

Ori Ratner

Co-founder at Pedago

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Summary

Polyglot programmer and technical leader with experience in innovative web, desktop, and mobile application development across a variety of technologies. Creating delightful user experiences is my greatest motivator. But, if doing so involves solving interesting computing, scalability, or software design challenges, all the better.

Experience

Co-founder at Pedago, LLC

April 2013 - Present (3 years 4 months)

Building a faster, more effective way to learn online. Developers of the world's first mobile-ready MBA.

Director of Software Development at Rosetta Stone

April 2012 - March 2013 (1 year)

Transitioned to a dual role on ReFLEX, managing product requirements as Executive Producer while continuing to function as Tech Lead. Wrote user stories, resolved technical and content questions, prioritized requests from the go-to-market teams, analyzed data and built custom analytics dashboards, and pitched in with a bit of code and artwork when needed. Role included significant communication and coordination with sales and marketing groups in South Korea and Japan.

Software Architect at Rosetta Stone

August 2009 - April 2012 (2 years 9 months)

As Software Architect, I drove the technology roadmap for the SDQA organization, spearheading new product architecture development, reviewed software design proposals, lead internal standardization and code management efforts, organized workstreams for cross-team coordination, and otherwise helped projects succeed as a floating development resource.

In February 2011, I took over as technical lead of the company's newest language learning product, ReFLEX. I supervised a team of 9 developers as we brought the application to market. Unique aspects of this project include an AI backend with adaptive daily lessons, just-in-time matchmaking of live video sessions with professional language coaches, and an accelerated development process incorporating daily production rollouts.

Product Owner: Mobile Applications at Rosetta Stone

August 2009 - April 2010 (9 months)

Concurrent to my new role as Software Architect, I directed the newly formed Mobile Applications team, defining and delivering the initial version of our first iPhone app, Rosetta Stone Mobile Companion.

Responsibilities included:

- * Requirements gathering, product definition with stakeholders, project planning
- * Mockups and user experience flows
- * Working with design consultants to iterate on production artwork
- * Working with internal language experts to adapt RS curriculum content for the mobile device
- * Small feature contributions, code review

Technologies: Objective-C/Cocoa, iOS

Scrum Master: Social Applications at Rosetta Stone

July 2008 - August 2009 (1 year 2 months)

Following the release of Rosetta Stone Manager I was given charge of the newly formed Social Applications team. The goal was to create a suite of casual language learning games that would form one of the 3 pieces of the new TOTALe product. The role later expanded to include work outside of the original charter of the team to support the overall TOTALe deliverable.

Tasks included:

- * Collaborating with dozens of engineers and stakeholders to envision and build TOTALe
- * Brainstormed and collaborated on implementation of an architecture for game-to-game communication/state coordination built on a pub/sub abstraction; allowed for development of games without per-game web services
- * Collaborated on a novel NoSQL-like persistence layer for the games to support the "generic platform" approach
- * Collaborated on creation of a social applications "game framework"; provides consistent game chrome, improved mocking and test harness support, and templates for deployment and CI
- * Managing several projects, including Studio (our online classroom product) when it was folded into the team

Technologies: AS3, Flex, Ruby/Rails, SQL, XML, RTMP/RTMFP, LCCS (formerly CoCoMo)

Scrum Master: RS Manager at Rosetta Stone

July 2007 - June 2008 (1 year)

Upon completion of the Version 3 product, I immediately transitioned to leading a team of 4 developers charged with creating an institutional "manager" for the Version 3 application. The solution would allow schools, corporations, and other large organizations to manage usage of Rosetta Stone, including advanced reporting and curriculum customization features. The product was made available as both a multi-tenancy

service hosted by Rosetta Stone, as well as a standalone server that could be deployed entirely within the customer's site.

New responsibilities included:

- * Leading a distributed team that was almost entirely remote from the main RS office (a first for the company)
- * Managing the scrum process
- * Defining requirements with stakeholders (moonlighting as a Product Owner during this time)
- * Maintaining the RS culture in this new office

Technologies: AS3, Flex, Ruby/Rails, SQL, C/C++, Objective-C, MSI/InstallShield, PackageMaker

Software Developer at Rosetta Stone

January 2006 - July 2007 (1 year 7 months)

I worked on the team that built the Version 3 rewrite of the Rosetta Stone application. The application needed to run on Mac and PC via CD install, as well as online. Our goal was a fully-immersive language learning experience, with an intuitive interface containing little to no explanatory text.

