Jason C. McDonald█

Software Engineering Manager
Business Analyst
Author, Speaker, Mentor

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Skilled communicator, facilitator, team-builder and software engineer seeking a role facilitating communication between people, especially in a technical context. Can excel in a variety of roles, including Engineering Manager, Business Analyst, Project Manager, Community Manager, or Director of Engineering.

Selected Professional Experience

Director of Community Development | OWASP: February 2024 – June 2024 (Full-Time)
Oversaw OWASP community. Revitalized and managed social media, increasing average engagement by 600% in first month. Developed marketing plans and materials for OWASP projects. Produced original content for YouTube and DEV in partnership with community, using editing and video production skills. Managed multiple community outreach initiatives. Built connections with other major organizations. Crafted policy proposals to improve operational efficiency. (Terminated without cause.)

Principal Software Engineer | Sparq: August 2022 – August 2023 (Full-Time)
Managed a team of 2-8 developers implementing a full-stack web application, functioning as both Tech Lead and Product Owner. Maintained backlog for scrum-based team. Elicited, validated, documented, and prioritized requirements. Communicated between developers and stakeholders. Worked with client, UX designer, and product strategist to design product from business requirements.

Advise clients on how to improve their software engineering best practices, and mentored developers. Implemented full DevOps CI/CD pipelines. Modernized existing code for an in-production ML/AI image processing pipeline, significantly improving performance, resilience, and maintainability. (Laid off.)

Senior Software Engineer | Corgibytes: February 2022 – August 2022 (Full-Time)
Modernizing legacy code. Planned and implemented data migrations and API features for an in-production enterprise system.

Senior Software Engineer | Canonical: June 2021 – February 2022 (Full-Time)
Maintained and developed Ubuntu cloud image delivery pipelines, tooling, and automation. Functioned as a primary point-of-contact for Microsoft Azure to communicate with engineering teams. Routinely acted as de-facto project manager. Resolved conflicts in stakeholder priorities and requirements.

Developed and owned roadmap and user stories for a project crossing multiple internal engineering teams, communicated with client cloud provider on project, ultimately enabling rollout of a feature to hundreds of thousands of enterprise customers.

Redesigned test framework for all Ubuntu cloud images, which is still in active use. Requirements were gathered from existing code and from discussions with various cloud image engineers.

Developed and wrote departmental policies to improve resilience and productivity of cloud images team. Assisted with policy roll out and getting buy-in from stakeholders and developers.

Director of Engineering | MousePaw Media: May 2010 – June 2024 (Volunteer, Full-Time 2010-2021)
Developed a robust year-long remote internship in collaboration with a few local universities; later expanded the internship to accept applicants globally. Managed and mentored teams of developers, mostly junior software engineers, working on game engine component libraries in C++. Served as product owner and project manager. Trained managers and DevOps.

Developed remote collaboration, training, and project management techniques, including Quantified Tasks and Commenting Showing Intent. Most of our internship graduates have gone on to senior and management roles at software firms around the country.

Community Manager | Mailspring: January 2021 – June 2021 (Volunteer, approx 20 hours/week)
Managed the open source community. Distilled over 1K open tickets on GitHub into a roadmap, and set up a new bug report and feature request pipeline. Elicit needs and requirements from different user groups in the community. Configure Discourse community, moderate discussion, and manage development tooling. Additionally, I contributed code in Typescript, Javascript, and C++.

Selected Works

"Dead Simple Python" (No Starch Press, 2022): https://nostarch.com/dead-simple-python
A thorough introduction to every feature of the Python language for programmers who are impatient to write production code. Instead of revisiting elementary computer science topics, you'll dive deep into idiomatic Python patterns so you can write professional Python programs in no time.

Quantified Tasks: https://quantifiedtasks.org
A groundbreaking software estimation and planning methodology that objectively and repeatably tracks and communicates the effort involved in tasks.

The Bug Hunters Café (2021 - Present): https://bughunters.cafe
A podcast that explores how our best planned software winds up with bugs. Features interviews with notable industry guests including Naomi Ceder, Sedat Kapanoğlu, and Jean-Heyd Meneide.

Selected Skills

Agile Project Management: Managing projects with changing requirements, high risk, and high churn. Served as Scrum Master and Product Owner. Implementing Jira and Monday.com workflows.

Business Analysis: Eliciting and maintaining requirements, managing stakeholder engagement, maintaining extensive documentation, developing policies and workflows. Collaborating with designers, developers, and stakeholders to develop solutions to business problems.

Management: Managing teams of developers ranging from interns to seniors. Mentoring and training developers, especially interns. Designing policies to address organizational challenges. Managing administrative processes.

