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DevOps Engineer, Manager and Cloud Architect. CI/CD Specialist

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Highlights

Wide ranging, eclectic background from web developer to consultant to devops leader
Large orgs (Microsoft, Fujitsu, Bunnings, Domain)
Small orgs and startups (Ento, GoodHuman, Attik)
End-to-end experience in large-scale environments on both Windows and Linux
Cloud Architect for Octopus Deploy SaaS
DevOps Lead for Domain Group's Cloud Transformation
Former Microsoft MVP for IIS and Web Technology
Public speaker on DevOps and general tech topics
"Professional Geek" with experience in a number of different roles
Established - and contribute to - the DevUps.org mentoring community
Built and grew DevOps teams at several organisations

Key Technologies

AWS
Azure
Google Cloud
Terraform
Octopus Deploy
Python
DevOps Patterns and Practices
CI/CD on multiple platforms
IIS, Nginx, Apache
Shell Scripting – Bash and PowerShell
Packer, Vagrant, Docker
Agile & Lean
Serverless (Azure Functions, Google Cloud Functions and AWS Lambda)
IoT
F# & C#
Cloud Architecture & Scaling

Awards

- Domain Innovation Day Tech Award winner for "Dance To Deploy"
- Domain Innovation Day Runner up for "The Release Train"

- Microsoft MVP (IIS) for three years (2001/2002 and 2002/2003 and 2003/2004)
- Microsoft GPGP Award winner for excellence in CPE
- Several monthly spot awards while at Microsoft

Employment (most recent first)

GoodHuman.me
Aug 2022 – March 2024
Head of Infrastructure

GoodHuman is a disability-focused startup, which gels well with my own personal passion. My partner lives with a permanent disability, as did my prior partner, so I live alongside the problems of disability service provision in Australia every day. As such, joining GoodHuman was probably a no-brainer. GoodHuman provides workforce management software for NDIS providers, with an eventual ambition to widen the services into a more direct marketplace for end-users and service providers.

GoodHuman is primarily on Google Cloud & Firebase using Linux Containers, with a tech stack built mainly in TypeScript. The infrastructure stack is fully terraformed, with automation code in Python and PowerShell, mostly built by myself.

As I'm the only 100% infrastructure member of staff, I often have to rely on cross-team resourcing to get major tasks done, and that's been a major success here.

The work I'm most proud of is *gh-stack*, a terraform module which encompasses an entire development environment in one hit, allowing teams to rapidly spin up an entire disposable dev environment by merging a simple pull request. I also introduced Honeycomb for OpenTelemetry metrics, which I also use at home to monitor my family IT stack and Home Assistant setup.

GoodHuman entered Administration in March 2024

WithYouWithMe
May 2022 – Aug 2022
DevOps Manager / Head of DevOps

Leading a small DevOps team mainly focused around Azure using Terraform.

When approached about a role with GoodHuman, a company more aligned with my longer-term goals, I moved on, leaving my 2iC to capably run the team.

Ento (Marvel Internet Group)
Jun 2021 – May 2022
Squad Manager & DevOps Discipline Lead

Ento was a Workforce Management startup in Melbourne with numerous technical and business challenges. I came on board to handle a fragmented DevOps discipline and a team struggling with burnout and toil.

I pushed the DevOps team towards best-practice, continuously delivered Terraform, AWS Control Tower, Octopus Deploy Runbooks and a largely self-service deployment system, freeing up significant toil and clickops, and helped drive better agile practices in a team that had experienced high turnover and numerous tech debt issues though the pandemic. I also started automating many of the ad-hoc tasks that had left the team bogged down in BAU activity.

I grew the DevOps discipline from a single engineer to a team of three, one hired in and one trained internally, so there was significant mentoring and guidance in the role, as well as management of a small team of external consultants.

Ento has now been merged with another WFM company.

Bunnings Pty Ltd
Jan 2020 – Jun 2021
Innovation Lab Senior DevOps Engineer

Bunnings Established the Innovation Lab as a standalone unit in late 2019, to drive new ventures in the digital and physical spaces. I was approached to come on board as the first DevOps Engineer, to evolve the TradePro application before moving on to other apps.

The planned trajectory of the team hit a major roadblock with the COVID pandemic, but we continued as a small, close-knit multi-disciplinary group and eventually restarted the expansion process. My previous experience of remote work really helped through the pandemic and I was able to offer a number of patterns and practices to keep the team running smoothly. Our team spearheaded the Bunnings Click & Collect system early on, which handled enormous quantities of traffic, and later I was seconded off to the broader Bunnings IT team to assist in building a new Snowflake Data Warehouse in Azure.

The Inno Lab infrastructure was mainly Azure-based, with CircleCI, TeamCity, Octopus Deploy, DataDog and a number of other common tools, including external services such as Stripe, Localz and FlexBooker, and the devops code is mostly Terraform with Python and PowerShell, with app code in Go running in Alpine-based containers.

