John Harman

Web developer

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If you're on a modern browser you'll notice a web of information between this box and the main content. Click in that gap to view the content in full.

About me

I'm a very driven, self-taught web developer who has a keen interest in good user experiences and delivering a product that is as useful to the user, as it is maintainable for the developer.

As a born and bred farmer I didn't have regular access to computers until the age of 17, after 3 years of learning web development by building sites for family and friends I got my first full time job at the age of 20.

I've now got over 10 years of experience in professional web development, working on both backend and frontend in numerous platforms and technologies. Along with my experience you get a very passionate and personable developer who believes strongly that communication is the key to success.

In general I think CVs aren't a good representation of a person, but I'm happy as long as whoever reads this notices my clients come back to me time and time again because I think it speaks volumes for the sort of developer / person I am.

Strengths

I can

- get things done
- learn quickly
- work in a team or solo
- mentor and manage others
- plan and manage projects

I am

- responsible
- adaptable
- a hard worker
- a good communicator
- interested in who I work for

- think creatively and problem solve
- understand the client's / user's needs
- make quick and decisive judgements
- work to a high level of quality

- a pleasant person to work with

Current situation

I have been working 3 days a week for dreamm since February, unfortunately I need to increase the number of working days back up to 5 and dreamm cannot commit to that at this moment in time.

Therefore I am looking for either a regular 2 days a week commitment from another client, or if I am offered 5 days of work elsewhere then I will give notice to dreamm before starting the new contract.

My preference is to work from home, however I do not mind working in the office if needs be.

Work

Web developer (contract) @ dreamm

Period: **February 2014 - Present**

This is my third spell at dreamm, working from home each time. All of dreamm's staff work from home and use tools such as Skype, Slack, Google Docs, Hangouts, Dropbox and SVN to work effectively from a variety of locations throughout the UK. They predominantly work on eLearning projects for pharmaceuticals but they also have clients in other sectors with other objectives.

During this spell I've maintained and extended a number of different codebases using the technologies above, two of the more interesting projects have been:

Updating HTML5 eLearning engine

Javascript Backbone Underscore CSS LESS HTML5

I created the engine during my second spell with dreamm. Although it was originally created for a specific client who had simpler needs, the other designers and developers found it so easy to work with that it has since become their main eLearning engine to create content within.

Internal project management tool

ASP.NET MVC5 SQL Server 2008 ElasticSearch Javascript Backbone Browserify ReactJs Webpack CSS HTML5

An internal project management tool which helps keep track of projects, mostly focusing on project information, links and key documents.

Its most powerful feature is that a user can deploy eLearning content in a multitude of eLearning formats. It does this by connecting to the Dropbox API, syncs the files locally, before publishing them to Amazon S3. This means that anyone within dreamm can deploy content without taking up developer time.

The next phase, which is in its early stages of development, is to create a testing UI

to help testers record issues quicker, automatically pushing content into Trello, while at the same time recording their inputs and interactions so that they can be replayed in a variety of browsers using nightwatchjs / browserstack.

Head of Digital (contract) @ Avvio

Period: **March 2013 - January 2014**

Unfortunately the previous Head of Digital that I had originally helped settle at Avvio decided he had to leave for personal reasons. I was asked to come in to help manage the development side of digital while we looked to hire a full time replacement.

Non development tasks

Communication Pitching Estimates

- Building up confidence in the digital team again
- help gain new business, working closely with design and client services for ideas, estimates and pitches
- settle in a new .NET Senior Developer and improve his working knowledge of JavaScript
- highlighted the vulnerability of only having one developer, and hired a junior web developer
- helped to improve the knowledge and confidence of the new junior web developer
- hire the new full time Head of Development.

