Donald Gifford

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Lead Cloud Infrastructure Engineer, Security Developer

Professional Summary

Leader, Developer, Engineer, and Architect with over a decade of experience building and supporting services for Media and Entertainment, Education, and Security Industries.

Skills

- Leadership : Proven ability to lead and manage a wide variety of design and development projects in team and independent situations.

- Scale : Built the largest television production in the history of TV. Created and launched an AWS Service. Managed the infrastructure for a video game spanning thousands of servers all over the planet.

- Self-Managed : Don't need pressing or tasks defined. A problem and a direction is all that is needed to deliver.

- Deeply Technical : In close to 20 years in the industry, there isn't much I haven't seen or built - or is being repackaged and sold as new. I drive deeply into problems not only to better understand the issues but to expand my knowledge and hopefully learn something that can be applied in the future.

- Mentor : The best lead by example. They are force multipliers for their team, organization, and company. The example I set is one of participation and helping others see their potential and become force multipliers.

- Document Driven : A by-product of being a former Amazonian is the preference of documents driving everything. I document and write in detail in an effort to provide efficient and asynchronous workflows.

- Learning : In close to 20 years in the industry, there isn't much I haven't seen or built - or is being repackaged and sold as new. That doesn't stop me from constantly reading, learning, and testing the newest technologies to find new and novel applications.

Technical

1. Cloud Providers(AWS, Azure, GCP, Digital Ocean)
2. Golang
3. Python
4. Kubernetes
5. Terraform/OpenTofu
6. Linux
7. Identity(OAuth2, OIDC, Okta)

Experience

Senior Cloud Security Engineer - Arctic Wolf, *Jan 2025 - Current*

- Lead the refactor, design, and deployment of company wide IAM covering 200+ Accounts.
- Created workflow processes for RFC(Request for Comments), code documentation design patterns, and documentation automation. Refactored Terraform deployments of to use modern approaches for scaling large infrastructure.
- Lead, redesigned, and refactored custom Golang applications for user logins to AWS, profile management, and deployment.

Engineer / Architect / Advisor - Contract - NDA, *Mar 2024 - Jan 2025*

- Working with a large media services (NDA) company to help facilitate a large acquisition project.
- Provided technical advice for navigating the adoption of the purchase.
- Designed a new multi-cloud architecture and codebase for the next version of the service.

Software Engineer - Contract - NDA, *Jun 2024 - Sept 2024*

- Created a fully custom iOS Watch application for an unannounced television show.
- Backend services all built in Golang, deployed with Docker using Github Actions and Tailscale.
- Devices deployed and managed through a SSR frontend using HTMX. Watch application tracks users locations, health, and sleep data for the show.

Lead Security Software Engineer / Architect - NBC Studios, *June 2023 - March 2024*

- Brought on to lead the studios productions move towards a "Studio in the Cloud" infrastructure.
- Architected and built production to cloud workflows for large file transfer, media storage, and security.
- Worked across organizations to tie in legacy applications for managing assets and production workflows.
- Cloud infrastructure built using Terraform and custom Golang applications.

Systems Development Engineer / Software Development Engineer - Amazon Web Services, *Jan 2022 - June 2023*

- Brought over from Amazon Studios to the Nimble Core team to launch an AWS service from the application I created created at Amazon Studios as a part of the new Nimble Studio.
- I also help provide industry experience in building secure applications for media workflows and identity design and management, user experience, and large scale systems design.

Software Development Engineer / Security Architect - Amazon Studios, *Oct 2019 - Dec 2021*

- Architect, design, implement, and manage a cloud first studio production platform service managing 200+ film productions.

- Design and build custom applications and services for production content creation and management workflows.
- Created the first large scale identity management solution for Amazon Studios that allows all users work in a secure environment that is easy to manage across corporate and production environments.
- Created and managed custom cloud security tools for the creative environment while working with privacy bodies like MPAA.

Senior Site Reliability Engineer - The Walt Disney Studios, *Feb 2017 - Oct 2019*

- Manage, build, and deliver cloud based infrastructure and applications for studio technologies.
- Migrated applications from on premise to cloud based container orchestration systems.
- Lead application teams with decisions regarding stack implementations, telemetry and automation.
- Primarily focused on building, maintaining, and upgrading the video transcoding platform for the Studio, Marvel, Disney+, and Movies Anywhere.
- Built and supported prerelease media compliant applications in AWS for streaming and security content protection.

Senior Systems Administrator - Achieve3000, *April 2016 - Feb 2017*

- Responsible for the modernization of infrastructure management, application management, and delivery.
- Moved the applications from bare-metal managed hosting providers to AWS using Chef, Terraform, and custom tools.
- Redesigned and lead architecture of the application and infrastructure monitoring and metrics.
- Unified service delivery pipelines for more efficient and reliable deployments.

Linux Systems Administrator - Frostburn Studios, *May 2015 - Dec 2017*

- Managed the complete infrastructure for the Heroes Of Newerth title.
- Implemented and used tools like Chef, Ruby, Jenkins, Sensu, Graphite, Logstash on Cloud providers including AWS, Digital Ocean, and Softlayer for 2500+ servers worldwide.
- Designed and implemented custom game server API in Golang for management of all 2500+ game servers.
- Created a in game notification service with custom API backend in Golang utilizing Redis and Twemproxy to process 5 Million messages a second.
- Also built a in game ladder service using Golang and Redis.

Devops Engineer and Developer - ICON Interactive, *April 2014 - May 2015*

- Helped build highly available and scalable apps using Chef, Nagios, New Relic, and Logstash on Cloud Providers AWS and Google Compute.
- Created development processes using Vagrant and Docker.
- Supported legacy systems for clients including technologies like AIX, Solaris, Sun Microsystems hardware, and Fedora Core 3.
- Managed Co-location services for clients.
- Created a global streaming services for clients to show off live viewing of clients services using AWS.

Systems Engineer - Dice Corporation, *July 2012 - April 2014*

- Responsible for the high availability for 2000+ servers countrywide.
- Systems included proprietary monitoring systems, web servers, databases, and PBX servers. Some technologies used were RedHat5-6, Lifekeeper, DRBD, Nagios, VMWare, Apache, Asterisk, Kickstart/PXE BOOT, and Chef.
- Created automation to drop ship servers to onsite clients that auto configured using PXE boot with chef. - Frequent on-site installs included all Dell Hardware(r4XX-r7XX servers), Sonicwall NSA Devices, Dell Powerconnect switches, and KEMP Firewalls.

Developer - Freelance/Self Employed, *June 2009 - March 2011*

- Received contract jobs through various job boards for everything to simple desktop repair, server deployments, networking repair, web development, and web design.
- Created various web applications using Ruby on Rails, Python/Django, or Php depending on client handoff.

Desktop Support Specialist - University Of Michigan - Flint, *June 2006-April 2007*

- Provided all faculty, staff, and students with desktop support. Duties included creating images for different machines, deployments, repair, providing helpdesk support, lab support, and general user support.

Education

Carman-Ainsworth High School, *Flint, MI / 2006*

- High School Diploma

University of Michigan, *Flint, MI / 2006-2007*

- B.S. COMPUTER SCIENCE

Saginaw Valley State University, *Sagniaw, MI / 2007-2009*

- B.S. COMPUTER SCIENCE