
ALISTER WEST

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SUMMARY

I love the challenges of people, process, and technology that come with being an engineering leader. My mission is to improve the lives of developers and deliver an exceptional experience to our customers. I am passionate about DevOps, SRE, Platform, and Security - and I look to fill gaps and add value at all stages of the Software Development Life-Cycle. I excel in working cross functionally with technical, product, and leadership teams to deliver solutions to complex and critical problems.

I'm looking to join a high-growth company where I can leverage my experience to the fullest.

EXPERIENCE

ENGINEERING MANAGER, HOOTSUITE, VANCOUVER – 2014-2022 (8yrs)

Social Media Management tool offering advanced workflows on-top of Twitter, Facebook, etc. where I grew through 3 main roles with differing responsibilities

1. Hootsuite - Software Development Manager, DevOps (5 yrs) - Manage the transition from separate Platform Engineering and Operations teams into a consolidated DevOps organisation and to accelerate developer delivery and service modernisation through tooling and automation

Cloud Operations

- Managed Cloud Operations across 1,200+ instances, 200+ services in Go/Scala/Php, MySQL, MongoDB, Kubernetes, AWS. Created KPIs and automated reporting
- Managed work prioritisation/collaboration, and co-ordinated external teams (AWS TAM team, SaaS vendors, contractors) with internal stakeholders on large projects
- Owned access, usage, and enforcement to critical production systems (AWS, SSH, MySQL, MongoDB). Automated these processes
- Managed cloud cost management in AWS including application of Reserved-Instances, SavingsPlans, EDPs and automated reporting on product costs
- Worked with Staff engineers to develop cloud infrastructure standards and create long-term program to drive adoption (eg. Terraform, Ansible, AWS-Aurora, MongoDB-Atlas). Partnered with Dev teams to drive adoption
- Created automated pipeline for building and deploying EC2 instances into ASGs. Reduced re-spin time for high security issues (eg Log4j) from 5 months to 2 weeks
- Created modernisation & standardisation processes for MySQL DBs - adopted modern versions of MySQL, 5th+ gen instance types, encryption at rest and in transit, converge on IAC standards, and managed contractor engagements
- Migrated DB's from self-hosted to cloud-managed to reduce operational overhead. 40+ MySQL DBs -> Aurora, 8+ MongoDB -> MongoDB-Atlas

- Worked with security to attain SOC2 and FedRAMP certification by reporting on issues from various inputs, creating remediation plan, created processes and automation to solve current and future issues. Owned several controls and worked auditors through our processes for Access-Control, Configuration-Management, and Incident-Response

Leadership

- Build trust and establish forums for open communication with individuals and teams
- Created and grew teams, assisted other managers with hiring and conflict resolution
- Managed direct reports through coaching, goal setting, performance feedback, and promotions.
- I managed team-leads, staff engineers, senior/intermediate/junior and co-op engineers. I have managed up to 13 IC's directly.
- Created job descriptions, standardised questions and hiring processes, and worked with talent-acquisition team to successfully close candidates
- Regular 1:1s with all reports, peers, and key stakeholders in Dev, Data, IT, Security
- Mentored and lead in-house co-op/intern program - creating a shared space for collaboration and community building (5-15 per cohort).

Reliability

- Established SRE team to drive reliability and standardisation practices and improvements. Created team charter and enablement model for working with development teams to drive and accelerate reliability, modernisation, and security
- Established, reported on, and improved key reliability metrics
- Owned on-call process for the Production environment including being in primary rotation and running and reporting on post-mortems (5whys) for outages. Supported organisational transition to service owners on-call for their own services by providing feedback and helping guide managers and developers through best-practices and processes

Planning and Execution

- DevOps assistance was required on most large technical projects from Development and Security teams, and DevOps was also driving several modernisation programs. My team was responsible for ensuring successful execution of most DevOps collaboration projects and I collaborated with product managers across Dev/Security/IT to create a shared roadmap for cross-collaboration work.
- Owned roadmap for my teams, used Jira to build short and long-term roadmaps and track progress
- Created and submitted SR&ED applications, and defended projects when audited for the DevOps organisation