Development tasks

ASP.NET MVC4 SQL Server 2008 Javascript jQuery Backbone Handlebars Browserify LESS CSS (Responsive) HTML5

Development tasks involved me helping the team deliver a variety of projects by either giving support or developing code, more notable projects were:

- Various micro-sites for internal BSkyB campaigns, predominantly SPA's using .NET, SSO (ADFS), SQL Server 2008, jQuery, Handlebars and Browserify
- build a responsive web app supporting Telefonica UK's new reward & recognition scheme, it was later rolled out to the rest of Europe off the back of its success, this was another SPA hosted in Azure using ASP.NET MVC4, jQuery, Handlebars and Browserify
- helped refresh sections of a SharePoint 2003 intranet for an undisclosed client, using modern HTML5 and JavaScript techniques to give a very old system a more personal, social and responsive so that is accessible on other devices.

Web developer (contract) @ Avvio

Period: **September 2012 - November 2012**

I was asked to come back to Avvio for September, which quickly turned into October and part of November. While there I helped the new Head of Digital settle in by sharing my previous

experiences and as much knowledge as I could.

While helping the new Head settle in I also built the site 10reasons.sky.com alongside the design and client service teams.

10reasons.sky.com

Javascript jQuery Backbone RequireJs Less HTML5

The idea of the site is to showcase why Sky is such a great place to work, which was tested and built to work on their current browser (IE6 / IE7) as well as iPads and other modern browsers for consumers outside of the company.

Web developer (contract) @ deltatre

Period: **May 2012 - July 2012**

deltatre provide digital media, broadcast and back-end services to the sports media industry. Originally only booked for one month they asked me to stay on, however I could only stay until the end of July because I was away during August.

I worked with a team of 4 to update Channel 4's Paralympic website.

Channel 4's Paralympic website

VB Javascript jQuery XML XSLT CSS HTML5

The website was already up, however a new design along with new features was already well under development when I came in. My main role was to help them ensure an on time and smooth delivery. This entailed learning and using their in-house CMS which is specifically designed for sporting events. I wouldn't say that the role was technically challenging but I did have to learn a lot very quickly to start getting code out the door. This job mostly involved:

- Creating web pages and includes using XML and XSLT from their bespoke CMS and data queries
- working with Channel 4's accessibility agency to ensure the site was accessible to at least AA standard, this also entailed using screen readers such as JAWS for testing
- enhancing features which did not provide the best user experience, for example the original schedule had a header row which disappeared off the page once you scrolled. I was asked to implement an accessible version of this schedule so that the headers will be visible while you were scrolling the page
- ensuring the website HTML validated as much as possible, there were some scenarios that this was not possible due to accessibility features actually breaking full validation
- generally discussing usability issues with the team to see what we could do to make it a better experience for the user.

Web developer (contract) @ Avvio

Period: **May 2012**

British Gas were the main sponsors of the London 2012 GB swimming team. I was brought in on

a two week contract to help develop content which would help engage their staff and educate them in the swimming team as a whole.

GB Olympic swimming team mini games

Javascript ThreeJs RequireJs CSS HTML5

I worked closely with the head of development to produce the following three mini games:

- Matching pairs
- Dodge the obstacles swimming game
- Send a postcard - where the user would dress a character with various clothes and accessories before writing a message b images of the characters were saved to the machine and exported at a later date
- I also created an on screen keyboard that the user would interact with to fill in any forms.

Web developer (contract) @ dreamm

Period: **December 2011 - April 2012**

I was brought in by dreamm to build a bespoke LMS for Canon. During this period I was used on other projects where deadlines were either tight or where other programmers workloads were becoming unmanageable.

Bespoke Learning Management System

ASP.NET MVC3 SQL Server 2008 Javascript Backbone CSS HTML5

The LMS was created so that Canon could easily train their partner companies' staff. The staff to be trained could be located anywhere within the UK and the machines they would be learning on were mostly going to be slow with bad resolutions. My role in the project included the following responsibilities:

- Reading and maintaining the specification document, ensuring that it describes all functionality required by the system.
- Discussing technologies to be used with the technical director at dreamm and creating the project using them
- Ensuring that all involved in the project were up to date with its current status and making sure that deadlines were going to be met.
- Liaising with other companies to ensure SSO integration with partner companies was successful
- Deliver the product to testing and complete all bug fixes

Career Progression Tool

ASP.NET MVC3 SQL Server 2008 Javascript Backbone CSS HTML5

This tool is an internal site which helps staff create goals for their career progression. It does this by allowing them to create and review goals on a quarterly basis, this review process is done remotely with the manager via the site. I was asked to create the backend administration for the tool so that dreamm could administer the options available.