Python: Author of "Dead Simple Python" (No Starch Press). Designing and implementing native desktop applications, command line applications, APIs, ML/data pipelines, testing frameworks. Architecture, modernization, testing, and best practices.

C and C++: Architecting libraries and native desktop applications, particularly with efficient, memory-safe code. Diagnosing and debugging difficult errors, especially undefined behavior. Code modernization, memory management, algorithmic efficiency, and advanced debugging techniques.

DevOps: Maintaining mission-critical image publication pipelines. Deep familiarity with Git. Implemented comprehensive CI/CD workflows with Docker, GitHub, GitLab, Jenkins, etc.

Additional Technical: Strong technical aptitude, enabling rapid onboarding to any language, framework or domain. Experience includes Bash, C#, JavaScript, TypeScript, Ruby, SQL. Configured and maintained public-facing, access-controlled Ubuntu servers on both bare metal and cloud.

Hiring: Conducting remote and in-person interviews of local and international candidates for various development and non-development positions at three organizations. Trained others in hiring techniques and best practices.

Technical Writing: Writing documentation for libraries/APIs, DevOps processes and workflows, training material, and administrative policy documentation. Written multiple articles regarding software practices, project management, and software development.

Speaking and Teaching: Presenting at technical conferences, colleges, workforce training, and universities on software development, management, career advancement. Developed courses and training materials.

Education

North Idaho College [Non-Degree]: Interpersonal, intercultural, and non-verbal communication, public speaking, general psychology.
- 4.0 GPA, Dean's list.
- Recipient of Outstanding Student in Communication Department Award.

Selected Endorsements
(from LinkedIn)

"Jason played a huge role in revitalizing the Mailspring open source project. He single-handedly reached out to and rallied community members around the project, set up a new community forum, and triaged our enormous backlog of GitHub issues. Jason's understanding of the open source ethos helped us align Mailspring's roadmap with the communities interests and engage contributors that had been working on a separate fork of the product. Jason also used his deep knowledge of Linux and C++ to merge and organize GitHub issues that had been in our moderation backlog for more than a year. I think Jason brings a combination of domain expertise and people management skills that make him a valuable community leader and a strong addition to our team."

- Ben Gotow, Founder & Principal Engineer, Foundry 376 (Mailspring)

"Jason worked for me at canonical on the public clouds teams. He is a brilliant, meticulous developer who cares deeply about doing the right thing, and doing it right. On top of that, he is great at managing complex projects and managing conversations with our partners."

- Eric St-Jean, Engineering Director for Public Clouds, Canonical

"In any capacity, Jason is passionate about delivering the best product possible. He brings an infectious enthusiasm combined with a remarkable depth of knowledge to any project he's on, immediately bringing the entire team up to the next level. I've seen him pull together a full product design and development team at the drop of a hat, simply to explore a new idea. The fact that he could gather such a wealth of talent around him by simply having an idea is a testament to his skill, thoughtfulness, and deep love for the work of creating something new."

- Joe Dallacqua, Principal Consultant / UX Design Lead, Sparq

"Jason is the most creative and versatile problem solver I have ever had the pleasure of working with. No matter the issue or area of expertise, Jason is always able to dive in quickly and come up with a comprehensive plan of attack. He is fearless in the face of adversity, always rises to the challenge, and brings out the best in his teammates. Jason brings an incredible passion and drive to everything he does. As CEO of MousePaw [Media], he always demonstrated his commitment to the users, the product, and his team. He is always ready to go above and beyond to make his team feel welcomed and help them with any problems. Perhaps the most impressive aspect of Jason is his ability to learn and adapt. Jason is already a considerable expert in many fields of computer science/engineering, but any time I've seen him run into a something he isn't familiar with, he is able to learn it quickly. He doesn't just learn the basics, he instead gains a deep and considerable knowledge of the new topic. There are few people who can match the leadership, passion, expertise, adaptability, and work ethic of Jason."

- Scott Taylor, Director of Software Engineering, Telestream

"Jason is kind, compassionate, well-spoken, and just as importantly an outspoken moderator for DEV (dev.to). He regularly participates in mod conversations open to our larger team of mods, weighing in on how to approach difficult Code of Conduct violations, offering guidance to other folks on the mod team, and putting forth excellent ideas about how to improve internal systems on DEV to make moderating more efficient and effective. Jason is also hardworking and regularly puts in great work to help us with mod-focused tasks. He's the moderator for several tags and does an excellent job of tending to these. He's also quick to flag any abusive behavior and will stand up for folks that he feels are being mistreated. Lastly, he's always quick to raise his hand and volunteer if there are other things that we need help on. I think Jason is a super reliable, helpful person that forever has valuable insights to offer; and aside from this, his strong moral compass and empathetic world view are truly inspiring."

- Michael Tharrington, Senior Community Manager, Forem (DEV)