

Andrew Gatenby

Product-focused Lead Engineer | Software Architect | Engineering Manager
E-Commerce, AI Automation, APIs & Shopify Apps

Introduction

Product-Minded Full-Stack Engineer & Technical Lead with 20 years of experience building high-growth e-commerce platforms, Shopify apps, and microservices. Currently a Software Architect at Visualsoft, I lead the design of modular, SOLID-principled applications and REST APIs using Laravel, Vue & React, and Inertia, backed by strong QA and documentation. With a background spanning agency delivery, SaaS and in-house, engineering management, and AI-driven automation, I take end-to-end ownership from user problems and requirements, through to production deployment - crafting intuitive user experiences and clean, scalable software that delivers.

Contact

Phone	07958351746	Email	andrew@gatenby.dev
Location	Teesside, UK	URL	andrew.gatenby.dev

Skills

Tech Stack & Expertise

Backend Stack

- Laravel
- PHP
- Symfony
- Kohana
- Node

Frontend & App Stack

- Javascript & Typescript
- React & Vue
- Inertia JS
- Tailwind CSS
- AstroJS

Automated Testing & QA

- PHPUnit & Pest
- TDD & testing plans
- Browser testing
- Coverage & test reporting

Data Handling

- MySQL & Postgres
- Redis
- Elasticsearch
- APIs & OAuth with RBAC

Tooling & Scaling

- Websockets & Reverb
- Queues & Schedulers
- GitOps & GitHub Actions
- CICD build & deployments

DevOps & Delivery

- AI automation & pipelines
- Docker & containerisation
- Kubernetes
- Proxmox & VMWare

Soft Skills

- Technical leadership & organisation
- Software development life cycle
- Effective system architecture design & planning across APIs and application-level functionality
- Coaching & training colleagues
- Documenting for technical & non-technical stakeholders
- Liaising with external clients & stakeholders to determine requirements and delivery milestones
- Effective and efficient problem solving, through to solution delivery
- Agile Scrum development best practices
- People and technical process design, implementation, rollout & review
- Recruitment, interviewing, appointing & onboarding for new colleagues
- Conducting staff appraisals, performance reviews, setting goals & targets
- Familiarity across various legislation & requirements for GDPR, PCI compliance, Data Protection etc.

Employment History & Experience

Software Architect

Visualsoft, May 2023 - present

Moved laterally within Visualsoft into a hands-on engineering role as Engineering Management initiatives matured, partnering with product teams and stakeholders on requirements, research, and proof-of-concept builds. Initially revitalised the flagship e-commerce platform via microservices before pivoting to Shopify Apps using shared, reusable tooling for rapid development. Worked in a forward-deployed capacity with Shopify teams and merchants to translate technical concepts for non-technical partners and build tailored solutions.

Key Technologies

Laravel, InertiaJS, React, Docker, Shopify Polaris, Shopify POS, MySQL, Redis, Elasticsearch, Kubernetes, Pest, CI/CD

Key Achievements

- Launched 11 brand new Shopify apps, in 15 months
- Attained 'Built for Shopify' status for multiple apps
- Built cross-app toolkits & dependencies to handle billing, uptime monitoring, performance and security
- Implemented AI-assisted pipelines to automate aspects around release management, deployments, translations, bug fixes and simple feature implementation
- Worked with Shopify technical & product teams
- Achieved unified-commerce approach, pairing Shopify POS & storefront
- Built robust CI/CD build pipelines for app builds
- Integrated with key technical partners including Shopify, Mantle, TikTok, Amazon and Google
- Developed and delivered multiple microservice API architectures
- Scaled & optimised multiple API services for improved efficiencies

Engineering Manager

Visualsoft, May 2021 - May 2023

Promoted during a wider technology restructuring into a people- and process-focused leadership role with direct line management of engineers and technical leads. Consolidated previously isolated developer teams into an aligned unit under a consistent agile process to support a product-led e-commerce approach. Also led technical interviews and scaled the department through a targeted recruitment campaign.

Key Technologies

Laravel, VueJS, Docker, MySQL, Redis, Elasticsearch, Kubernetes, Tailwind CSS, PHPUnit, CI/CD, Playwright Test Automation

Key Achievements

- Agile adoption across the technology side of the business
- Line management of software engineers and technical leads
- Conducted 1-2-1s, performance and annual reviews
- Worked to establish and drive personal development plans for staff
- Ensured that technical delivery scopes were adhered to, to avoid scope creep
- Organised and presented at internal technology conferences
- Conducted recruitment campaigns, interviews, hiring and onboarding of new staff
- Worked with new product-led approach, to establish appropriate agile methodology for planning projects and sprints
- Driving daily standups with engineering teams
- United multiple, siloed development teams with new consistent and aligned processes

Lead R&D Developer

Visualsoft, October 2017 - May 2021

Transitioned into a Lead Developer role within an R&D context while retaining team and line management responsibilities, researching technologies, approaches, and tooling for Visualsoft's next-generation platform. Shifted focus away from direct client work toward internal stakeholders, designing scalable solutions to address broader merchant requirements.