New dreamm Site

ASP.NET MVC3 SQL Server 2008 Javascript CSS HTML5

The new dreamm website had been in the pipeline for some time but no-one ever had time to complete it. So I was tasked with creating their new site in three days. The website was very simple in structure and layout, which made the task achievable. However the site is still not live due to the guys at dreamm still being too busy with client work to finalise content and launch it. Watch this space.

Web developer (contract) @ Avvio

Period: **September 2011 - November 2011**

Avvio had a large amount of work come in from their client BSKYB which required more resource to work on the job. I had previously worked on the project for 3 years, so it made sense for Avvio and I to work together on this.

Intranet, mobile intranet and extranet integration

ASP.NET C# protobuf-net NHibernate Communication Client facing

Historically the intranet, mobile intranet and extranet are three different websites. The intranet is managed by the Internal Communications team for staff that worked on site at Sky or over a VPN and was created by Avvio. The extranet was managed by the Supply Chain for engineers out in the field so that they could get the latest news, it was also created by Avvio. The mobile intranet was managed by Internal Communications but created by Sky's internal mobile team. It allowed staff that had a windows BSKYB login to access the intranet content while they were outside the network on their mobile, tablet or desktop.

In an internal re-shuffle Supply Chain became part of Internal Communications, this created the opportunity to streamline the communications process to all staff of Sky as well as opening the possibility to enabling comments and likes to anyone that was able to view the content on either website. The main tasks of the brief were:

- Allow content to be published via the intranet CMS onto individual or all three sites. Including being able to only show to particular sub user groups in each site if necessary
- can handle sharing of images and videos that are used in the article
- should be resilliant enough to handle connection down time and continue as usual
- any comments or likes made from either site would be available on all others almost immediately
- the site was to be moved onto a new environment which included two load balanced web servers and a clustered SQL server

I was involved in all meetings once the project was started, often going into Sky to speak with the clients, who I have always had a good relationship with due to working with them for 3 years previously. After the initial development and testing period I worked at Sky HQ to ensure that the code was functioning correctly and performing satisfactorily. This meant I worked with Sky's CADM team and their performance testing team over a two week period until all were satisfied.

The above is only a synopsis of the main work that occurred on this phase of the project, there is more but we can discuss that in person. The project was delivered on time and is in production as we speak.

Web developer (contract) @ dreamm

Period: **July 2011 - September 2011**

dreamm needed additional frontend resource as well as someone with .NET experience to help them on some up and coming projects. Having worked with dreamm previously at Avvio they knew what I was capable of and were quick to take me on.

eLearning content for desktops and iPads

Javascript HTML5 CSS

My brief was to create a simple and extendable frontend engine that would allow designers with frontend knowledge to develop eLearning content that would work on all desktop browsers (including IE6) and iPads. The system needed to allow designers to create their own functionality and interactions while giving them the basics of simple page transitions.

eLearning content creation tool

Javascript HTML5 ASP.NET MVC 3

The second phase of the engine was to create a tool that would be used to speed up content creation by helping the user create / edit content directly in the browser. I came into this project after the initial editing tool was created and helped to improve it by adding more functionality. This helped to create a system that could be used as it was or one that could be easily be extended for any requirements. I was then working on any bugs while the tool was used on its first project.

ASP.NET MVC 3 was used as the backend to manage screens and save changes to disk, other features were added including the ability to see the difference between two saved versions of the same screen.

Study planner for College of Estate Management

Javascript Backbone CSS XHTML

A study planner was created for CEM which helps students to plan their weekly study plan. Students would go through a step by step guide asking for input of study points required and their commitments such as work, leisure, sleep. Once all steps had been completed the user was informed if they had enough study time booked in or if it need to be adjusted. If the study time was correct it then analyzed their plan and if necessary would suggest other tips to help them, e.g. splitting up study blocks if study sessions were too long.

