Nik Kantar

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Summary

Senior Software Engineer with significant experience using Python and AWS (Lambda, ECS, DynamoDB, RDS, SQS, EventBridge, API Gateway, SES, Terraform, CloudFormation). Historically primarily web oriented, framework-less and Django. Open to other technologies and environments.

Experience

December 2020 – August 2023
Instil — *Software Engineer/Squad Lead*

- Architected, built, tested, deployed, supported, and documented many major initiatives: bulk importing of freeform data into the platform, audit log of destructive changes to data in the platform, kanban style board system for main data type, internally managed feature flags, various data exports, task management, etc.
- Served as *Squad Lead* for six months, splitting time between engineering and project management for half of the engineering team, and working closely with the product team on planning resourcing for squad initiatives.
- Championed best practices around code quality, testing, and developer tooling.
- Wrote application code in Python, and managed infrastructure on AWS (Lambda, Step Functions, DynamoDB, EventBridge, S3, SES, and CloudFormation).

February 2019 – October 2020
sweetgreen — *Lead Software Engineer*

- Heavily involved on a small team in charge of delivering two major projects: a sales forecasting system which predicted sales numbers using machine learning and inputted them into back office software for restaurants, and an inter-system coordination tool which delivered information on orders to internal and external teams for order fulfillment.
- Predominantly worked solo to deliver a rewrite of a system coordinating fulfillment of outpost orders using the stack newly preferred by the engineering org (TypeScript/NodeJS).
- Introduced and maintained an internal tool which streamlined common engineer tasks initially only related to the development process but eventually deployment as well.
- Wrote application code in Python and TypeScript, and managed infrastructure on AWS (Lambda, ECS, RDS, DynamoDB, SQS, and Terraform).

September 2017 – February 2019
friendbuy — *Senior Software Engineer*

- Contributed to the maintenance of the legacy Python/Flask/SQLAlchemy platform.
- Played a major role in a full rewrite of the platform using TypeScript, NodeJS, AWS Lambda, DynamoDB, Kinesis, Apex, and Terraform.
- Designed, implemented, and tested major features: internal logging tool used by all services for logging to a central database table and Slack, dynamic tag system for template rendering, email delivery tracking system, etc.
- Introduced a self-installing internal API client based on curl.

Projects

- **mdut**: Markdown URL tag generator, available as a CLI tool and Python library.
- **sus**: Scripted generation of a static site comprising http redirects for use as a URL shortener.
- **Autohook**: Simple Git hook framework, consisting of one shell script and a naming convention.
- **Parsenvy**: Environment variable parsing library, focused on providing a minimal API.
- **Keysort**: Helper library for sorting lists of dictionaries by key value.
- **Starminder** (decommissioned): Web service built using Flask, SQLAlchemy, github3.py, and AWS SES to send users periodic reminders of their starred GitHub projects.
- **SendOtterLove.com** (decommissioned): Web application built on Django, Stripe API, and Twilio API which took payment from the sender and sent adorable otter pictures and puns to the recipient.

Community

February 2020
PyBeach 2020 — *Chair*

- Chaired the first general Python conference in Los Angeles, supported by a group of community volunteers and the Python Software Foundation.

December 2017 – present
SoCal Python — *Organizer*

- Organized a number of SoCal Python meetups over the years as part of a group of core organizers.
- Collaborated with Write the Docs Los Angeles and PyLadies Los Angeles on social events.

Talks

PyOhio 2013
Adafruit Circuit Playground Express as an "On Air" Light

PyOhio 2019, SoCal Python February 2019, Write the Docs Los Angeles October 2018
TODO: add comments: 5 Tips for Winning at Code Comments

PyOhio 2019
BYOAPI: No API? No Problem! — *lightning talk*

Education

2008 – 2011
California State University, Los Angeles
B.A. Art—Graphic Design/Visual Communication

2004 – 2007
University of California, San Diego
Computer Science and Engineering (coursework)

Languages

- *Fluent in* English, Serbian/Bosnian/Croatian
- *Familiar with* Spanish, German, Latin