

Ben Wermuller

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As a human-centered CTO with decades of experience spearheading technology initiatives across diverse sectors, I bring a unique blend of technical expertise and empathetic, strategic leadership.

My journey spans from co-founding pioneering open-source platforms, through steering startups to acquisition, to revitalizing tech teams at top-tier newsrooms. Whether it's architecting platforms for global broadcasters, mentoring startups in mission-driven accelerators, or driving equity-focused tech strategies, I've consistently championed innovation, transparency, and human-centric design. As a technology and product leader, I'm motivated by harnessing technology to foster collaboration and drive meaningful impact as part of inclusive teams.

Experience

PROPUBLICA (2023-)

Interim Tech Lead (Contract)

ProPublica is a non-profit newsroom addressing abuses of power and betrayals of the public trust by government and businesses.

- Stepped in during staff transition to guide engineering and IT.
- Revitalized team culture and spearheaded hiring initiatives.
- Established team policies like code review and equitable hiring standards.
- Conducted 1:1s, offering direct support to engineers.
- Contributed with hands-on coding.
- Organized staff summit, providing design thinking training and facilitated discussions with external engineering and product leaders.

THE 19TH* (2022-2023)

Chief Technology Officer

The 19th* is a non-profit newsroom focusing on gender, politics, and policy.

- As first CTO, pioneered the technology team's role within the newsroom.
- Led hiring and mentorship of engineers.
- Cultivated an open, transparent team culture.
- Designed and implemented equity-focused technical decision-making processes.
- Actively contributed to the core codebase.

- Steered transition to Automattic's WordPress VIP platform for publishers.
- Integral member of the senior leadership team, shaping organizational strategy.

FORUSALL (2019-2022)

Head of Engineering

ForUsAll is a fintech startup that aims to help more people save for retirement.

- Built and led a 22-person engineering team.
- Oversaw all technology decisions.
- Established equitable hiring and professional development processes.
- Key member of the senior leadership team, guiding company strategy.
- Contributed to the codebase and wrote software to manage financial audits.
- Conducted venture design thinking courses for all staff.

UNLOCK, INC (2018-2019)

VP, Product Development

Unlock is an open source startup building a protocol for membership on the open web.

- Established a cross-disciplinary open-source product development team.
- Integrated human-centered design principles into company culture.
- Actively worked on the core Node codebase, including integrating with the Ethereum blockchain.

MATTER VENTURES (2017-2018)

Director of Investments (San Francisco)

Matter was a venture capital accelerator for media startups backed by institutions like PRX, KQED, the New York Times and the Associated Press.

- Led and executed west coast investment strategy.
- Invested in 24 startups across diverse verticals, supporting a total portfolio of 73.
- Led mentorship sessions for portfolio startups that included fundraising, technical decision-making, and team culture.
- Co-taught a 5-month course on venture design thinking and product strategy for startups and newsrooms.
- Facilitated Open Matter, a design thinking bootcamp for news startups.

MEDIUM (2016)

Senior Engineer, Publications

Medium is a top 100 website focused on in-depth, quality writing.

- Integral member of the publications team, aiding major platforms like The Ringer and Think Progress.
- Significantly contributed to the core codebase.
- Co-founded the Openness circle:
 - Championed and wrote data export functionality.
 - Ensured adherence to web standards.
 - Pioneered compliance with privacy measures, including Do Not Track.
- Co-led strategic sessions addressing the 2016 election aftermath.

KNOWN (2014-2016)

Co-founder, CEO

Known is an open source platform that powers mobile-first communities on an organization's own domain.

- Created open source platform and community.
- Grew the contributor base.
- Secured funding from Matter Ventures and joined its third accelerator class.
- Collaborated with esteemed partners including KQED, Davidson College, and Harvard University.
- Won a NAMLE media literacy award for work with KQED.
- Served as an invited expert in the W3C Social Web Working Group.
- Successfully led Known to its acquisition by Medium.

LATAKOO (2010-2014)

Chief Technology Officer

Latakoo allows TV journalists at networks like NBC to swiftly transfer videos back to their newsrooms via any internet connection.

- Architected Latakoo platform, empowering journalists at NBC News and other broadcasters to swiftly transfer videos back to their newsrooms.
- Built and led the technology team as first employee.
- Wrote code and led platform development.
- Facilitated video transfers from high-profile locations: Sochi Olympics, Syria, Mount Everest, and Air Force One.
- Integral member of the strategic leadership team.

- Awarded multiple patents for technical architecture.

EDINBURGH FESTIVALS LAB (2010)

Geek in Residence

The Edinburgh Festivals are, collectively, the world's largest arts festival. The Festivals Lab aimed to drive innovation around festival programming.

- Designed and constructed a data API for the Edinburgh Festivals.
- Collaborated with disparate arts organizations to address their digital requirements.
- Co-hosted a hackathon targeting Scotland's creative sector.

ELGG (2004-2009)

Co-founder, Chief Technology Officer

Elgg was one of the first white label social networking platforms.

- Co-founded and developed the platform.
- Bootstrapped the startup to profitability and secured external investment.
- Attracted hundreds of contributors; platform translated into 80+ languages.
- Powered networks for governments (Australia, Netherlands, Canada), NGOs like Oxfam, Fortune 500 companies like Hill & Knowlton, and social movements like 15-M.
- Presented at venues including Stanford University, Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government, the University of Southern Denmark, the University of Barcelona, the ALT-C educational technology conference, the University of Cambridge, and events across Silicon Valley.
- Honored as InfoWorld's Best Social Networking Platform in 2008.

UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD SAÏD BUSINESS SCHOOL (2005-2006) – Webmaster

UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH MEDIA AND LEARNING TECHNOLOGY SERVICE (2003-2004) – Engineer

Education

BSc (Hons) COMPUTER SCIENCE

University of Edinburgh

