Website Sections

# Index (Homepage)

# Welcome Banner

**Welcome!**

Hey! Welcome to my website. I'm a recent graduate from the University of Waterloo, currently living abroad in Asia. I develop apps, plan on starting my own company, and like to write. At university I studied computer science, business and literature - the former two because I'm interested in entrepreneurship, and the latter because literature is fun. I made this website because it gives more information than a traditional resume and more flexibility than LinkedIn. Plus it was fun and I got to be a little creative.

# About me

**Professionally** I am driven, versatile and creative. I am passionate about finding solutions to real problems, and doing work that leads to quantifiable improvements in people's lives. I have developed a diverse skillset through studying business and computer science, and experience professionally in both fields. This allows to me work effectively on any stage of the product development cycle – from writing professional code and designing a product that is easy to use to developing an effective marketing and sales strategy.

**Personally** I love to travel, have developed a keen interest in photography and love to both eat and cook food (plus I’m nurturing a minor coffee addiction). I’ve recently spent two weeks in Brazil, just finished up a semester studying in Hong Kong, and am currently set to embark on a multi-month adventure through South East Asia and India. Unfortunately all of this traveling has meant that I haven’t been cooking a lot lately, but it has been objectively fantastic for my photography

# What I'm looking for

I want to work somewhere I can make an impact, try out as many different roles as possible and get my feet wet in a diverse range of scenarios and environments. I want to develop a more diverse skillset - I enjoy programming, and it’s where I have the most experience, but at this point in my career I am more interested in taking different or hybrid roles. Given the range of experience I have I could fit in and learn quickly in a wide variety of positions.

# Some Things I'm good at

**Business, Leadership**

Through the combination of case competitions, experience running the science section of Imprint and projects completed throughout my academic life I have developed strong leadership and management skills. I work well with others and am comfortable delegating and making important decisions.

**App Development and Computer Science**

During my five professional internships I have developed apps from scratch, worked on established products for Silicon Valley giants and contributed to major releases for growth-stage companies as both a developer and product manager. During my academic career I developed low level applications, worked on UI and UX projects and developed a good understanding of algorithms and data structures

**Writing and Communication**

I have experience as an editor, columnist and reporter for UW Imprint, as well as an English literature minor from the University of Waterloo. Writing has allowed me critically engage with topics and issues that I find interesting and journalism has given me the opportunity to exercise my research, interview, and reporting sills.

# Some Places I've Worked

Scribd - Product Management & Android Development </h1>

September - December 2014 | San Francisco, CA | Android, Product

* Project lead for usability studies aimed at improving the Scribd website and apps’ UI and UX.
* Contributed to major releases including the rollout of the audiobook feature and better support for offline mode</li>

Bridgit - Android Developer <h1>

January - May 2014 (Part Time) | Waterloo, ON |Android

* Took Bridgit’s Android app from not functional to release ready on my own, acting as my own product manager and designer
* Built a well-written, architecturally sound and efficient code base that could be effectively scaled

Yelp - Android Development

September - December 2013 | Android

* Completed the development of a feature that is currently in use </li>
* Gained a much better understanding of the feature creation process including building a functional UI, working effectively with design and back-end teams and making the feature production ready

Xtreme Labs - Agile Engineer </h1>

January – May 2013 | iOS, Android, Ruby on Rails

* Worked with a pair on a library for iOS that facilitated syncing between core (local) data and server data
* Vastly improved my ability to write clean and well architectured code through consistent re-evaluation and contribution to project architecture decisions

A few things people I've worked with have said about me

Sam got up to speed on Android super-quick and made some killer contributions in the first few months. I was even more impressed with how he took on the product manager role and jumped into some difficult tasks despite not having much structure or guidance from the rest of the team, figuring things out for himself as he went

* Jared Friedman, Scribd Co-Founder and Former CTO

Sam performed exceptionally well throughout his internship. He worked hard to build out our product and to ensure we are only shippping robust features. He integrated well with the team. He was also very receptive to feedback, and worked to develop and improve his performance throughout the term.

* Donald Lau, (Mentor) Android Engineer, Yelp

# Stuff I think is pretty cool

**Travel**

Travelling has provided me with some of the greatest experiences of my life. I have learnt an incredible amount about other cultures, ways of living and myself (I know this a a cliché, but hey, it’s true) while abroad. Travelling forces you out of your comfort zone, it forces you to question some of your core beliefs and come to terms with the fact that you probably don’t have everything figured out. It’s a way to step back from the forward march of life and take stock of where you are, and how you got there. For me personally it has opened the door to countless experiences that I never would have got a chance to live through had I not taken stepped out my door and into the world.

