com AWS Perimeter Protection <i>System Engineer II</i>	<p>I was the senior engineer in the team responsible for detecting and mitigating DDoS attacks in real time. We ran third-party detection and mitigation equipment as well as setting up temporary BGP rules to re-distribute traffic onto larger links.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Co-founded the DDoS Response Team- Built DDoS detection stack in four regions- Partially automated builds, reducing effort by factor of three- Covered daytime on call to guarantee timely delivery of a new product
2015 to 2012	Amazon.com Payments System Operations <i>System Engineer II</i>	<p>My team was responsible for operations in The Payments Secure Zone, which is the highest security network in the company. It's where the customer's payment instrument data is kept. We worked with third party payment processors and internal engineers to keep money flowing both into amazon and out to our merchant customers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Supported Mobile Payments project<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Bake-off and recommendation for DUKPT Hardware Security Modules- Provided operations support and consultation to development teams- Worked with third-party developer to deploy their product on AWS- Supported AS2 payment processor partner communication system<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Trained teammates on how the system works- Obtained and renewed platform security certification- Regular on-call duties of Payments SysOps<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Troubleshoot payment processor communication problems- Support and advise internal development teams- Co-authored six-pager for moving Payments into AWS
2012 to 2010	Fred Hutch Cancer Research Center SCHARP.org <i>DataFax Administrator</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Performed a major software upgrade- Refactored code defining clinical trial forms- Adapted form code to take new security model into account- Corrected and back-filled data reporting automation- Supported in-house developers of systems extending DataFax- Recovered from infrastructure issue which caused data corruption
2010 to 2002	The Walt Disney Internet Group Three different teams <i>SysOps Specialist III</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Supported engineers and content producers of Disney's web properties- Assisted in migration from internal Java servlet engines to Tomcat- Assisted in launches of the Pirates of the Caribbean online game- Wrote 'How To Be Perfect' document about data center change control- Installed cabling and servers in newly expanded data center- Supported internally developed email marketing system- Re-architected system to reduce cost and increase availability
2002 to 1996	Three small companies Santa Cruz, CA <i>Tech lead, sysadmin, etc.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Desktop/server/network/hardware operations for- Got.net, an ISP with 2500 dial-up and web hosting customers- Coast Commercial Bank with six branches- Tapestry.net, a dot-com startup with 60 employees