

Ben Werdmuller

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I'm a technology and product leader with a focus on supporting mission-driven organizations.

Over the last two decades, I've designed and built software that has been used by social movements, non-profits, and Fortune 500 companies. As part of this work, I've built strong technology and product team cultures and worked on overall business strategy as a key part of the C-suite. I've taught the fundamentals of building a strong organizational culture, design thinking, product design, and strategy to organizations around the world.

I'm excited to work on meaningful projects that make the world better.

Experience

THE 19TH* (2022-2023)

Chief Technology Officer

The 19th* is a non-profit newsroom that reports at the intersection of gender, politics, and policy. It has been instrumental in creating a more inclusive news media.

I was its first CTO and established the role of the technology team in the newsroom. I hired and supported engineers, instigated an open and transparent team culture, established a process for evaluating technical decisions through a strong equity lens, and participated in organizational strategy decisions as part of the senior leadership team.

FORUSALL (2019-2022)

Head of Engineering

ForUsAll was founded to help the underserved build financial safety for retirement. I built and led a 22-person engineering team and was responsible for all technology decisions. I also led our product team serving small businesses who aim to give low-income employees a 401(k). I sat on the internal product board, advising on company strategy. I also ran an internal venture design thinking course for all employees.

UNLOCK, INC (2018-2019)

VP, Product Development

Unlock aims to allow independent creators all over the world to make money from their work, using permissionless blockchain technology. I helped to build a cross-disciplinary open-source product development team, built human-centered design fundamentals into the company culture, and worked directly on the codebase.

MATTER VENTURES (2017-2018)

Director of Investments (San Francisco)

Matter was an early-stage startup accelerator investing in founders with the potential to change media for good, supported by partners including McClatchy, KQED, the New York Times, and the Associated Press. I determined and executed on the investment strategy for the west coast. In the process, I invested in 24 startups across multiple verticals, while supporting a total portfolio of 73, and participated in teaching a 5-month venture design thinking and product strategy course to both startups and newsrooms. I also participated in teaching Open Matter, a design thinking bootcamp for news startups.

MEDIUM (2016)

Senior Engineer, Publications

Medium is a top 100 website that aims to host thoughtful, long-form writing. I worked on the publications team, helping to build the platform for leading publications like The Ringer and Think Progress. While I was there, I co-founded the Openness circle, helping Medium to export data, adhere to web standards, and provide market-leading compliance with privacy protections like Do Not Track. I co-led strategy sessions around responses to the 2016 election.

KNOWN (2014-2016)

Co-founder, CEO

I devised and built an open source, “indie web” community platform, growing the open-source contributor pool to over 50 people. We partnered with organizations like KQED, Davidson College, and Harvard University in order to power innovative social environments for teaching, learning, and publishing. I raised funding from Matter Ventures and participated in its third accelerator class. I participated in the W3C Social Web Working Group as an invited expert.

LATAKOO (2010-2014)

Chief Technology Officer

With my team, I designed and built a platform to quickly send video footage in any format back to TV newsrooms over any internet connection, arriving in the format of the newsroom’s choice for editing and broadcast. I then helped to sell it to over 200 NBC News stations and over 170 Nexstar Media Group stations, and supported journalists in transferring video from locations including Syria, Mount Everest, and Air Force One. I participated in fundraising, helping to raise over \$2M in capital. I’m most proud of building a product that could be used by independent journalists to report from the field at low cost.

EDINBURGH FESTIVALS LAB (2010)

Geek in Residence

The Edinburgh Festivals are, collectively, the world’s largest arts festival. I designed and built a data API, worked with arts organizations in order to support the digital needs of each organization participating in the festivals, and co-hosted a hackathon for the creative sector in Scotland.

ELGG (2004-2009)

Co-founder, Chief Technology Officer

Elgg was one of the first open-source white label social networking platforms. As well as building the first versions of the platform, I co-founded the startup, bootstrapped it to profitability, and subsequently attracted investment. At its peak, it had hundreds of contributors and was translated into over 80 languages. It powered networks for the Australian, Dutch, and Canadian governments; Oxfam used it to train aid workers; the Spanish Movimiento 15 anti-austerity movement used it to organize activists; and it was used as a pioneering social intranet platform by Fortune 500 companies. InfoWorld awarded it 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

UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH (2002)

BSc (Hons) Computer Science