

CV

Dmitry Shalashov

Backend developer / engineering manager / co-founder & CTO | 15+ years of backend/architecture /product experience | 1 exit

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Involved, hands-on, informal, like to leave everything better than it was, enjoy helping people and love finding optimal technical decisions.

As a contributor, I can design and ship new complex features, creating new revenue streams for the company from scratch. As a leader, I care about the people and am humble, empathic, patient, and kind. My goal is to teach and then not get in the way.

Created a great team at my startup and led it until an acquisition and beyond that. I ended up managing close to 100 people in three projects, but I felt more in my place managing 5-10 and writing code.

I'd like to go back to that level (developer or a tech/team lead), and also learn new skills. For many years my main language was Perl, now it's Go, also I touched a few other technologies briefly. I'm open to other backend languages as well, if you're willing to hire me without the relevant experience. I would say "yes" to Kotlin, Python, Typescript, Rust, Elixir, Clojure, Erlang. I would say "no" to, among popular languages, Scala. Ask about others!

Experience

CTO

Recsystems division of VK Group (former [Mail.Ru](#) Group)

Jun 2019 — Mar 2023

To be precise, Recsystems in the context of VK means Relap.io, [Pulse.Mail.Ru](#) (Yandex.Zen rival), and Mediaprojects divisions of VK.

Pulse.Mail.Ru was transferred to our team management as part of the acquisition of Relap.io by VK, and Mediaprojects joined us two years later.

The size of my team initially doubled, and then grew even more, and my responsibilities changed drastically, from an acting coach to a proper manager. It wasn't easy.

They included:

- building processes like review 360
- building relationships between people and teams
- a lot of negotiations — between projects, with other VK divisions, external suppliers
- growth of my reports
- salary and hardware budgeting
- finding resources

- just a general problem-solving
- also, I developed an architecture for a new type of advertising that required integration between three services, with tens of thousands of dollars in revenue per month

I did mostly fine, but it was not fun at all.

Relap and Pulse both multiplied their traffic and revenue a few times over during our time at VK.

CTO

Surfingbird

Mar 2011 — Jun 2019

Surfingbird was our first project. It was a personal recommendation system, like StumbleUpon. In 2014, we created a side project — Relap, a recommendation system for publishers, like Taboola. This project took off like a hockey stick, and since then we worked only on it.

Both projects were fun to work on, primarily because we had to solve technical challenges using very modest resources.

Relap took most of the Russian market share, and successfully fought off rivals like Taboola, Outbrain, Plista, Giraff.io, myWidget by Mail.Ru, and recommendation widget from Yandex.

I'm especially proud of the great team retention and working atmosphere.

Surfingbird was featured in Russian Forbes (I'm on the right), Kommersant's "The Firm's Secret" (Kommersant is one of Russia's leading business newspapers) and other online outlets, and got a grant from Startup Fellows (Pavel Durov & Yuri Milner).

Relap was named one of the 100 hottest European startups by Wired in 2015.

In the end, it was acquired by Mail.Ru Group (now VK) where the management was obliged to stay for another 3.5 years.

- under my leadership, we created the largest native advertising network in Eastern Europe, using only a couple dozen of servers, which also generated billions of content recommendations per month

I personally:

- made a video advertisement platform from scratch with tens of thousands of dollars in revenue per month
- revamped big chunks of the system, like an entire ad auction system, to make them faster and clearer to enable further development
- implemented eCPM prediction engine that raised revenues by 20% and then reduced the supply required for this engine training by 30% by eliminating some loopholes
- implemented a basic contextual targeting system in a week without new hardware resources

Perl developer

Yandex

Nov 2010 — Feb 2011

I worked on the Direct, system for creating and managing contextual search ads in the Yandex search engine. Then we got funding for our startup, and I left.

- changed client report generation from on-the-fly to queued to get rid of timeouts and be able to generate bigger reports
- implemented "targeted phones" feature to measure advertisement effectiveness

- participated in the development of geo-targeted ads

Perl developer

Parallels

Aug 2010 — Oct 2010

I worked on a shared hosting management system, PBAS 4.0, but decided that I'm more interested in developing end-user services.

Senior Perl developer

Web Prime Group

Mar 2010 — Jul 2010

I was tasked with the creation of a culinary social network, but management changed and the project was scrapped.

- had experience building full-text and geo search

Perl developer

Mail.Ru Group

Jun 2007 — Mar 2010

My first serious gig as a developer. I have a funny story about how I got there, and I didn't know Perl at all (only some PHP), but I learned quickly. I participated in the development of my.mail.ru — the third Russian social network, blogs.mail.ru — a blogging platform that we almost made a leader in the market, and api.mail.ru — API for social games on the my.mail.ru platform.

- learned to work with high load
- developed a new platform for api.mail.ru with an order of magnitude better performance
- developed "Facebook share" alike feature

Skills

- Go, SQL, Perl, Javascript
- PostgreSQL — designing data schema, optimizing queries, performance tuning
- ClickHouse
- Memcached, Redis
- Graphite, Grafana, Graylog
- Nginx
- Git
- Linux — command line, basic dev ops

Education

Specialist degree at National Research Nuclear University "MEPhI" (5.5 years) Experimental nuclear physics faculty Grade average: above 90%

Languages

Russian (native), English (advanced), Portuguese (basic, learning right now)

Certifications

- [Stratoplan Team Management education](#)
- [Machine Learning](#)
- [Probabilistic Graphical Models](#)
- [Algorithms: Design and Analysis, Part 1 & Part 2](#)