James Meickle

Principal engineer for hire

Contact

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Skills

DevOps / SRE   10+ yrs.

Amazon Web Services   10+ yrs.

Linux   10+ yrs.

Docker / Containers   10+ yrs.

Python   10+ yrs.

Kubernetes   5 yrs.

Terraform   5 yrs.

Ansible   4 yrs.

About me

I am a specialized generalist with a deep appreciation for complexity and chaos. I've worked at three consecutive AI startups as an infrastructure and security lead and ensured that each each successfully launched to customers. In total, I have over a decade of experience in full stack, DevOps, site reliability engineering, and security roles across regulated industries such as finance, law, and research.

I'm searching for a principal+ engineer IC role on a fast-moving team at an engineering-centric company. My current areas of technical interest include distributed systems, LLMs, Bazel, Rust, and ATproto.

Work experience

Roboticist   **Feb. 2024 - current**
Robotics and AI Institute (RAI)

- Administrator for on-prem and cloud Kubernetes research clusters (~35k cores, ~500 GPUs) including GPU allocation and cost management.
- Earned a HackerOne bounty for a novel access control bypass in GitHub.
- Implemented security controls including VPC segmentation, log centralization and SIEM integration, and hardening GitHub.
- Designed strategy for retrofitting Google Cloud Platform landing zone best practices onto existing "clickops" resources using modern Terraform.
- Designed next-generation robotics build system using Bazel and secured consensus on adoption from a dozen independent research projects.
- On-call support for research teams including foundation modeling, reinforcement learning, robotics controls, and data engineering.

Founding Engineer (Infrastructure & Security)   **Mar. 2022 - Nov. 2023**
Tome (Remote)

- Designed SOC 2 controls for seed-stage LLM startup, implemented all required technical and process measures, and won auditor approval.
- Secured approval of our LLM architecture and data privacy from law firm cybersecurity risk teams, allowing us to sign deals and train on their data.
- Aligned all TensorFlow/Keras serving, Python services, and data pipelines on continuous delivery, distributed tracing, and centralized logging.

Principal Infrastructure Engineer (Fidelity Labs)   **Jun. 2020 - Jan. 2022**
Catchlight / Fidelity Investments (Remote)

- Secured enterprise-wide approval for Terraform as an IAC tool and coached other teams on adoption and best practices.
- Accelerated production deploy frequency 10x by building containerized CI/CD pipelines with Jenkins, Kubernetes, Kaniko, and Terraform.
- Integrated conversion ML model with Elasticsearch while remaining compliant with security, data protection, and regulatory standards.

Education

2005 - 2010

**Bachelor of Arts,
Psychology & Political Science**

Central Connecticut
State University

Projects

- **Community Land Trust**
  Starting my own affordable
  housing non-profit

- **Malden Neighbors
  Helping Neighbors**
  COVID-19 mutual aid

- **Pawpaw grove**
  Growing North America's
  only native tropical fruit

Interests

- Conference organizing
- Native gardening
- Language learning (ES, 中文)
- Cooking global cuisine
- Permadeath games

Senior Site Reliability Engineer   Mar. 2017 - Apr. 2020

Quantopian (Boston, MA)
acquired by Robinhood

- Eliminated 90% of overnight PagerDuty incidents by migrating fund trading from `cron` scheduling to Apache Airflow running on Kubernetes pods.

- Prototyped 50% cost reduction of Python trading algorithms by refactoring system as elastic serverless execution and analysis using Kubernetes, Argo Workflows, Amazon S3 and Amazon Athena.

- Designed self-service Github PR flow for Kubernetes CI/CD, including on-demand developer environments using Helm and *garden.io*.

Site Reliability Engineer   May 2015 - Feb. 2017

Harvard University - Neuroinformatics Research Group

- Wrote a Python framework for high reliability statistical processing of petabyte-scale MRI brain scan data using SLURM on HPC hardware.

- Designed research data pipeline to cope with 5x data volume due to increased voxel density, phone logs, and GPS coordinates.

- Converted existing `cron` scheduling to Buildbot with support for retries, backfills, and on-demand jobs.

Developer Evangelist / Sales Engineer   Jan. 2013 - Oct. 2014

AppNeta - TraceView (Boston, MA)
formerly Tracelytics, acquired by SolarWinds

- Conducted pre- and post-sales for distributed tracing software in multi-language enterprise environments spanning hundreds of servers.

Release Engineer / Full Stack Developer   Jun. 2012 - Nov. 2012

Romney for President (Boston, MA)

- Decreased page load times by 50% as traffic increased 20x via targeted CDN and rendering improvements discovered using observability tools.

- Achieved 50,000 peak users during presidential debates by conducting load testing, optimizing cache utilization, and refactoring backend code.

- Increased deployment frequency from biweekly to multiple times per week by replacing legacy `svn` workflow with `git` and migrating all users.

Writing and speaking

- *Cooperative Economics for Engineers* (devopsdaysNYC 2020, DevOpsDays Boston 2019, DevOpsDays Hartford 2019)

- *Beyond Burnout* (Ch. 29 of *Seeking SRE: Conversations About Running Production Systems at Scale*, ed. Blank-Edelman, pub. O'Reilly, 2018)

- *Sell Cron, Buy Airflow: Modern data pipelines in finance* (ODSC East 2019, PyData DC 2018, Velocity New York 2018)

- *Ansible for SRE Teams* hands-on training course (O'Reilly Safari, Velocity New York 2018, SREcon18 Americas)