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About Me

- I believe in diversity in tech, so I volunteer with Railsbridge NYC.

- Some books that have influenced me: *Lean From The Trenches* by Henrik Kniberg, *Practical Object-Oriented Design In Ruby* by Sandi Metz, and *The Hitchhiker's Guide To The Galaxy* by Douglas Adams — naturally.

- I'm a Certified Scrum Master.

- While I did study philosophy, please don't talk Plato with me as I'm sure I have forgotten most of it.

Professional Experience

_relentless_GENERATOR (SonyDADC New Media Services) * October 2010 to Present

Senior Director of Software Development * Chicago, IL & New York, NY

With the successful launch of the Ariama classical music store for Sony Music, I joined Sony as a permanent employee. My duties straddle both tactical and strategic concerns. I work directly with developers on systems design, and even write some code. I'm also responsible for more strategic issues such as maintenance of product roadmaps in accordance with company goals and identification of projects eligible for capitalization.

- eCommerce & Marketing Platform Engineering. I manage a team of Rails and PHP engineers, product managers and project managers tasked with building and maintaining the codebases on which all Sony and many non-Sony recording artist commerce and marketing sites are built. My responsibilities include

    - participating in pre-pitch meetings to be sure what we are presenting to potential clients is possible, sensible and cost effective

    - working with product management to document client desires and turn those into actionable user stories for the engineering team

    - helping the project manager determine priority

    - facilitating estimation by the team

    - removing any impediments to the smooth flow of the development process

    - spend a lot of time working with other groups in the company to understand and respond to their changing needs

- Ariama Store. I managed the software development for Ariama until it was shutdown in early 2013. At its peak, the team on Ariama consisted of four Rails engineers working remotely. I functioned not only as the manager for the development but also often as a software engineer and devops engineer.

- Agility and Lean Evangelism. I have been an advocate of agile methods and processes since 2005 and was acquainted with XP as early as 2000. At Generator I encourage product and project managers and developers to continue refining our agile practices. We are far from a perfect example, but we strive to improve all the time. And I'm always looking for places to introduce agility and lean practices throughout the organization, not just within my own group.

Independent Consultant * February 2009 to October 20

Development and Project Management Consulting * Chicago, IL

With the closure of TotalMusic, I began working on independent consulting projects primarily associated with the digital music space. My duties on these projects have encompassed system architecture, software development, project management, and business analysis.

- I managed the Ariama project for Sony Music Entertainment. Ariama was an online classical music store selling high quality digital music files and presenting classical-centric metadata in a unique manner.

- I designed and built the content processing system and other systems that support Ariama's operations. This includes metadata cleanup and normalization systems, media transcoding, data warehouse operations, and sales reporting. These systems were Ruby-based.

- As a content management system expert, I consulted with LimeWire LLC in their due diligence process considering the purchase of one of their competitors.

TotalMusic LLC * February 2008 to February 2009

Director of Software Engineering * Herndon, VA

TotalMusic was an API-based music platform providing music file delivery, user-generated content storage and sharing, and a music download store.

- I managed a team of 14 engineers (Rails, PHP, Java) and technical staff building all facets of our platform.

- Additionally, I functioned as the Scrum Master, and our use of Scrum development methods was successful in delivering functioning software.

- As part of the development team, I worked with other engineers to design the internal systems and the APIs to access those systems.

- Working with the QA team, I prioritized and filtered bugs for the development staff.

- Our operations team worked closely with the development team, and I helped operations personnel make sure the deployed hardware and software systems were adequate to meet the needs of the software we were building.

- Managing the team included doing annual reviews, negotiating salaries, holding weekly one-on-one meetings, mentoring junior engineers, and participating in decisions on staff reductions.

Independent Online Digital Alliance (IODA) * May 2007 to February 2008

Software Engineering Manager * San Francisco, CA

IODA is a digital media company providing content distribution and accounting services to independent record labels. They encode and deliver digital music and video to all major online music services, including iTunes, eMusic, and Rhapsody.

- I managed a team of seven Perl engineers responsible for all systems engineering tasks including content ingestion, media file transcoding, media file delivery, and royalty accounting.

- I consulted on all design decisions regarding systems built by my team, and mentored junior engineers as they worked on the systems we built and maintained.

- I increased inter-department communication by helping software engineers to trust other groups to handle day-to-day operational duties. When I arrived at IODA, the engineering staff was primarily responsible for running many of the systems they were building. In order to improve development efficiency, I worked with the developers to transition these duties to operational groups within the company.

- Successfully delivered on several Scrum sprints. IODA uses Scrum as a development process, and as a Certified Scrum Master, I was able to help the team focus on stories in the current sprint (development cycle) and avoid the outside distractions that cause development delays and undue team stress.

- Laid out design goals promising increased operational efficiency, allowing the company to increase content throughput without adding staff. Many of the deployed systems are labor intensive or overwhelmed by the amount of content flowing through them. I worked with the engineering staff to identify areas where these systems could be refactored and improved.

AOL Music Now (formerly FullAudio/MusicNow) * January 2000 to April 2007

Manager Of Music Service Development * Chicago, IL

The Music Now division of AOL was a subscription-centric music service providing over three million music tracks to our 500,000 paying subscribers. Our service also had a purchase component, much like Apple iTunes, which allowed our two million shopper members to purchase music and videos.

- I managed a team of 7 engineers using Java-based technologies.

- I increased the speed with which new software was developed and released to production by introducing agile methodologies to the service development team. Prior to introducing agility, development cycles were running as long as 12 weeks or more. Once we began using the agile techniques I introduced, the development cycles were reduced to three weeks. This allowed quicker release of high priority features and fixes.

- Introducing this agile development process saved on development staff attrition. Prior to introducing agility, the developers were frustrated by the project management process then in place. I learned through informal discussions that the most senior and knowledgeable engineers were beginning to explore other opportunities. The promise of a new development methodology kept the staff together and improved overall morale.

- I designed and built a system that decreased storage costs by 50%. We were contractually required to distribute our music files with anti-piracy technology attached to each file. This required us to have multiple copies of each file in our storage system, one copy with anti-piracy and another without. The system I created attached the anti-piracy wrapper on request whenever a user purchased a song or video. By handling distribution this way, we only needed a single copy of the file and were able to reclaim half of our SAN storage.

- I enabled our content team to increase the ingestion speed of new content into our music service by creating a content processing system . At our peak in January, 2007, we were able to make over 70,000 new songs per week available to our members using this system.

- We were contractually obligated to pay royalties for all music and videos sold. I designed and built a system in Perl according to these contract terms, decreasing our risk of making incorrect or late royalty payments.

- I designed all data structures for all database-centric projects I worked on. I understand relational database concepts and am familiar with standard DDL used to build and manage relational databases.

Educational Background

Loyola University *Chicago, IL* Graduate Studies, Philosophy
University of Northern Iowa *Cedar Falls, IA.* BA, Philosophy