2 Hootsuite - Lead Software Engineer, Platform (1 yr) - Resolve CI/CD issues across monolith and JS pipelines focusing on automation and improving metrics

- Introduced tooling and monitoring for key build metrics (deployment-frequency, build-time, build-success-ratio, test-success-ratio) across monolith, js-bundles, and microservice pipelines
- Led small team which standardised monolith CI/CD pipeline to improve MTTD from 50min -> 5min for around 10x deploys daily, co-created JS async build pipelines for significant speed gains
- Created new services to manage and monitor deployments of monolith on 100+ instances
- Helped establish Test Engineering team which created tooling for shared CI/CD workflows and introduced selective inclusion for integration tests

3 Hootsuite - Software Engineer, Web Operations (2 yrs) - To stabilise and scale the public facing website to increase SEO, improve development workflows, and own backend feature development and CMS growth.

- Technical lead on all backend projects. Designed, implemented, and transitioned public facing content-management-system to more scalable and reliable infrastructure
- Owned backend feature development and integration into core product, specifically developing backend services which used internal apis to surface information to the CMS and frontend platforms
- Led team agile practices (SCRUM) and quarterly planning for the teams internal and external roadmap
- Led hiring for 3 roles reporting to me (Snr Backend, Jnr Fullstack, QA)
- Standardised Dev, Staging, QA, and Production environments using Infrastructure-As-Code (Ansible, Terraform) and created CI/CD automation (Jenkins, Cron+Bash) so internal and 3rd party editors could make reliable updates to public pages
- Improved team reliability practices including: backup & restore automation, monitoring and alerting on key properties, website speed performance monitoring and improvements, running 5-whys processes for outages, established review process for embedding 3rd party scripts and framework to deal with issues they may cause
- Held regular 1:1s with reports (QA, Backend devs, Co-Op), peers, and key stakeholders, as well as ensuring goal-setting and performance feedback and reviews for reports inline with company processes.

SENIOR DEVELOPER, GOSSAMER-THREADS, VANCOUVER – 2009-2013 (4.5yrs)
Canadian hosting provider for 1000's of customers offering a range of hosting and development services running on gentoo linux.

- Full-stack Developer improving website SEO through performance testing and optimisation requiring client communication, database configuration, load-balancer configuration, JS packaging, HTTP headers. (NGINX/HTTP/JS)
- Full-stack Developer improving custom virtual hosting management tools similar to cPanel: Added simplified SSL purchasing through APIs with installation and setup automation, small features added to configure DB/LB/Email installations, added test suite and improved dev workflow, several package upgrades (JS/Perl/Bash)
- Installed and customised ticketing system (RequestTracker) for clients. Point of contact for clients, project planning/estimation/execution, open-source contributions. (Perl/OS)
- Full-stack developer working on creating several domain specific search engine websites (business director / company documents / public-domain books). Installed and configured SOLR/Lucene/Google-Search-Appliance. Embedded search box and search results with custom pagination. (JS/SOLR/Lucene/GSA)

SOFTWARE DEVELOPER, ZOOPLA! (UK) – 2008-2009 (1yr)

UK property pricing portal for individuals and real estate agents

- Developed custom CRM tooling and workflow for Customer Support as we encouraged property owners to send us / upload for review changes made to their homes to increase their value (Perl/JS/Email)
- Architected and delivered a data-warehouse with the associated ongoing ETL pipelines & reporting framework to cover core KPIs (SQL/Perl)

SOFTWARE DEVELOPER, LOVEFILM (UK) 2003-2007 (4yrs)

European 'rent DVDs by post' competitor to Blockbuster and Netflix before streaming

- Data-warehouse/ETL/Reporting across 10 M&A and 5 countries (SQL/Perl/Php/C#)
- Migration of allocation product from 3rd party to in-house replacement (C++/Php/Perl)

EDUCATION

UNIVERSITY OF OTAGO (NZ), POST GRADUATE DIPLOMA (COMPSCI) - 2001

UNIVERSITY OF OTAGO (NZ), BACHELOR ARTS (PHILOSOPHY, MATH) - 2000

SKILLS

- Leadership / Management
- Cloud Operations / Production Operations
- Software Development
- SRE / DevOps
- Developer Productivity
- Planning / Agile / Scrum