My responsibilities included:

- * Choosing a technology platform (decided on Actionscript 3 + Flex 2)
- * Initial application architecture
- * Speech experience and technology integration
- * Working with a vendor to enable Flash on the desktop
- * Maintaining the vision of the original labs prototype as we rebuilt and extended its functionality for production
- * Assisting in user experience brainstorming, mockup creation, and user testing
- * Assisted in debugging and refining solution for display of tricky international character sets (ligatures, bidirectional scripts, etc.)

Technologies: AS3, Flex, Ruby/Rails, Java, C/C++, XML, SQLite, Perl

Software Developer in Labs at Rosetta Stone

May 2005 - January 2006 (9 months)

I was part of a small team that iterated on the prototype that would become the model for Rosetta Stone Version 3. Besides brainstorming and hacking on the codebase, I ran user tests, implemented a basic ticketing system to track the team's work, and drove some documentation efforts. When the project transitioned from research to full-on product development, I was the team lead charged with maintaining the vision of the prototype as we rewrote it for production.

Perhaps my biggest contribution was the speech recognition user experience. In addition to creating and polishing a novel "hands free" speech UI, I also evaluated a number of SRE technologies, commercial and academic, running bake-offs and comparing recognition accuracy. This included a bunch of Perl and Ruby scripting to clean up and organize our corpus of recorded speech data + transcriptions in order to construct test speech models with a research group in Boulder, CO. The results of this effort heavily informed the company's decision to bring this group aboard as the foundation of Rosetta Stone speech research lab.

Intern/Software Developer at Rosetta Stone

May 2002 - May 2005 (3 years 1 month)

Rosetta Stone was a small company when I first began working there, with just a handful of technical folks on-hand. As such, I was fortunate to have the opportunity to tackle big projects early on.

My first assignment was a rewrite of the online license server, giving me a chance to play with Java, servlets, EJBs, JBoss and the like. Challenges included reverse-engineering the protocol (and associated encryption), factoring the problem into a multi-stage filter pipeline for simplified protocol extension, creating a multi-threaded load test agent, and working with a second developer in the design of the underlying EJB structure. Incidentally, this was my first Java program. Years later, I would revisit this legacy code to help scale the server preparation for a large contract with the Army.

After finishing the license server ahead of schedule, I was handed the task of creating the backend for the rosettastone.com website refresh. At the time, XML+XSLT was hot stuff, and our writers/designers wanted to be able to craft the site using these technologies. Browser support was lacking, and Apache Cocoon was quite unstable at the time, so I ended up writing a servlet-based solution from scratch to handle managing the site content, including XML/XSLT transformation, caching, and HTML forms. This would run the main rosettastone.com site for several years until we switched to Ruby on Rails and more traditional CMS setup.

I also worked on a number of other web projects, including leading a team that built a Cocoon-based language learning site that could be customized and integrated into other institutions' websites. At the end of my final internship year, I transitioned to a research-oriented team, exploring ideas that would eventually lead to the Version 3 rewrite of the core Rosetta Stone product.

Skills & Expertise

Scrum

Flex

ActionScript

Ruby on Rails

Software Project Management

HTML5

CSS

JavaScript
Objective-C
Software Design
HTML 5
Agile Methodologies
Web Development
Web Services
HTML
XML
Subversion
Software Engineering
Web Applications
Ruby
Test Driven Development
Software Development
XSLT
Batch Files
TCL
EJB
Microsoft Windows 98
CVS
SQL
CORBA
Continuous Integration
Java
User Experience
Distributed Systems
Mobile Applications

Education

University of Virginia

BE, Computer Science, 2001 - 2005

Activities and Societies: ACM leadership council (event planning, marketing, hosting), Rodman Scholars Engineering Honors Program, UVa Graphics Lab (undergraduate researcher), TA for Engineering Ethics (TCC 201, 3 years)

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16 people have recommended Ori

"Ori is a highly effective technical leader and developer. He has wide competence technically (from backend services, to HTML/JavaScript/CSS, to Flash/Flex, to Objective C/iOS) and brings those abilities to bear on customer-facing product problems creating innovative solutions that delight customers. He leads by example and is incredibly resourceful in finding ways to get things done fast."