Key Technologies

Laravel, PHP, Kohana, MySQL, Docker, Kubernetes, VueJS, Tailwind CSS, CI/CD, PHPUnit

Key Achievements

- Led with new API-first approach for reworking the VS e-commerce platform into a microservice architecture
- Implemented responsive wireframes templated site builder, to aid rapid development for client websites
- Worked with Google on new page speed improvements and training content for a Google algorithm change
- Focused on improving Lighthouse scores across the VS platform
- Worked to improve VS platform-wide conversion rates to be above 3% with speed, UX and stability improvements
- Involved with platform roadmap team and work planning
- Line management and team lead duties

Development Team Leader

Visualsoft, April 2011 - October 2017

Promoted to Team Lead, line managing backend development teams and working directly with clients. Evolved the team's remit from delivering growth-focused features and integrations for existing stores to onboarding new merchants onto the Visualsoft platform with day-one solutions and setup.

Key Technologies

PHP, Kohana, MySQL, Javascript, jQuery, CSS, Sphinx, Wordpress

Key Achievements

- Liaised directly with clients to establish requirements, provide quotes and implement features
- Further development and improvements for the VS platform
- Established timelines and timescales for project planning and ensuring delivery to clients
- Payment provider integrations with PayPal, Sagepay, Google Checkout
- Integrations with EPOS & CRM Providers including Khaos Control, Peoplevox, TRIMs and custom integrations
- Provided technical plans internally
- Line management and team lead duties

Senior Programmer

Visualsoft, November 2008 - April 2011

Joined Visualsoft, an award-winning web agency, as a senior programmer at a time where the company focus was building upon their existing e-commerce experience, with the beginnings of a new platform. Working with clients directly to establish requirements, then building these into the new VS3 e-commerce platform.

Key Technologies

PHP, Kohana, MySQL, Javascript, jQuery, CSS, Sphinx

Key Achievements

- Foundation work on the new VS e-commerce platform
- Utilised MVC Kohana framework and supported colleagues on new concepts
- Built new VS3 key features such as filtering, payment & EPOS integrations, new admin UX etc.
- Worked with in-house designers and front-end specialists to build award winning websites for clients
- Developed internal tooling to allow rapid migration from legacy VS2 sites to new VS3 platform
- Spoke with clients to determine requirements
- Wrote technical and delivery proposals for clients

Senior Developer

Ethical Superstore / PointOV, January 2006 - November 2008

Hybrid role acting as an in-house developer to support operations and logistics for Ethical Superstore as an e-commerce business, but also as an agency developer serving clients via PointOV - an ethical focused, web & design agency.

Key Technologies
PHP, OSCommerce, MySQL, Javascript, Javascript, CSS, Wordpress

Key Achievements

- PHP-focused web development work in e-commerce and logistics capacity
- Built further upon an adapted OSCommerce platform for multi-tenant
- Implemented numerous optimisations around image handling, static caching, extended product catalog, payment integrations
- Worked with PointOV clients to identify requirements, provide solutions and build custom websites
- Collaborated with Design & Marketing teams internally and externally
- Extended OSCommerce base platform across multiple connected storefronts for Cancer Research, Traidcraft and Divine Chocolate

Lead Developer & Designer

Mobile Fun, April 2004 - January 2006

In-house developer and designer role, for a successful UK e-commerce company, where I worked within the IT team to plan, implement and rollout changes and new functionality across the e-commerce website, as well as internal systems used to control day-to-day logistics and fulfilment.

Key Technologies
PHP, OSCommerce, MySQL, Javascript, Javascript, CSS, Wordpress

Key Achievements

- PHP development for an in-house e-commerce store and fulfilment operation
- Built integrations for internal systems and payment integrations to handle thousands of physical orders & hundreds of digital orders each day
- Design & development for sideline websites including contract phones, digital content and brand-specific micro websites
- Worked with Product, SEO & PPC managers, to ensure aligned launches and consistent growth
- Design work for online stores and print campaigns with brochures, leaflets and trade show banners
- Key focus on monitoring and improving organic SEO presence
- Website improvements for "My Account", live order tracking, streamlined checkout, product reviews, shopping feeds
- Supported key-growth era seeing daily e-commerce orders triple, doubling online conversion rates

Education

MA Creative Multimedia
University of Teesside, 2003 - 2004

BSc Visualisation (2:1)
University of Teesside, 1999 - 2003

References

Available upon request.