A company this size with such excellent staff retention has limited opportunity for climbing towards a CTO role, so I took advantage of a pause in Innovation Lab activity to seek a new opportunity back in startup world

EzyPay
Oct 2019 – Jan 2020
DevOps Manager

I moved back to Sydney in October 2019 for personal reasons, and took up a role with EzyPay, heading up a small DevOps team working primarily with AWS and Terraform, and with a number of additional tools to help maintain PCI compliance. The role was much more linux-oriented than previous roles, which was a good skills pivot, as I was finally forced to admit my bash skills could use work.

I resigned in January in order to return to Victoria.

Octopus Deploy
June 2017 – Sept 2019
Cloud Architect

As a heavy user of Octopus Deploy, I was well known to the Octopus team, so when the time came for Octopus to launch a Cloud-hosted Octopus edition, I was a strong candidate to come on board and help deliver the product. I did this as part of a small, ops-focused team scattered around Australia.

v1 of Octopus Cloud launched in June 2018, and was heavily reliant on AWS, PowerShell and a highly automated build/deploy chain in TeamCity and Octopus. New

customers would onboard through Octofront, our custom front-end, which would trigger a series of tasks on Octopus Deploy to provision their instance and background services. The API-first nature of Octopus made this a logical choice and allowed us to push the limits of what could be done with Octopus as a devops platform.

Post-launch I moved into Cloud maintenance with a 20% focus on Integration and Client Tools, and contributed to Cloud v2, especially around Azure integration and ACS Engine/Kubernetes.

I also worked heavily on the Octopus DSC Powershell module, as well as build and test agent images for AWS, Azure, Virtualbox and Hyper-V, and the octopus-serverspec-extensions, a test framework written in Ruby.

The team was remote-first, so I took the opportunity to move to Country Victoria and escape the Sydney grind. I firmly believe remote work is the future of the industry, with benefits for both companies *and* employees, and as bandwidth becomes cheaper and more pervasive, the reasons not to adopt remote are slowly vanishing. *(note: in the wake of COVID-19, this sentence carries some heavy irony)*

After the retirement of v1 and the launch of v2, I struggled to find a new niche in the company, and as my partner back in Sydney was suffering some health problems, I opted to move back and find a new role.

Since moving on I still occasionally contribute to Octopus Open Source, including the Docker images, the CircleCI orb and the public documentation repo, and have an ongoing relationship with a number of former colleagues, some of whom contribute to my mentoring community at DevUps.org

Domain Group
May 2014 – June 2017
Senior Systems Administrator – DevOps

Domain's need for a technology transformation intersected with my own need for a career pivot, as I took on DevOps, Cloud and Continuous Delivery full-time.

I was the first Ops engineer brought in-house (previous Domain used the Fairfax Digital shared ops group) and I led the move from day-long manual deployments to an end-to-end automation pipeline encompassing infrastructure, deployment, monitoring, remediation and support. Domain went 100% AWS in 2015 and has since transformed an aging monolithic .NET Stack into a diverse, performant and reliable microservice architecture.

Developers can deploy a microservice in a matter of seconds, and flagship products deploy automatically several times a day, with the record being over 150 production deployments in a single week.

The change was revolutionary and the development team grew tenfold, necessitating a lot of work in mentoring, goal setting and patterns and practices. Scaling a team like this came with many challenges, not all technical. There was a constant need to manage stakeholder expectations alongside coaching engineers in patterns and practices, innovating new ways to manage infrastructure, cost saving work, vendor relationships and community outreach. A significant part of any overhaul of a tech team is, in fact, cultural rather than technical, and this multi-year project was a masterclass, taking Domain from a small and struggling subsidiary of Fairfax into a multi-billion dollar industry star.

Domain were chosen by Octopus Deploy to pilot Octopus v3.0 High Availability edition, and were the first company globally to go live with an HA, Auto-scaling Octopus Deploy cluster in AWS. We open-sourced the DSC resource that enabled it, along with several other modules and processes. We were also early adopters of ChatOps tools, with several self-service slackbots allowing common operations to be run, such as Akamai cache flushing, termination of unhealthy instances or firing off Octopus Deploy runbooks without needing to log in to the Octopus UI.

My small team was referred to by IT News as "Poster boys for Australian DevOps", and we presented at Conferences such as the AWS Summit, NDC Sydney and PowerShell.asia on the topics of Continuous Delivery, Cultural Change, Infrastructure as Code and Cloud Automation, and have also spoken at numerous local-level meetups. I've also written at length on topics such as Robot Army and Octopus Deploy at my own blog http://d.evops.co/ and on http://tech.domain.com.au

You can find my pre-2014 employment history (Microsoft, Fujitsu, Dimension Data, Leo Burnett etc) at https://jasbro.io/workhistory/