

JAMES KING

Chief Technical Officer / AI-Augmented Software Engineer

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PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY

Leveraging AI daily to build production features safely. Proven experience delivering high-compliance systems processing millions in payments, extensive code review ownership, and mentoring junior developers who progressed to Senior roles. Writes AI skills and guidelines to improve development workflows. Passionate advocate of test automation and best practices in software development.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Chief Technical Officer (Hands-on Technical Lead) | Varsuite Media Group Ltd | November 2024 - Present

Website development agency producing WordPress and Laravel websites. www.varsuite.co.uk

- Took over development from an outsourced team who were not delivering; secured and stabilized insecure WordPress and Laravel client sites
- Migrated 100+ websites from multiple hosting platforms (primarily AWS) to 20i Reseller hosting, reducing hosting costs by ~70% and improving reliability
- Introduced development standards: coding conventions, code review process, and client issue reporting workflows
- Established new site onboarding process for clients joining the agency
- Led technical delivery across all production websites, ensuring 99.99% uptime
- Technical strategy: architected migration plan, managed vendor relationships, and implemented quality assurance processes
- AI-Augmented: Introduced AI tools to speed up development safely, writing team guidelines for AI-assisted coding

PHP Developer | Wider Plan Ltd | March 2018 - November 2024

Symfony application development for salary sacrifice and Gov.UK projects. www.widerplan.com

- Developed features for Wider Plan salary sacrifice system and Gov.UK services
- Collaborated within an 8-developer team delivering government services under strict compliance and WCAG AA accessibility constraints
- Converted CI/CD pipeline from legacy Jenkins to GitHub Actions with custom runner VMs
- Active code reviewer via GitHub PRs, ensuring high code quality and test coverage
- Maintained large Symfony codebase supporting payment systems processing millions
- Devised automated tests in PHPUnit: Acceptance, Feature and Unit testing
- Established tooling for deployment and PR staging environments, saving team time

Senior Developer | Just Checking Ltd | May 2015 - March 2018

Laravel SaaS for care home monitoring. www.justchecking.co.uk

- Promoted from Web Application Developer to Senior Developer (November 2016)
- Mentored Junior Developers who went on to become Senior Developers
- Delivered full-stack features end-to-end for prototype projects and main application
- Created development tooling for a legacy platform
- Migrated from Microsoft SQL Server to PostgreSQL and Windows Server to Ubuntu
- Answered technical support line as second line support for customer service

Temporary Web Developer | Real Point Design Ltd | May 2014 - October 2014

Laravel systems for clients including major BBC project.

- Delivered full-stack features end-to-end
- Established coding standards and way of working with Laravel
- CentOS system administration for cloud servers
- cPanel administration for client sites

Junior Web Developer | Trakware Solutions Ltd | May 2013 - May 2014

Industrial placement during University. Cloud services via AWS.

- Set up open source on GitHub for in-house JavaScript framework
- Managed AWS cloud services
- Delivered full-stack features and bug fixes
- Managed release process for open-source framework

SIDE PROJECTS

Chief Technical Officer (Hands-on Technical Lead) | Varsuite Core Ltd | December 2024 - Present

Multi-tenant SaaS platform for agency site management. www.vs-core.com

- Architected and built multi-tenant SaaS platform in Laravel 11, supporting 80+ websites
- Pioneered scalable Kubernetes cluster using infrastructure-as-code, achieving zero-downtime deployments
- Implemented CI/CD pipelines in GitHub Actions with automated testing using Pest
- Authored coding standards and code review practices (PSR12, Rector)
- Delivered full billing integration with Paddle, training other team members
- AI-Augmented: Use OpenCode with Claude & Ollama daily for code generation, safety-reviewed before production

Owner / Founder | Momentum Studio Ltd | April 2018 - December 2024

Digital agency founded while working freelance in evenings and weekends. Taken over by Varsuite Media Group Ltd.

- Founded and ran own digital agency, handling all aspects from sales and marketing to technical delivery
- Delivered end-to-end projects using Laravel, WordPress, WooCommerce, cPanel, Linux and Shopify

- Developed own coding standards and CI/CD pipelines
- Created custom tooling to aid Linux system administration
- Registered Shopify Partner
- Managed all client communication, project delivery, and billing

SKILLS

AI-Augmented Development:

OpenCode (with Claude & Ollama models) | AI Pair Programming | Safety Review Process | Writing AI Skills and Guidelines | Prompt Engineering

Technical:

Full Stack Web Development | Laravel | PHP | Symfony | JavaScript | Node.js | React | AlpineJS | AJAX | CSS | TailwindCSS | Docker | Kubernetes | JSON REST APIs | GraphQL | MySQL | MariaDB | PostgreSQL | AWS | DigitalOcean | Hetzner | 20i | Cloudflare R2 | Redis | KeyDB | Valkey | Terraform | Ansible | IaaS | Linux | Server Administration | Git | GitHub | GitHub Actions | WordPress | WooCommerce | Test-driven Development | Pest | PHPUnit

Leadership & Strategy:

Technical Leadership | Architecture Decisions | Code Review | Stakeholder Management | Vendor Management | Team Collaboration | Mentorship | Budget Optimization | WCAG AA Accessibility | Agile | Scrum

EDUCATION

Staffordshire University, Stafford | 2011 - 2015

BSc (Hons) Web Programming - 4-year course including 1-year industrial placement. Final year project won GradEx for the web category.

ACHIEVEMENTS

Winner of GradEx 2015 (Web Category) - Final year project won web category

Posters in Parliament 2016 - Presented final year project in London to industry leaders and MPs