**Photography**

Photography helps to keep me sane when things get stressful. On top of being fun, having a visually creative hobby has helped me appreciate the little things that make our world amazing (this is especially true when travelling). I'm a big fan of mirrorless cameras, and my (currently very modest) set of gear is made up of the Sony Alpha 6000 (APS-C sensor), a 16-50mm f3.5-5.6 zoom lens, and (my personal favourite) a 35mm f1.8 prime. On top of the limited slideshow below you can check out my Flickr account here

# Resume

# Welcome Banner

Hey! This is my resume. If you need any more information you can also check out my LinkedIn page

# Internships

**Scribd - Product Management & Android Development**

**September - December 2014 | San Francisco, CA | Android, Product**

* Project lead for usability studies aimed at improving the Scribd website and apps’ UI and UX. Suggestions from this project were used in improving the app and website
  + Conducted user tests by developing a set up tasks that Scribd users peformed both in person and using usertesting.com
  + Interviewed Scribd's most profilic users in order to obtain qualitative usability data that could help all users
* Contributed to major releases including the rollout of the audiobook feature better support for offline mode
* Refactored and improved the functionality, architecture and readability of numerous parts of the Android app

Evaluation: Excellent(6/6)

Sam got up to speed on Android super-quick and made some killer contributions in the first few months. I was even more impressed with how he took on the product manager role and jumped into some difficult tasks despite not having much structure or guidance from the rest of the team, figuring things out for himself as he went

* Jared Friedman, Scribd Co-Founder and Former CTO

**More on Scribd**

Scribd gave me the opportunity to split my time there between working as a product manager and an Android developer. This allowed me to improve my expertise on the Android system, while also developing new skills in product management, UI and UX design and usability.

My role as a product manager was focused on finding frequent problem areas for average users, as well as identifying areas in which we could improve usability and functionality for our heaviest users. In order to isolate problem areas for our average users we chose to conduct usability interviews both in person and using usertesting.com. Users were asked to answer a series of survey questions to better correlate results with user-type. Following this we recording them performing a series of basic tasks. We chose a large enough sample size to establish patterns and generated actionable tickets for both the website and apps which were later implemented.

To identify potential areas of improvement for our heaviest users we conducted a series of in-person interviews in which we asked them about which features they used, how they used them, and what they would improve or like to see.

My work as Android developer involved taking tickets ranging from small bug fixes to medium-sized feature implementation. The largest feature I worked on was the the UI and UX for the “my library” tab, which is where users can save books to their library, and download them for offline, as well as the back-end for downloading and saving both books and audiobooks. This involved integration with the third-party audiobook API Scribd uses, collaboration with other members of my team working on the audiobook implementation, and refactoring the existing save-to-device architecture and implementation to add the ability to track download progress, add layers of abstraction to a design that was previously non-robust, and add the ability to download multiple books simultaneously. On completion of this project I moved on to product management.

**Bridgit - Android Developer**

**January - May 2014 (Part Time) | Waterloo, ON |Android**

* Took Bridgit’s Android app from not functional to release ready
* Had the opportunity to make a large impact on a small start-up
* Helped define the direction for the product and with its UI/UX redesign (not released yet)
* Worked closely with the iOS and Web developers to ensure a consistent experience
* Wrote, re-wrote or refactored the majority of the current Android code base
  + Acquired a much more comprehensive understanding of the Android OS and development environment through building an entire app
* Focused on building a well written, architecturally sound and efficient code base that could easily be understood and scaled.

