

Christopher Hamm

Director of Software Engineering

Platform & Engineering Leader

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Louisville, KY Area

Summary

Technology executive with 20+ years leading development strategy, platform architecture, and engineering teams for customer-facing digital platforms serving 100M+ monthly unique visitors, including CNET, ZDNET, PCMag, and IGN. Delivered platform and commerce features that generated $5.0M in additional revenue, led engineering through two acquisitions, and moved a flagship CMS to WordPress without a data cutover.

Currently focused on applied AI in engineering: built an enterprise generative-AI development framework around Spec-Driven Development, helped design an AI-enabled delivery workflow adopted as a division standard, and shaped a RAG-based conversational product search on Gemini and Vertex AI Search.

A working software developer who still ships production code across AI agents, catalog APIs, data pipelines, and commerce systems, with deep experience in vendor and budget ownership and in PCI and SOX/SOC controls.

I also volunteer as a mentor for transitioning military veterans and military spouses through American Corporate Partners (ACP).

Work Experience

Director of Software Engineering at Ziff Davis

Sept 2024 - Oct 2026 · Remote

- Owned the technology strategy and roadmap for the catalog platform behind CNET, ZDNET, PCMag, Mashable, Popular Science, IGN, and RetailMeNot, unifying product data, APIs, ingestion, and commerce across divisions into a single source of truth.
- Shaped the design of a RAG product search system on Gemini and Vertex AI Search, supporting conversational and standard search; built its proxy and caching layer, raising throughput from about 5 to 100+ requests per second, and set up its test plans and QA.
- Built an enterprise generative-AI development framework around Spec-Driven Development, and helped design an AI-enabled delivery workflow connecting Jira and GitHub to an AI agent that became the division standard, measured with a DORA-based dashboard.
- Led the CMS transition from a custom platform to WordPress with partner XWP, using an API that shared databases with the legacy CMS so editors could move without a data cutover.
- Refocused engineering priorities toward conversion focused and revenue-centric architecture, protecting performance baselines while supporting recurring commerce revenue.
- Built Python data ingestion and processing for 30K+ merchants, and partnered with data science on coupon and best-offer models.
- Directed the Salesforce integration into an ad media planning tool, and maintained PCI and SOX controls for subscription systems.
- Managed multiple engineering managers while regularly shipping production code for catalog APIs, ETL pipelines, and commerce integrations.

Director of Software Engineering at Red Ventures

Aug 2021 - Sept 2024 · Remote

- Delivered next-generation platform and commerce features that generated an additional $5.0M in revenue.
- Directed backend platforms for content and catalog APIs, knowledge management, and advertising and commerce revenue systems, serving 360+ internal users publishing 25K+ pieces a year to 100M+ monthly uniques.
- Led a 30+ engineering division through its acquisition by Ziff Davis, coordinating technical due diligence, data transitions, and system transfers without interrupting consumer-facing platforms.

- Managed concurrent brand divestments, platform operations, and feature roadmaps; partnered with product leadership to set KPIs and ROI targets for every initiative.
- Grew engineers from mid-level to senior through structured mentorship and opportunity matching.

Senior Engineering Manager, CNET Media Group at Red Ventures
Oct 2020 - Aug 2021

- Managed major technology transitions after Red Ventures acquired the division from ViacomCBS, while hiring senior and mid-level engineers.

Senior Engineering Manager, CNET Media Group at CBS Interactive
Oct 2018 - Oct 2020 · Louisville, KY Area

- Owned backend CMS and API engineering for CNET.com, TVGuide.com, TechRepublic.com, ZDNet.com, and Download.com.
- Led a distributed, multi-timezone agile team of up to 10 direct reports across cloud migrations, CMS platform work, and feature development.
- Managed critical vendor relationships end to end, including renewals, budget justifications, negotiations, and accountability for service quality and ROI.
- Developed a QA process using an image recognition model (later YOLO, with built-in retraining) to detect broken web pages.

Software Engineering Manager at CBS Interactive
Jan 2012 - Oct 2018

- Managed application engineering and site development for CNET.com with 6 engineers plus international contractors; technical authority for ads, lead generation, and conversion tracking.
- Instituted automated build pipelines, mandatory code reviews, application security hardening, and monitoring for major traffic events such as CES.
- Established developer capacity models that improved estimation and delivery predictability.

Earlier Career: CBS Interactive & University of Louisville
2003 - 2012

- **Lead Web Developer, CBS Interactive (2010 - 2012):** delivered web initiatives valued at $4.0M+ on schedule with a team of 3, and architected the patented asynchronous page-updating system used across CNET.com, CBSNews.com, and Download.com.
- **Senior Web Developer, CBS Interactive (2006 - 2010):** built Java, Spring, and JavaScript applications for CNET.com, CBSNews.com, and Download.com; received the CBS Interactive Engineer's Award (Q3 2007).
- **R&D Systems Analyst, University of Louisville iTRC (2003 - 2006):** supported a Homeland Security-funded communications R&D project and incubation data center under FIPS and NIST standards.

Military Service: Indiana Army National Guard
May 1999 - May 2006

- Infantry Soldier, then Military Police; attended Officer Leadership Training.
- Honorably discharged as a Specialist (E-4); received the Army Achievement Medal and service ribbons.

Key Skills

Leadership & Strategy

Technology Strategy & Roadmaps	Agile Team Leadership	Hiring
Vendor & Agency Governance	Stakeholder Alignment	
Budget & Capital Planning	Leadership Development	

Architecture & Platforms

CMS Migration	REST APIs	Incident Response & SLAs
Headless / API-First	DevOps	Security
CRM & Commerce Integration	Release Management	

AI

AI-Augmented Development	RAG	Conversational Search
Spec-Driven Development	Vertex AI Search, Gemini	Image Recognition, YOLO

Data & Cloud

AWS, GCP	ETL Pipelines	Kafka, Confluent
BigQuery, Looker	MongoDB, DocumentDB	Databricks, Snowflake

Governance & Compliance

IT Governance	PCI Audit Controls	Data Privacy Governance
Technology Risk Management	SOX Controls	FIPS, NIST

Languages & Frameworks

Java, Go, Python	Spring Framework	Salesforce
SQL, JavaScript, Node.js	WordPress	

Education

Indiana University
2000 - 2005
BS, Computer Science & Business

Certifications

Google Cloud Certified – Cloud Digital Leader
Google Cloud

Patents

US Patent 9,805,135: Systems and methods for updating rich internet applications
Filed Mar 2011 · Granted Oct 2017 · Assigned to CBS Interactive

- A pre-framework reactive UI architecture enabling partial page updates without full reloads, paralleling SPA patterns later standardized by Angular, React, and Vue.
- Structured server responses map discrete payload segments to client-side page regions, with automatic UI synchronization and server-triggered side effects such as ad activation.
- Declarative update rules can be stored, fetched dynamically, and reused across pages.

See patent