

Craig Thompson

Head of Engineering · Hands-on, AI-first

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Open to: hands-on technical leadership roles, such as Head of Engineering, in start-ups and scale-ups · **Work:** remote first; flexible hybrid considered in the North East · **Notice:** 3 months

SUMMARY

Head of Engineering and full-stack software engineer with 20+ years building for the web. Led Hive HR's engineering through to its acquisition by WorkBuzz, and drove the shift to AI-first delivery: most code is now AI-generated and AI-reviewed against in-repo standards. Still close to the code, from the 100+ package TypeScript monorepo and CI/CD to AWS architecture, auth and security. Looking for a hands-on technical leadership role.

CORE SKILLS

AI-first engineering & AI-assisted development (Claude Code, Amazon Bedrock, Mastra) · Hands-on full-stack development · Engineering leadership · Engineering strategy · Hiring & interviewing · People management · Stakeholder & board reporting · Customer-facing technical expertise · Incident management & on-call · Disaster recovery · Budget & supplier management · Agile delivery (Scrum, Kanban) · Outsourcing & distributed teams · Platform engineering · DevOps · CI/CD · Test automation (Playwright, Cypress) · Cloud architecture (AWS) · Infrastructure as code (Terraform, CloudFormation) · TypeScript · JavaScript · Node.js · React · GraphQL · MongoDB · Monorepos · Security · GDPR · ISO 27001 · Penetration testing · IT & device management (MDM, Google Workspace)

EXPERIENCE

Head of Engineering — Hive HR

B2B SaaS, acquired by WorkBuzz · Newcastle upon Tyne, UK

Dec 2018 – Present

- Led engineering for a multi-tenant B2B SaaS employee engagement platform (surveys, peer-to-peer recognition and confidential feedback) running 24/7 for enterprise, mid-market and SME customers, with a cross-functional team of up to 12 engineers; set engineering strategy and aligned the technical roadmap with product goals.
- Led the department's shift to AI-first engineering over the past year: the vast majority of code is now AI-generated and reviewed by AI alongside human reviewers, against style and coding guidelines iterated on in the repo; introduced an advisory AI risk rating on pull requests, AI summaries of Terraform plans and 20+ Claude Code skills for team workflows.
- Helped start an AI agent service built with Mastra on Amazon Bedrock, in an isolated AWS account with evals in CI.

- Led the consolidation of ~18 repositories into one TypeScript monorepo (100+ packages) with history intact, including CI/CD, Docker and local development.
- Led the replacement of a legacy multi-tenant sign-in system with a new auth framework: SAML SSO, enforceable 2FA, per-identity rate limiting and zero-downtime key rotation.
- Led repo-wide toolchain migrations by codemod: TSLint to ESLint, yarn to pnpm, Webpack to Vite, ESLint + Prettier to oxlint + oxfmt (4,366 files), TypeScript run natively by Node (3,502 files) and TypeScript 7.
- Led the redesign of a core reporting data model on MongoDB, giving a 10× higher complexity ceiling and removing 1–3 s search stalls under load.
- Built and continued to evolve the CI/CD platform: self-hosted Buildkite defined in Terraform, driven by an in-house TypeScript build engine that builds and deploys only affected packages; continuous deployment with daily automatic releases.
- Led AWS architecture modernisation: ECS on EC2 to Fargate with ECS Service Connect, CloudFront and WAF as the only public entry, SSO through IAM Identity Center and Control Tower, SSM Session Manager and PrivateLink.
- Led the inception of the first end-to-end automation suite on Cypress and evolved it in CI alongside the Test Automation Engineers; when performance suffered as the suite grew, led the switch to Playwright, with huge gains in performance and stability across CI/CD.
- Drove evidence-led AWS cost reduction, with ≈ \$1.3k a month documented from the first three changes alone.
- Saw the company through from startup to its acquisition by WorkBuzz, providing technical leadership throughout and representing engineering right through due diligence.
- Hired 10+ engineers, full-time and outsourced; designed the interview process with the CTO and Deputy Head, including a pre-interview technical screen and interactive coding exercises; evolved onboarding from people-led workflows to largely self-driven, AI-assisted documentation.
- Reported to the CEO and CTO at different times, preparing board material on the roadmap and technical direction; worked closely with the Product Manager and Product Owner on the roadmap; contributed to build-versus-buy and packaging decisions.
- Ran regular 1:1s and set near- and long-term objectives with direct reports, feeding KPIs into departmental and board updates; promoted engineers to Senior and one from Software Engineer to Deputy Head of Engineering; introduced and hired for a new AI Engineer role; managed redundancy and performance management processes.
- Technical expert on sales, customer and due-diligence calls; helped produce a standard Q&A set for security questionnaires; handled SSO/SAML onboarding and data residency questions; primary escalation point for major customer issues alongside the Deputy Head.
- Set up and maintained the on-call rota (Jira Service Desk, Google Calendar) and a status page; led on incidents from single-client issues to full outages; helped produce an outage suite of write-ups, runbooks and actionable improvements; directly involved in the business's disaster recovery process.
- Owned the substantial monthly AWS budget for the SaaS platform, with cost anomaly detection across every area; managed all technical and IT suppliers, negotiating renewals and contracts; chose and consolidated software tools and licences.