— **Andy Harbick**, managed Ori indirectly at Rosetta Stone

"Ori is a rockstar technical entrepreneur! I've witnessed his awesome-ness first hand as he built numerous applications and led numerous teams which collectively generated hundreds of millions of dollars in revenue for Rosetta Stone over the last decade. He is able to learn new technologies, methodologies, and management practices quickly and apply them effectively. I'd hire him again/work with him/work for him as soon as I could :) On top of all that he is personable, fun to hang out with, and will bring down the stress level of any team with his calm presence."

— **Christopher Spiller**, managed Ori at Rosetta Stone

"Ori was such a fabulous person to work with and one of the most impressive technical leaders that I have ever worked with. He not only managed a team and lead development for a product, but he also was a great liaison with the business. While he was incredibly smart and focused, I could always count on Ori to be a good communicator and translate our needs and issues into real solutions. He is an innovator and I hope to work with him again in the future."

— **Betty Antonio**, worked indirectly for Ori at Rosetta Stone

"Ori is an extremely insightful director and an excellent manager. He has a firm grasp of not only proven technology, but also up and coming technology. He makes sure people have what they need to succeed, then gives them the space to achieve. He is also a very likable and friendly person. Ori was a key asset in the launching and improvement of a cutting edge application stack. I would not hesitate to work for him again."

— **Don Mowry**, reported to Ori at Rosetta Stone

"Ori is a technical leader who gets things done. I would buy stock in any company he works for. He efficiently and effectively builds great products and makes the right tradeoffs. He easily straddles technical and organizational leadership roles. The teams he ran at Rosetta Stone were run and organized very efficiently, and several times he created technical and organizational processes that were later adopted by other teams. In all of his leadership roles he remained technical enough to understand, simplify and optimize all the technical tradeoffs being made by his team members. He's a pleasure to work for and with because he is organized, a great communicator, and always treats everyone with respect."

— **Ann Lewis**, worked directly with Ori at Rosetta Stone

"Ori is one of the most impressive technical leaders that I have ever had the pleasure of working with. He consistently excels in executing the roles of software architect, engineering manager, mentor, lead developer, and senior technical advisor and deftly transitions between them to maximize his impact on each project. He has impressive breadth across a broad spectrum of technology stacks and established depth in many areas. He has excellent product design intuition and sells his ideas effectively, backing up his proposals with prototypes, data, and case studies as needed. Ori stays well ahead of developing technical trends, enabling his teams to respond quickly and effectively to changing business priorities and new opportunities. He is a world-class developer and a keen judge of talent when hiring or joining a new team. Ori's level of approachability and respect for others are rare for someone of his extraordinary talent. I recommend Ori without hesitation as a senior leader of mission critical, highly challenging technical initiatives and I would be delighted to work with him again in the future."

— **Chris Karas**, worked directly with Ori at Rosetta Stone

"Ori is an extremely talented and dedicated architect. I worked with Ori on a number of projects and was constantly impressed with his ability to solve complex technical problems, manage technical resources and serve as a source for new and innovative ideas. I hope I have the chance to work with Ori again."

— **Marshall Schoenthal**, managed Ori indirectly at Rosetta Stone

"For the past two years, Ori was my manager at Rosetta Stone. The strongest endorsement I can give him is that I would work for him again in a heartbeat. As a manager, Ori excelled at identifying all the business requirements for our project and distilling them into clear, focused goals. He was also exceptional at identifying the strengths and weakness of the team and planning accordingly, making our team one of the most efficient and productive teams at the company. But what makes Ori an unparalleled leader is the passion and drive he brings to every endeavor. That passion is infectious and made our team not only more productive and successful at meeting business goals but more positive and happy as well. Furthermore, Ori is an exceptional programmer which enables him to contribute in a myriad of ways beyond managing. From architecting new products to assessing the risks of different technological strategies to writing code during

crunch time, Ori uses his technical prowess to contribute wherever he's needed. I hope for the opportunity to work with him again."

— **Tyler Samson**, reported to Ori at Rosetta Stone

"Ori is a fantastic manager to work for for many reasons. He is an extremely gifted technologist and you can learn a lot from him. He is exceptional at managing teams, providing the info they need, writing clear requirements and giving the time needed to get it done under tight release schedules. I worked for him on a team that was the envy of the company for its rapid release ability and sophisticated approach to release management. The groundwork for the team's success was laid down by Ori. I knew I could always go to Ori with concerns or issues and would come away with thoughtful guidance as to the best way forward. I truly hope to work with Ori in the future."