Head of Digital @ Avvio

Period: **September 2010 - May 2011**

After being at Avvio for two and a half years, our Head of Digital went on sabbatical for 6 months, and I was asked to take on the role while he was away temporarily away. After 4 months he decided that he would not return to Avvio, at which point I was offered the position permanently. It was with great disappointment that I had to decline that offer because I wanted to move back to Sussex. However I continued the job for an additional 4 months to ensure that my team and

Avvio were prepared enough to carry on without me. My notice period was only a month, but I felt it was necessary considering my new position and the responsibility I felt towards my team who are also my friends.

Managing the team and recruiting

Management Communication Recruitment

During the transition from Senior Developer to Head of Digital I was made line manager for the rest of the team, including two digital designers and our two developers (one being a contractor until my old role was filled). At first it was tricky, because I would say my team were my friends more so than my colleagues. Naturally, I wondered how I would balance my new duties and responsibilities with those friendships. I think my approach has worked, I made sure that I was available whenever they needed to talk about anything, professional or personal. I also tried not to pull weight over them unless necessary, meaning that I discussed issues with them in such a way that they would reach their own conclusions. On top of that I tried to encourage their good work with verbal and written thanks as well as doing things like taking the team out to lunch to show them our appreciation.

On the side of managing the team and settling into a new role I had to recruit for my old position of senior developer. I worked closely with the Studio Resource Manager to make sure we found someone that had the necessary skills, mentality, personality and drive. In fact, their personality and mentality were almost more important than their skills, as we needed someone that would knock down barriers rather than put them up.

Client meetings and winning work

Client facing Communication Pitching

Being the Head of Digital meant that I had to be more client-facing than I had been previously. It was critical that I was at meetings with Account Directors or Senior Account Handlers to impress clients with Avvio's technical knowledge and understanding of the user's experience. As a result of this, during my time as Head of Digital I was involved in pitches and many other general meetings that lead to us gaining new clients and winning more work.

Additionally, as part of this role I would also try to build up a relationship with their internal technical teams. I found this made a massive difference in ease of delivery for the project and I would recommend it for any third-party.

Future of Digital

Communication Forward thinking Recruitment

An on-going job was to ensure that digital was aligned with the business' needs and direction. This meant regular meetings with other heads within the business to ensure that we were all agreed on what offering we could give to clients. This then lead to thinking about the skills we had in the team and any additional resources we had available i.e. freelancers in specific fields I could then make sure that any possible jobs that came in could be dealt with in confidence, from pitch through to delivery.

Senior Developer @ Avvio

Period: **February 2008 - September 2010**

[Avvio](#) is a small company comprised of roughly 40 employees. This meant that as Senior Developer (with the only other developer being a flash developer,) I was involved in projects in many different ways, such as brainstorming, client meetings, requirements gathering, estimates, planning, hardware specifications, development, management, working closely with client IT or development teams, testing and deployment.

Development

.NET 2.0 - 3.5 SQL Server 2005 NHibernate NUnit Elmah Lucene.NET XHTML CSS Javascript

While I've been at [Avvio](#) I've worked on many projects, including: emails, micro-sites, intranets, distributed scheduling tools and our own internal libraries such as a search tool.

During these projects I've taught myself all of the libraries found below and have used techniques that I have read about in books, online or by going to [Developer Developer Developer](#) and finding out about the latest new technology. The things that have excited me the most over the last two years have been Inversion of Control, NHibernate and Lucene.NET, not to mention a few things recently that I haven't had a chance to use at work but I have tinkered with, including: NodeJS, KnockoutJS, Razor view engine and OpenWrap.

Sky's Intranet

.NET 2.0 - 3.5 SQL Server 2000 XHTML CSS Javascript Relationship building

While working on [Sky's intranet](#) I used many different skills and abilities. Some out of necessity and some through a natural learning curve.

1. The site was hosted internally at Sky, so as a third-party we only had access to one of their testing servers. Originally only being deployed via a zip file, the deployment process was improved over time by creating simple to use installers.