- Introduced and iterated on ways of working (Scrum, Kanban, project-based, AI-driven workflows); set up and documented most of the Secure Development Policy and coding guidelines in an AI-powered docs site; introduced delivery KPIs such as cycle time and delivery time; worked through the challenges of moving to mostly remote working.
- Worked directly with an outsourcing firm in India to bolster in-house capacity, onboarding 5+ Software Engineers and Automation Test Engineers, many of whom stayed in the team for 2+ years.
- Was the technical point of contact for GDPR and ISO 27001 accreditation and the annual audits; arranged the yearly penetration test with external vendors and tracked findings to closure.
- Was the point person for internal IT: oversaw the hardware and IT estate, administered the Google Workspace directory, ran the MDM that provisions the Mac estate and enforces central InfoSec and compliance policies, and set up and maintained the IT service desk.

Technical Lead — Communicator

Email marketing SaaS · Newcastle upon Tyne, UK

Dec 2013 – Dec 2018

- Led a Scrum team of junior-to-mid engineers, setting the code quality standards, building the next generation of an email marketing SaaS platform sending billions of emails; led front-end development and mentored two software engineers.
- Architected a React drag-and-drop WYSIWYG Email Designer so non-technical clients could build compatible HTML emails.
- Built a Node.js/Cheerio microservice to automate CSS inlining and HTML optimisation and keep rendering consistent across major email clients.
- Led the team's migration from TFS to Git and TeamCity, then introduced GitLab with self-hosted runners for centralised, faster CI/CD; built Node.js functionality for new products.

Front-end Web Developer — Eutechnyx

Gateshead, UK

Jan 2011 – Sep 2012

- Turned visual mock-ups into interfaces and CMS pages for the Auto Club Revolution project with JavaScript and Backbone.js.

Consultant & Open-source Maintainer — craigsworks

Newcastle upon Tyne, UK · alongside the roles above

Apr 2008 – Present

- One-off projects for smaller and larger clients worldwide, from single websites to larger builds such as a crop management application, with Node.js, Express and modern SPA frameworks, and accessible UI libraries held to WCAG.
- Author and maintainer of qTip2, a widely adopted jQuery tooltip plugin (~2k GitHub stars, 458 forks, 1,384 commits), working extensively with community contributors, from issues and documentation to releases.
- 59 pull requests merged across 35 other open-source projects since 2012, including better-auth, nextra, lerna, swc-node, slate and preact.

TECHNICAL SKILLS

- **Languages:** TypeScript, JavaScript, HTML, CSS, Node.js, Bash, HCL

- **Back end:** Express, GraphQL (Apollo), Koa, REST / OpenAPI, Zod, RxJS, microservices
- **Front end:** React, Apollo Client, Emotion, Vite, Storybook, Playwright, Cypress, WCAG accessibility
- **Data:** MongoDB Atlas, Atlas Search, Elasticsearch, Redis, DynamoDB
- **AWS:** ECS, Fargate, Service Connect, EC2, Auto Scaling, Lambda, Batch, ECR, VPC, CloudFront, WAF, Route 53, Elastic Load Balancing, API Gateway, PrivateLink, SNS, SQS, IAM, IAM Identity Center, Control Tower, Organizations, Systems Manager, CloudTrail; some GCP; limited Azure
- **Delivery:** Git, Terraform, CloudFormation, Packer, Docker / BuildKit, Buildkite, GitHub Actions, pnpm
- **IT:** Google Workspace administration, MDM for macOS (Mosyle, Jamf), Apple Business Manager (ABM), ThreatDown endpoint security, IT service desk, Jira Service Desk
- **Observability:** Sentry, OpenTelemetry, Fluent Bit, Grafana, CloudWatch, Container Insights, AWS X-Ray
- **AI:** Claude Code, Anthropic API, Amazon Bedrock, Amazon Q, Mastra, promptfoo, Pi, Superset, GitHub Copilot

EDUCATION

MEng, Electronic & Computer Engineering — [Newcastle University](#)

2008 – 2013

AWARDS

- qTip featured in [Smashing jQuery](#) (2011)
- Famous Software Award for qTip2