**More on Bridgit**

I started with an Android app that was largely unusable. Although many of the core features had been developed (primarily the main list view and networking) the majority of the app was not functional due to out dated api calls, broken UI elements or crashes that hadn’t been fixed. I started by making the app’s main screen usable and refactoring to use fragments. I then worked iteratively to build new features, refactor old code and improve the UI and UX. I had to make sure the architecture was well implemented, the codebase remained clean and the app was consistent with the other platforms. Working independently I had to hold myself to high standards. Given that the target users were largely not tech savvy I had to work hard to build the most intuitive UI I possibly could. By the end of my term the app was release ready

**Yelp - Android Development**

**September - December 2013 | San Francisco, CA |Android**

* Greatly improved my Android development skills
* Worked on an intern project where I developed the Android part of a full feature along with iOS and back-end developers
  + Gained a much better understanding of the feature creation process including building a functional UI, working effectively with design and back-end teams and making the feature production ready
* Helped build the “Mobile Reviews” feature which allows users to write reviews for businesses on their phone
* Learned how a mature and well developed app is built, improved and maintained
* Learned how to effectively handle backwards compatibility for Android phones

Evaluation: Excellent(6/6)

Sam performed exceptionally well throughout his internship. He worked hard to build out our product and to ensure we are only shipping robust features. He integrated well with the team. He was also very receptive to feedback, and worked to develop and improve his performance throughout the term.

* Donald Lau, (Mentor) Android Engineer

**More on Yelp**

Yelp was my first experience working for a company with an internationally known brand name and a single product. As a member of the comparatively smaller Android team my code had a noticeable impact on an app with millions of daily active users. Working on the Yelp app also gave me the opportunity to learn a huge amount about how large apps are built and maintained as well as many of the common problems that can occur during the development process. On a broader level I gained an understanding of the many technical and business challenges that a company with over 100 million users has to face.

The majority of my work was focused on the client side of the product and therefore the challenges of the job were centered on providing users with the best possible experience. From a technical perspective this meant I had to have a solid understanding of everything from the android layout system to effective fragment management. I also had to make sure that everything was backwards compatible because a large enough portion of Yelp’s users are still using pre-gingerbread OS versions. The net effect of my work at Yelp was to give me a huge amount of confidence in my ability to write Android apps.

**Xtreme Labs - Agile Engineer**

**January – May 2013 | Toronto ON | iOS, Android, Ruby on Rails**

* Worked with a pair on a library for iOS that facilitated syncing between core (local) data and server data
  + Vastly improved my ability to write clean and well architectured code through consistent re-evaluation and contribution to project architecture decisions
  + Learned Objective-C and became very proficient working with Core Data
  + Wrote thorough and well-designed unit tests that achieved good code coverage
* Developed a testing server for the app using Ruby On Rails
* Refactored the Android authentication library during my first two weeks
* Learned a lot about company practices and the larger business processes that produce the quality apps that have brought success to Xtreme Labs

Evaluation: Excellent(6/6)

Sam was a great pair to work with at Xtreme Labs. He is enthusiastic about his work and is always striving to improve his own development skills. This translates into constantly imporving code and deeper levels of understanding about core computer science concepts

* Elliott Garcea, Lead Engineer @ Xtreme Labs

**More on Xtreme Labs**

Xtreme Labs was my first full development position and provided me with the opportunity to work with some amazingly talented people. Over the duration of my employment my coding ability improved more than it has at any other time in my life both from an architectural and theoretical perspective. This was due greatly to pair programming which allows co-op students to learn from full time employees at a much faster rate.

The duration of my time there, with the expectation of two weeks working on an Android project, was spent on an iOS library built as a layer on top of core data (see above). This allowed me to become very comfortable with Objective-c, the iOS platform and Xcode. Because the library was back end I only spent a little bit of time working on UI components. Nonetheless we had to build a sample app for the library so I did gain some experience on the front end components of iOS. In addition to the above I learnt a huge amount about writing clean code and producing well architectured apps. I was quickly able to implement architecture decisions with confidence, my code readability improved and my code reuse was reduced significantly. Overall this was an amazing term, I learned an incredibly amount, worked on an amazing project and had the pleasure of being part of a great company.

GroupthinQ - Marketing & Development

January – May 2012 | Toronto ON | Scala, Lift, Javascript, jQuery, CSS, Marketing

* Built and deployed many important features for the Company’s task management webapp, Q.
  + Taught myself the Scala and Lift web framework
  + Developed features including real-time email notifications, time tracking and new UI from the real-time chat client
  + For each feature it was required to develop both the front and back end components and as such I gained an understanding of the complete creative and development process
* Worked on multiple marketing initiatives
  + Pioneered a marketing campaign focused on students
  + Re-started the company’s social networking presence
  + Worked on a SWOT analysis and made marketing and product design recommendations based on my findings

Evaluation: Very Good(5/6)

Sam has been a great addition to the team. He demonstrated strong technical and marketing skills. He picked up our dev environment quickly, brought a lot of energy and new ideas to the team and worked effectively with his coworkers.