2. I was often contacted directly by the client, either to discuss new features / ideas that he may have. If a bug appears on the site, he will often speak to me directly so that we can resolve the issue as quickly as possible for him.

3. Working with Sky's internal development team use to be a difficult experience. We improved this relationship by involving them as early on as possible in the update process, including them in testing and asking their opinions on functionality. We also made strides to build a more personal relationship between the two teams by bringing them together over lunch to discuss the project and other aspects of our work.

4. Sky's intranet was created using a, no longer supported, code generation template for data access, a no longer supported. I decided that the best approach to take on the site's continued development and evolution without a re-write was to start using NHibernate for new features and to gradually move across the old features as necessary.

5. Some features, such as integration into other systems internally, would have been tricky for us to implement. Instead, we created container areas so that Sky's development team could plugin their own features to enhance the site.

Development workflow

Decision making Analysis

Avvio use a model whereby the core digital team is small but is bolstered by contractors for additional man power or specialist skills when required. This means that we couldn't always use the very latest technology because finding contractors last minute that could do those skills was either very difficult or very costly.

I would say the biggest technical changes I made at Avvio were; moving from SourceSafe to Subversion, .NET framework 2.0 to 3.5, and starting to work on a new set of libraries to help speed up development of features that were created time and time again. I also setup CI for less friction during the development lifecycle, this also had the bonus that contractors didn't need to be shown how to deploy to our test servers.

Server management

Hardware knowledge Decision making

Avvio use two server environments, testing and live. I was responsible for both environments and had to decide:

- What specifications are required to serve each environment
- what should be installed
- what conventions should be followed, e.g. website and structure
- FTP setup - including management of users and access
- ensuring security is strong enough so that our client's data is safe

Web developer (Contract) @ Revenue+

Period: **November 2007 - February 2008**

Revenue+ was a fairly new company that was creating a new booking system for a ferry transport operator. Once the system was created it was going to be re-sold to other operators around the world. I was brought in by my ex-manager at Friday-Ad who had moved to Revenue+ shortly after I left Friday-Ad.

ASP.NET Training Day

Teaching Communication .NET 2.0

I was asked to come in and give a day's tuition to two full time developers who were due to start building the booking system mentioned above. I was asked to teach them the basics of ASP.NET and go through solutions to simple scenarios that they frequently came up against.

I tried to teach what I considered to be best practices when programming in ASP.NET using OOP. However, it was quickly evident that they had not touched upon OOP before and that they had a lot to learn. To aid their learning I created a very small example application that they could refer to during their development.

ASP.NET Booking System

XHTML CSS Javascript .NET 2.0 SQL Server 2005

After giving the day's training course I was asked to come on as part of the team to help start build their new booking system. The system had already been planned by the development manager, but not to a huge amount of detail. As a result, we

frequently had to use our own common sense because we were often mapping loose ideas to the way that pages from an older system had worked.

If I was to work on this contract again I would get the team to review each other's code far more often. This did happen, but only really when helping each other. If it was made part of the daily cycle the quality of the code would have been better and knowledge of the system would have been shared more evenly.

Web developer (Contract) @ Avvio

Period: **October 2007 - November 2007**

It was my frontend expertise that got me the contract at Avvio. However, they quickly realised that I could be utilised in other ways. They asked me to do various backend and accessibility tasks, which I not only did without much management, but quickly and to a high standard. It was during this five week period that I was offered a full-time position, (which I turned down).

Sky's Intranet

XHTML CSS Javascript .NET 2.0 SQL Server 2000

I was brought in originally to tidy up the CSS that had become a mess and was misbehaving in various different browsers but mostly IE6. I fixed all of the layout issues of the site and also tidied up the use of HTML, which was semantically very wrong in a few places, e.g. strong being used as header tags. I did it far quicker than expected and quickly moved onto other tasks that needed doing, such as fixing bugs on already existing administrative pages, creating new features such as an audit trail, and adding polls to the site

Web Developer (Contract) @ Friday-Ad

Period: **March 2007 - August 2007**

Friday-Ad asked me to come back in as a freelancer. Originally I could only do one day a week due to other commitments, but eventually I was working there five days a week there again. During this time I worked on various sites that needed to be updated or created from scratch.

www.clickcars.co.uk

XHTML CSS Javascript .NET 2.0 SQL Server 2000

[Simon Harriyott](#) (contractor) and I were given the task of creating the [website](#) from scratch. We we're given the brief, page designs and part of the database structure. We then had to work through the rest of the project, including; project task management, completing the database structure, backend programming in C#, front end HTML / CSS / JavaScript, self-testing and working with the QA department before the final deployment.

