Chester Black

Software Engineer

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Summary

Adaptable Software Developer with a focus on frontend and 9 years of web development experience in publishing and SaaS. I enjoy problem-solving, especially if it involves learning something new, and have a keen interest in product development, from ideation all the way through to testing and iteration.

Languages

TypeScript
JavaScript
PHP
SQL

Frontend & UI

React
NextJS

Backend & Data

WordPress
MongoDB

Testing & Tooling

PHPUnit
Jest
Playwright
Docker
LaunchDarkly

Professional Experience

DC Thomson Software Engineer *Jun 2022 - present*

At DC Thomson, I was part of a sequence of product teams that either worked to deliver a set project, or worked long-term as a team (including product managers, content creators and designers) to iteratively improve upon a single product.

My work here involved working as part of dedicated product teams for digital education hub Teachwire (including a complete rebuild and migration from ExpressionEngine to WordPress), golf magazine Bunkered and regional newspaper brands the Courier and Press & Journal.

Highlights include:

Beano Product Team

Working on legendary British comic brand Beano to improve their digital offerings and increase the revenue generated by their research departments' Brain product. Over two years we increased digital traffic by over 60% and created new methods in which to interact with the site's games, jokes, quizzes and surveys.

This involved working closely with the other teams in Beano - such as the creative, licencing and marketing teams - and doing a lot of A/B testing to iterate on ideas generated either from within the team or as a result of market research carried out by both ourselves and the dedicated research department.

Project Reforge

A complete overhaul of every site and digital service the company provides, moving from a series of legacy systems (mostly WordPress) to a custom-built system involving a NextJS frontend and a MongoDB content store. This setup meant that the back-end and front-end could be swapped out independantly of one another and ensured shared resources and compatibility for the wide array of products.

This project included almost every engineer in the company and I worked intially as part of the front-end team to create versatile components that could be shared across brands with minimal need for brand-specific customisation.

Once the platform was stable, I moved to the brand delivery team, which worked to build on the new platform to migrate two of the key brands that would pioneer the new setup.

Aceville Publications

Web Developer — *Jan 2019 - Jun 2022*
Junior Web Developer — *Sept 2017 - Jan 2019*

Aceville was a small publishing company that was lean and moved *fast*. I came into the company at a very junior level and learned a lot in a very short time.

My responsibilities there grew over time, starting with a lot of digital and email marketing, IT support, and site maintenance and moving on to working in a product team and completing site rebuilds according to design specifications.