

Profile

Engineering leader with 20+ years building high-performing teams and delivering full-stack solutions in Ruby, Clojure, and JavaScript. Track record of implementing agile practices, mentoring engineers, and delivering mission-critical systems from defense to fintech to education technology.

I Value:

Outcomes

- *Practice over Heroics*
- *Gently exceed customer expectations*
- *There is always more to learn*
- *Collaboration over Competition*

Supported by

- *Fast, dependable, automated tests* quickly direct the developer to problems and document the system.
- *Iterative designs* grow solutions to complex problems from simple components.
- *Pair-Programming* maximizes peer-review and shares knowledge.
- *Test-Driven Development* toward solid design, complete tests, and confident development.

Skills

Proficient Ruby, Clojure, Javascript

Professional Ada, Java, C, C++, Perl, Tcl/Tk, Php, Soar

Hobbyist Haskell, Prolog, Elm, MiniKanren

also Awk and Ksh, but that's a story...

Experience

January 2024- **Engineering Lead/Manager, Ignite Reading, Remote**

November 2025 Ignite is a mission-driven organization taking on the ongoing literacy crisis in America. Ignite uses one-on-one virtual tutoring and a science-based curriculum to help children learn to read.

- Managed a cross-functional feature delivery team. Included performance management of team members, led architectural decisions, and participated in collaborative development of features.
- Led the successful delivery of over 80 sprints. Improving students meeting benchmark from 16% to 49% in an independent study.
- Utilized AI tools like Claude Code and Cursor, using commit frequency as a measure to determine its effectiveness as a development tool.
- Helped improve the skills of fellow engineers by working closely, presenting educational materials and code katas, and providing consistent and immediate feedback.
- Planned, architected, and implemented full-stack features in the Lesson and Assessment Tracking system of the Ignite Reading Platform. Included work on migrating from a monolith to SOA.
- “Helping the team navigate some challenging terrain, and always delivering features on time. By challenging terrain, I mean a rapidly changing product roadmap and short lead times for feature delivery. [...] Toby has taken it all in stride, never complaining but rather responding and delivering.”
- “Toby has recruited, hired, and onboarded several strong Software Engineers [...]. In fact, all software engineers on Croissant are folks Toby has brought into the organization. The Croissant team seems to be at full strength and working on good stride.”
- “Toby has built an environment on trust and empowerment, which is felt and appreciated by the team. It's clear Toby wants the effort and credit to fall to the folks doing the work, and creates a great support and collaboration model with pair programming practices.”
- “Toby is patient and calm, even during busy times. Team members see this and appreciate his ‘slow and smooth’ demeanor, which is an excellent model for others.”

Skills: *Management, Agile / Scrum / XP, Ruby, Rails, React, JavaScript*

- September 2021- **Engineering Lead**, *Provi*, Chicago, Illinois
 November 2022 Provi simplifies the complex process of ordering, selling and promoting wholesale alcohol between buyers, distributors and suppliers. At Provi, I:
- managed a team of nine software developers of varying experience levels.
 - mentored team members through Agile practices such as TDD and Pair-programming.
 - oversaw architecture and design for Ruby on Rails and Javascript Svelte code bases.
- Skills: *Management, Agile / XP, Ruby, Rails, Svelte.js, JavaScript*
- September 2019- **Senior Software Developer and Team Co-Lead**, *OppLoans*, Chicago, Illinois
 September 2021 OppLoans is a leading fintech platform that powers banks to help middle income, credit-challenged consumers. At OppLoans, I:
- continually helped the team improve its development and delivery process.
 - applied agility and design to the Ruby on Rails front-end and to its supporting services.
 - worked with team members to develop a culture of continuous learning.
 - “Toby is the type of person that when he commits to something, it will get done.”
 - “Toby is always super helpful to everyone on the dev team. When people are stuck on something, he always offers to jump in and take a look. He does a really good job of sharing his knowledge around Rails and Ruby, so we all learn a lot from him.”
- Skills: *Management, Agile / XP, Ruby, Rails, Clojure, React, JavaScript*
- June 2018- **Lead Software Developer**, *OpenMarkets Health*, Chicago, Illinois
 September 2019 OpenMarkets is a rapidly growing technology company reinventing the healthcare equipment marketplace with an emphasis on data, collaboration, and simplicity. While at OpenMarkets, I:
- led the team in developing a new deployment process that allowed more frequent and responsive deployment of features to production.
 - led and trained the team in designing and developing the Clojure back-end and ClojureScript front-end of the OpenMarkets platform.
 - helped the team develop an effective strategy for remote pair-programming.
- Skills: *Management, Agile / XP, Clojure, ClojureScript*
- May 2015- **Lead Software Developer**, *Goldstar Learning*, Chicago, Illinois
 January 2018 Goldstar produces masterymanager.com, an assessment and reporting tool for K-12 teachers and administrators. Once administered, educators can produce a set of reports to demonstrate the efficacy of the material being taught or of the assessment itself. While at Goldstar, I:
- led the initiative to migrate mastery-manager’s current decade-old monolithic Perl system into smaller redesigned sub-systems.
 - instructed developers—with widely varying experience levels—in Object-Oriented software design, systems architecture, and planning.
 - began the creation of a new Clojure reporting system that will allow for real-time assessment result reporting. Reporting results are presented in a set of interactive d3.js views. Used generative tests with [test.check](#) to reduce defects.
- Skills: *Leadership, Agile / XP, Ruby, Rails, Clojure, Perl, JavaScript*
- December 2010- **Senior Developer**, *Backstop Solutions Group*, Chicago, Illinois
 May 2015 Backstop is an award-winning software provider that creates solutions for a wide variety of fund managers. I worked on the InvestorBridge platform: a Rails application that integrates with Backstop’s Java CRM platform to provide an information portal for fund managers to more easily release information to their investors.
- shared expertise company-wide in such areas as Agile planning, developer testing, Object-Oriented design principles, Javascript and Ruby fundamentals, performance analysis and optimization, debugging, configuration management, and general software design.
 - coached developers through the practice of pair-programming.
 - gave a number of classes in these areas.
 - led the team in the development of a Clojure/Datomic back-end for encoding the complicated permissions applied to InvestorBridge resources.
- Skills: *Leadership, Agile / XP, Ruby, Rails, Java, Clojure, JavaScript*
- April 2007- **Senior Consultant**, *ThoughtWorks*, Chicago, Illinois
 December 2010 ThoughtWorks is a global software consultancy with a focus on Agile software delivery and client enablement. While at ThoughtWorks, I was involved with the following clients:

- *Major Political Party*: Created a high-performance national voter lookup service to aid their collaborators in sharing voter information and with locating and de-duplicating their large database. The service is implemented as a Ruby Rack endpoint in front of a MongoDB database. Also created a similar service in Sinatra for reserving voters with an iPhone canvassing application.
- *Major Labor Union*: As part of a new program to organize and train 10,000 of their members, led a team to create a social-networking platform to support collaboration and involvement. The site is implemented in Ruby on Rails and tested with RSpec and Cucumber. It is deployed on Passenger.
- *Oracle Mix*: designed, developed, and deployed mix.oracle.com in a compressed engagement of 5 weeks and two developers, working closely with Oracle Labs to iteratively deliver a new customer engagement site for Oracle customers. The site claims to be the first enterprise deployment of JRuby on Rails for customer consumption.
- *Sleepy Giant*: near the beginning of Sleepy Giant's business, I helped coach the company through requirements gathering and categorization as well as coaching the developer through his early practice of Test-Driven Development.
- *Leading VOIP Provider*: worked as a developer on the team that rewrote the company's legacy J2EE front- end customer subscription system in Ruby on Rails. Following an initial production release, the team released to production every eight weeks with new features the client had been unable to add to the legacy system without introducing intractable regression issues. At last count, the site handled more than 200,000 hits a day and integrated with 2 legacy databases and more than 20 web services.
- *A Leading Wholesale Auto Auction*: This was the largest Ruby on Rails project to be undertaken anywhere in the world. The domain involved working on an auction site for trading automobiles which included many custom features for sellers. Helped on this team as a Ruby on Rails developer to build stories and get this project finished ahead of time. Involved in TDD with RoR, integrating RoR applications with web-services (written in Java), and functional integration testing with Selenium and Ruby.

Skills: *Leadership, Agile / XP, Ruby, Rails, Java, Groovy, JavaScript*

November 2006– January 2007 **Software Development Consultant, Menlo Innovations**, Ann Arbor, Michigan
Menlo Innovations builds software for a very diverse client set using High Tech Anthropology® and Extreme Programming. Projects included a web based system to ease the viewing of compound testing results for a large pharmaceutical company and software to power a flow-cytometer for a small Ann Arbor firm.

During this brief but valuable engagement, I was able to:

- mentor junior developers in Object Oriented Design and in automated testing.
- contribute to architecture discussions and decisions.

Skills: *Mentorship, Agile / XP, Java*

July 2005– November 2006 **Software Engineer, Soar Technology**, Ann Arbor, Michigan

Soar Technology develops and researches cognitive software for application in training, modeling & simulation, intelligence analysis, command and control, robotics, and medical informatics.

While at Soar, I:

- Developed tools and systems to apply artificial intelligence technology to simulation, modeling, and user interface design.
- Created custom IDE applications on top of the Eclipse platform.
- Developed and maintained tools, using Java Swing and SWT, for visualizing the state and actions of AI agents. This included mapping, event table, and agent interaction visualizations.
- Instigated the deployment and use of multi-platform continuous integration practices.
- Integrated several diverse systems, including an agent component in Soar, to model complex social networks.
- Advocated for, and helped implement, an open team room to facilitate communication and collaboration.

Skills: *Agile / XP, Soar, C++, Ruby, GOMSL*

- May 2002– **Research Engineer**, *Oasis Advanced Engineering*, Auburn Hills, Michigan
- July 2005 Oasis develops hardware and software for advanced military training systems, including technology that embeds training devices into fielded vehicles. These devices allow crews to train while deployed, where normally their skills decline.
- While at Oasis, I:
- Participated in the development of a safety-critical base operating system. The system was targeted for the Visual Display Unit used to monitor a nuclear power plant. The code followed the strict guidelines of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission for software safety.
 - Participated in the implementation of several versions of the Abrams Common Software Library (ACSL) and Wolverine Common Software Library (WCSL). These projects entail the conversion of vehicle software for use in all M1A2 Main Battle Tank, M1A2 SEP Main Battle Tank, and Wolverine Mobile Bridge Deployment System training devices. The functionality of the vehicles' embedded operating systems, graphics systems, and communication bus are preserved in a UNIX operating system environment.
- Skills: *Ada, C, C++, Java, Perl, Php, Ruby*

Education

- 2002 **Bachelor of Science, Computer Science with Honors**, *Michigan State University*, East Lansing, Michigan

Military Service

- 1995–2000 **Michigan Army National Guard**,
1070th Maintenance Company, Lansing, Michigan
- 1992–1995 **United States Army**, *1st Infantry Division*, Fort Riley, Kansas