This site is still mostly as it was when it was created. This website is now three years old and the techniques that I used at the time show. If I was to do it now I would want to output much cleaner HTML using some MVC framework and I would use Lucene.NET to create the search feature.

Web developer (contract) @ Fine Art Company

Period: **Feb 2007 - March 2007**

I was hired by the Fine Art Company to bring to life their vision for a new site. They were managing the old site page by page in an HTML editor and uploading this to their server. This meant that their site took up a lot of administrative time, lacked consistency, and that changing simple things like VAT across the entire site would have been a nightmare.

www.fineartcompany.co.uk (no longer available)

Planning Client facing HTML CSS Javascript .NET 2.0 SQL Server 2005

I worked closely with Laina, the owner of The Fine Art Company, to plan the site. We had to make sure that we had both the user's needs and the administrator's needs were met. Laina then used our plan and objectives to come up with designs, these designs were then tweaked to take on board some best practice advice from myself.

I then got to work on the site, building it using ASP.NET 2.0 and SQL Server 2005. It was not built on top of any already existing e-Commerce site because I thought that her needs were too bespoke to try shoehorning into the way another e-Commerce site worked. However, if I'm honest, I always used to think that a bespoke build was the best solution, but now I think that isn't always the case. There are so many different options available, either as a bought product or open source, that it's fairly likely one of those options will fit the needs of the client, which in the long run will save time and money.

I built the site using progressive enhancements so that the site was as accessible as possible. I had to integrate the site into Mal's eCommerce for the payment gateway because the client decided that they wanted to continue to using it, as it had worked so well for them previously. The site was delivered within the deadline of 1.5 months and has had a few updates since. I'm proud to say that there have been zero front end updates and as far as I know everything still renders well in all browsers.

Web Designer / Web Developer @ Friday-Ad

Period: **May 2004 - Jan 2007**

I started working at Friday-Ad as one of their two web designers. As time went on my role changed into a full-time developer, mostly due to my interest and keenness in learning things like CSS, ASP, ASP.NET (VB and C#) and SQL Server while on the job. Towards the end of my time at Friday-Ad I was often mentoring others and was asked to work on a few of their higher profile sites.

Web Designer

John Harman

I originally designed various websites, emails and basic banners. Eventually I was given the opportunity to design the main Friday-Ad website. Although designing is not my main skill, I still believe I have a good eye for design.

SEO updates on www.Friday-Ad.co.uk

SEO ASP SQL Server 2000

Although Friday-Ad owns a lot of different websites, their busiest site was www.friday-ad.co.uk. One of the main reasons for this was because of the amount of content on it and that the fact that this content was easily found through search engines. SEO changes that were put into place by myself and our SEO consultants were the reason for this. My part in this process was to plan and update the website so that search engines could index the different categories and results for specific areas, therefore targeting local content. This system worked so well that it was only replaced in 2010.

My other interests

Sports and exercise
I have an overall interest in keeping fit, generally through a variety of sports including running, squash and football. Another love of mine is snowboarding which I try to do whenever I have a good excuse.

Programming
I love programming. I like it so much that I do it when I get home as well. I read a variety of industry related books in my spare time, including subjects like best practices, technology specific (Lucene.NET, ASP.NET MVC) or even design principles. That's not to mention the various blogs I get feeds from, which these days has decreased due to the use of Twitter but is still a valuable resource for me. I also like to go to events like #ddd or get-togethers like ALT.NET Beers (although itbs been some time since I went to either).