— **Bob Cronin**, worked indirectly for Ori at Rosetta Stone

"I had the good fortune of working for Ori as he headed up the ReFLEX product at Rosetta Stone. The product represented an entirely new direction for how innovative applications were developed within the company; incorporating agile, rapid-release iterative methodologies, with Ori personally leading the charge. His technical acumen and breadth of understanding of all things development is staggering to say the least, and his ability to keep up with emerging trends in technology is downright scary. He has a holistic understanding of the demands on a business from the daily internal workings needed to facilitate cross-team product development, to the external users' desires. He has a particular zeal for capturing user metrics in depth and performing the analysis required to allow product iteration to continue in the right direction. Ori provided just the right amount of oversight and had the proper trust in our team to allow us to innovate outside the box while remaining focused on the customer. I couldn't ask for a better mentor and sincerely hope I have the opportunity to work alongside him again."

— **Brent Dearth**, reported to Ori at Rosetta Stone

"I've had the pleasure of working with Ori since he first arrived at Rosetta Stone. Ori joined us as an outrageously young, smart, hard working, creative, interdisciplinary team member. When we were recruiting young talent, we consistently asked ourselves, "Where can we find more Ori's?" It's been incredibly gratifying to watch Ori grow into a mature team leader, with the creative vision and skills at planning and execution to do amazing things. Ori has been a pleasure to work with. His grasp of the various aspects that go into a project (scope, requirements, effort, cost, business/brand strategy, etc.) makes him a valued colleague and a valued asset to the organization as a whole. And ultimately his ability to see the big picture made him an obvious choice to direct all of software development. Ori is among the brightest, most energetic, likable colleagues I've ever had. Any organization will be lucky to have him."

— **Jack Marmorstein**, worked directly with Ori at Rosetta Stone

"Ori is a rare find. I feel very fortunate to have worked with Ori on different projects during my time as RosettaStone. I have worked with him on projects where he was a developer and scrum master and have also worked with him on other projects where he was the product owner. Irrespective of his role, I always found Ori executing the projects flawlessly. Ori understand the business, technical and leadership challenges very well and always finds creative solutions to resolve them. Not only is Ori an awesome developer, product owner and a people manager but he's also an awesome person who is such a pleasure to work with. I would be thrilled beyond words to work with Ori again and I recommend him to any organization looking for A players."

— **Ruchi Sabharwal**, worked indirectly for Ori at Rosetta Stone

"Ori is a person with many gifts. Aside from his warm and pleasant personality, he possesses a unique combination of technical, business, and leadership skills. If all that were not enough, he's incredibly intelligent. I've watched a consistent pattern over the years where Ori is assigned to lead the most challenging projects and teams. This occurs because it's widely known that when Ori is managing a project team, the work will get done on time and the quality will be superb. Further, Ori has a tireless work ethic, is incredibly organized, and is extremely passionate about his work. I could go on, but I will close by saying that I highly recommend Ori for any organization looking for perfection!"

— **Dave Seyna**, worked directly with Ori at Rosetta Stone

"Ori was my ideal manager. His own breathtaking talents and generous nature inspired rather than intimidated, and he has a fine sense of when to give developers free-reign and when to bring the hammer down. He supported his entire team selflessly, and all of us have grown into our careers with his ready assistance. He is also a practical visionary. His voracious appetite for knowledge and ability to keep abreast of cutting-edge development practices (without ever seeming to fall behind in his own work or limiting our access to him) allowed him to see the future and plot an aggressive course toward it. Whatever our team did, other teams followed on six months later. Ori has deep technical knowledge in a variety of domains, embodies managerial excellence, and was a true thought leader in the organization. He is capable of anything."

— **Jeffrey Dettmann**, reported to Ori at Rosetta Stone

"Ori is easily one of the most talented developers I have had the privilege of working with. He has the ability to focus on low-level problems without losing sight or sense of higher level systems, objectives, and trends. I've worked alongside him as a developer as well as in his more recent Product Owner and Architect roles, and I've always been impressed with his conduct and ability to deliver high-quality results. I hope to work with him again should the opportunity arise."

— **Brian Vaughn**, worked directly with Ori at Rosetta Stone

"Ori is a genius. He is one of the most well-rounded and intelligent developers with whom I have ever worked. He can quickly acquire an excellent grasp of complex problems, he has great intuition, and he is a very effective mentor for less experienced team members. I have learned a great deal from Ori and I think he is a fantastic developer."

— **Scott Fanetti**, worked indirectly for Ori at Rosetta Stone

[Contact Ori on LinkedIn](#)