



Creative, collaborative Product Engineer with 14 years' experience spanning agency, in-house and freelance roles - from early-stage startups to enterprise-scale organisations - including Next, Node, React (+ Native) and TypeScript.

I care about accessibility and love using subtle animation and interactivity to craft natural and engaging user experiences. Away from work, I like to go mountain biking or scuba diving.

Digits:

Based in Sheffield, South Yorkshire

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Experience:



Pets at Home

Handforth

Principal Product Engineer

October 2024 - present • Contract

- Promoted to lead 15 engineers on complex e-commerce platform with 7M+ monthly visitors
- Expanded delivery beyond the core Pets site into the Vets project and, more recently, Insurance
- Partnered with other principals to prioritise the roadmap and share ownership of tech debt
- Triaged incoming bugs, ensuring they were refined and ready to fix before hitting squads
- Ran a site-wide accessibility audit, lifting WCAG compliance, usability, conversion and SEO
- Piloted AI tools (Copilot, Claude and Cursor) to accelerate delivery and assist problem-solving
- Migrated linting and formatting from ESLint/Prettier to OxLint/OxFmt, saving an estimated 15+ hours a week, locally and in CI

Technical Lead

April 2023 - October 2024 • Contract

- 7x extended contract at FTSE250 retailer, supporting a major digital transformation
- Upskilled existing engineers while building and launching a new Next site
- Delivered key features - search, find-us, bookings, subscriptions and health plans
- Led three of six squads, mentoring developers to grow in-house knowledge
- Shaped strategic technical decisions, embedding performant and scalable coding practices
- Defined coding standards and PR practices to raise code quality and test coverage
- Established advanced mocking and accessible testing across Jest and Playwright



IAM Cloud

Huddersfield

Senior Software Engineer

September 2022 - April 2023 • Contract

- Developed software UI used by thousands of companies and millions of customers
- Applied advanced React patterns (hooks, callbacks, memoisation) for lean, fast code
- Built extensive testing strategy for components, hooks and context to reduce bugs
- Extended the Chakra design system with advanced Storybook docs, aiding adoption
- Published packages to NPM with Rush monorepo for consumption by other projects
- Spun up Verdaccio via Docker, enabling local testing without publishing
- Switched build tooling to Vite, cutting local dev and test feedback loops



Pollen

London

Senior Software Engineer

April 2022 - August 2022 • Permanent

- Led and mentored development team of 5 as a T-shaped engineer at travel company
- Used TypeScript and GraphQL extensively in an Agile, product-focused environment
- Contributed to component library shared by web (Next) and mobile (React Native)
- Thoroughly unit tested code with Jest, explored functional and E2E tests with Cypress
- Improved code performance to enhance UX by reducing render and loading times
- Drove a codebase accessibility audit, increasing usability for all users as well as SEO
- Integrated feature flags and implemented AB testing in collaboration with data team



Absurd

Manchester

Lead Front End Developer

July 2021 - April 2022 • Permanent

- Promoted to lead role after building out multi-faceted team of different seniority
- Mentored and line-managed whole team; mapping objectives and running 1-2-1's
- Honed bleeding edge agency tech stack - Next, TypeScript, Node, Sass and Jest
- Embraced GraphQL, using it in headless instances of Shopify and Contentful
- Introduced modern unit testing with Jest // React Testing Library for code confidence
- Remained hands-on, developing major projects for Umbro, Lucy & Yak and CitySuites
- Shaped DX strategy, including branch workflow and Azure DevOps migration

Senior Front End Developer

September 2018 - July 2021 • Permanent

- Headhunted for senior role at service design agency after relocation to Manchester
- Introduced ES6+, TypeScript, React and React Native as well as GSAP and Webpack
- Implemented advanced React concepts like custom hooks, context and suspense
- Expanded agency's expertise into mobile via creation of a TypeScript React Native app
- Turbocharged performance and SEO of agency website utilising Next and SSR
- Developed Alexa app with Node and Lambda, led agency's official Alexa certification
- Championed the PWA, leveraging advantages with an offline-capable Vue project



Plusnet

Sheffield

Front End Developer

May 2016 - December 2017 • Permanent

- In-house JavaScript expert at major ISP whose site receives millions of hits per year
- Mentored placement student during project to rebuild Service Status in React
- Introduced unit testing using Mocha and Chai, used Selenium for functional testing
- Rebuilt old Grunt build stack in Gulp, saving the department 3 day's dev time per year
- Developed new prototype Member Centre in Angular after conducting user testing
- Completed code reviews for entire department to encourage clean, manageable code



Havas Lynx

Manchester

Front End Developer

March 2014 - August 2015 • Permanent

- Promoted to mid-weight following advancement of skills and knowledge as a junior
- Key member of development team, initiated and led both individual and team projects
- Acted up and ran department during replacement for outgoing Head of Front End
- Honed JS skills with use of Knockout, Require and writing custom Handlebars helpers

- Mentored junior devs, advising on key decisions and best practices to develop skills
- Responsible for scheduling and timelines, hiring freelance resource where necessary

Junior Front End Developer

July 2012 - March 2014 • Permanent

- Given full time role as a junior developer after impressing during placement
- Developed websites, apps and eDetails; including for various client CLM platforms
- Collaborated with mobile team for iOS apps, using TeamCity and provisioning profiles
- Involved in developing new build stack, moving from Jekyll + Zepto to Grunt + jQuery
- Used templating tools like Handlebars, Assemble and Jade to avoid code repetition
- Ran rapid prototyping - overnight app development for global company conference

Placement Developer

July 2012 • Placement

- Offered placement after being headhunted at university Creative Showcase
- Furthered experience to modern web technologies including HTML5, Sass and Zepto
- Gained exposure to Back End technologies by working on PHP and .NET websites

Skills:

My huge wealth of experience in engineering has equipped me with a broad toolkit across web and native technologies, and a genuine focus on code that's tested, scalable, performant and accessible. Next, Node, React Native and TypeScript are my usual stack; but I prefer reaching for the right tool over the familiar one, and keep pace with the evolving ecosystem - most recently branching into Back End with Nest, Go and Rust.

I'm a T-shaped engineer who values working closely with other disciplines. Mentoring is where I do some of my best work - there's nothing more satisfying than watching someone I've mentored get promoted - though I'm equally at home solving a hard technical problem myself.

Qualifications:

Leeds Metropolitan University

September 2009 - May 2012

First Class BSc (Hons) in Multimedia Technology

Lady Manners School

September 2001 - May 2008

12 GCSEs and 3 A-Levels

Profile:

 engaging.engineering //  linkedin.com/in/watsonbilly //  github.com/bcwatson22

References:

Tom Tollafeld

Head of Software, Pets at Home

 linkedin.com/in/tom-tollafeld-9732ba18

Mattia Battiston

Engineering Manager, Pollen

 linkedin.com/in/mattiabattiston

Rob Dorsett

Technical Director, Absurd

 linkedin.com/in/rob-dorsett-6b4378b0