* Kevin Taylor, former CEO of GroupthinQ

# Skills

**Driven**

It’s a cliché in tech to want to make a difference, but it’s what attracted me to the industry in the first place, what excites me about entrepreneurship, and what drives me to succeed. Technology can empower, create and revolutionize, but only if properly implemented and understood. I am passionate about finding solutions to real problems, and doing good work that leads to quantifiable improvements in people's lives.

**Versatile**

I have developed a diversified skill set through studying Computer Science and Business as well as experience professionally in both fields. This gives me a rare insight into the full development process and allows me to perform effectively in a large variety of roles. It has given me an understanding of what makes software great that encompasses how to market and sell it, how to write professional code and how to produce a final product that is easy and enjoyable to use.

**Social**

A company's greatest assets are its employees. For a work environment to thrive its teams need to function smoothly, its clients need to be happy and its employees need to work well together. I thrive in team environments, get along well with coworkers and have shown excellent presentation and marketing skills. I further developed my leadership skills during my New Venture project, ICE competition and through my work at GroupthinQ.

**App Development**

During my five professional internships I have developed apps from scratch, worked on established products for Silicon Valley giants and contributed to major releases for growth-stage companies as both a developer and product manager. I have experience in both Android and iOS, but my specialty is Android.

**Management and Leadership**

Through the combination of case competitions, experience running the science section of Imprint and projects completed throughout my academic life I have developed strong leadership and management skills. I work well with others and am comfortable delegating and making important decisions.

**Writing and Communication**

I have experience as an editor, columnist and reporter for UW Imprint, as well as an English literature minor from the University of Waterloo. Writing has allowed me critically engage with topics and issues that I find interesting and journalism has given me the opportunity to exercise my research, interview, and reporting sills.

**Programming and Computer Science**

I have the proven ability to pick up new software stacks quickly, understand how important it is to write clean, scalable and architecturally sound code and developed a solid background in algorithms, data structures and theory while studying at one of the most prestigious computer science universities in Canada.

**Product Design**

Experience working as a product manager at Scribd as well as assisting with the design of the Bridgit app and taking an intensive upper year course on UX has given be a solid base in designing products. Most of my work, both academically and professionally, has been focused on human-computer interaction, but I also have some experience with UI design

**Business and Marketing**

Years of studying business (I nearly have a full degree) in addition to experience professionally and through case competitions has given me a strong acumen to complement my technical skills. I am just as comfortable in a business environment as I am writing code, and can perform effectively in a variety of business-side roles.

# Awards and Extracurriculars

**Journalism**

**Imprint - Science and Technology Section Editor**

**May - August 2015 | Editorial, management and reporting**

* In charge of finding and assigning weekly stories, overseeing the reporting of those stories, editing submitted pieces, and writing articles for the section
  + Developed strong relationships with the University’s STEM staff and with the vibrant larger Waterloo tech community
* Started a recurring segment called Start-up Stories which profiled local technology start-ups at varies stages of funding

**Imprint - Staff Reporter and Columnist**

**May 2014 - August 2015 | Reporting, research, writing**

* Wrote a weekly technology column called Diluting the Kool-aid for two semesters
* Gained experiencing as a reporter covering science, events, and the arts in Waterloo
* Improved my writing, interviewing and editing skills

**Awards**

**Integrated Case Competition (ICE) 2013 - Semi Finalist**

**July 2013 | Consulting and marketing**

* BBA-wide (72-team) case competition focused on providing consulting style services to the Waterloo International Airport
  + Given one week to produce a comprehensive plan to increase revenue for the airport
  + Worked in a team of six to construct a plan, write a report and prepare a presentation

**Laurier Marketing Case Competition - First Place**

**March 5th 2011 | Real world marketing experience**

* High profile marketing competition sponsored by Microsoft, Kraft and McDonalds
  + Given two hours to come up with a marketing plan with four others for Windows Phone 7 targeted at students
  + Exhibited stellar teamwork
  + Achieved an extremely high level of detail in developing the plan

**New Venture Business Project - Semi Finalist**

**April 2011 | Working in a team, building a business plan**

* Full year business project/competition
  + Develop a comprehensive business plan for a product that we came up with
  + Assumed a leadership role for the group
  + Focused on the marketing and administrative plans but helped with all aspects of the project