

# Leif Singer

leif@leif.me · leif.me · github.com/l singer

## Engineering Leader

- Empathetic engineering leader with 10+ years of experience scaling distributed teams.
- Passionate about remote work practices, systems thinking, and helping engineers grow.
- Coach and mentor to software engineers and computer science students from BSc to PhD levels.

## Software Engineer

- Developing for the Web since 1996 — as employee, contractor, freelancer, and co-founder.
- Built solutions from ideation to maintenance. Worked on deployments with dozens of millions of users.
- Technologies: TypeScript, JavaScript, Python, Django, PHP, Ruby, Rails, others.

## Remote Worker

- Working remotely since 2014 in diverse organizations with colleagues from up to 93 countries.
- Shaped work environments and adjusted practices to asynchronous environments.
- Put insights from own and others' academic research on developer collaboration into practice.

## Professional Experience

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### Senior Engineering Manager

*Ghost (OSS content publishing)*

remote

2024–present

- Lead and coach three engineering teams (10 engineers total); defined rituals and processes including async stand-ups, rotations, and retrospectives.
- Partner with CTO and COO to shape engineering practices, values, and onboarding; apply ideas from systems thinking and flow engineering. Drive hiring and onboarding of staff engineers.
- Shape and promote engineering-wide practices for learning, continuous improvement, and team cohesion.

### Senior Engineering Manager

*HERO Software GmbH (B2B vertical SaaS)*

hybrid

2024

- Led and coached team of five engineers. Supported CTO and Head of Engineering in defining and assessing roles and career levels. Coached other engineering managers.
- Led initiative to evolve office- and call-centric hybrid culture to a remote-first, better documented, and more asynchronous mode of working, culminating in a company-wide culture playbook.
- Defined and gathered developer experience metrics for measuring the health of the engineering organization.

### Staff Software Engineer (Full-Stack)

*WooCommerce, Automattic, Inc. (OSS e-commerce solution)*

remote

2023–2024

- Member of WooCommerce Core team. Focused on diffusing product and process expertise and unblocking others inside and outside of the team. Led multiple emergency recovery efforts.
- Significant input on roadmap. Shipped new features, fixed defects, reviewed internal and external pull requests.
- Qualitative improvements to repository tooling supporting the WooCommerce release process and the CI pipeline, such as analysis and optimization of unit, functional, and end-to-end test suites.

### Interim Head of Developer Advocacy

*WooCommerce, Automattic, Inc. (OSS e-commerce solution)*

remote

2021–2023

- Hired developer advocacy team for the WooCommerce OSS project. Developed team vision, created OKRs and other KPIs, introduced and documented team processes to increase team's leverage and resiliency.
- Developed a developer satisfaction score to regularly measure quantitative and qualitative sentiment in the WooCommerce developer ecosystem as one of our success metrics and source of customer research data.
- Built relationships and processes across organization, improving developer awareness and communication.

### Engineering Manager

*WordPress.com, Automattic, Inc. (OSS content publishing)*

remote

2017–2021

- Led two teams of twelve developers and designers. Introduced and refined Kanban, retrospectives, and other collaboration practices; saved effort and increased reliability with checklists, process descriptions, and templates.
- Introduced design sprints, wire-framing, user testing, and other practices to plan and explore projects. Defined projects and created roadmaps for two engineering teams.

- Engineering Manager & Senior Software Engineer (Full-Stack)** **remote**  
*WordPress.com, Automattic, Inc. (OSS content publishing)* 2015–2017
- Led team that built a guided tours framework with a DSL for others to use, optimized for developer experience. Increased adoption by conducting workshops with members of customer support.
  - Scoped and built a contextual help system for WordPress.com; used A/B tests and analytics to measure impact.
- Product Manager & Software Engineer (Full-Stack)** **remote**  
*iDoneThis (B2B SaaS)* 2014–2015
- Front-end, back-end, infrastructure, and product work in a B2B SaaS product focused on making team collaboration better. Helped double MRR and cut monthly churn from 10% to 3%.
  - Used market and user research (surveys, interviews, analytics) to prioritize and scope work, e.g. an API and integration later used by 90+% of paying teams.
- Postdoctoral Fellow** **Victoria, Canada**  
*CHISEL Group, University of Victoria* 2013–2014
- Researcher in collaboration tools and processes for developers. Started, led, and collaborated on several studies (e.g., [How Software Developers Use Twitter](#)) with mixed-method designs; developed custom research tooling.
  - Mentored PhD students, published academic papers, gave talks in academia and at companies.
- Researcher & PhD Student** **Hannover, Germany**  
*Software Engineering Group, University of Hanover* 2008–2013
- Conducted research on how developers collaborate, use tools, and adopt engineering practices.
  - Started and led international collaborations; [qualitative](#) and [quantitative](#). Built tools for research and teaching.
  - PhD thesis: [Improving the Adoption of Software Engineering Practices Through Persuasive Interventions](#).
- Lead Software Engineer (Full-Stack)** **Hannover, Germany**  
*Freelance, Several Clients* 2002–2008
- Interviewed customers on their problems and needs; then designed, built, deployed, and iterated on solutions.
  - Examples: event planning system for *Hannover Concerts*, work roster system for *Radiologie Hannover*.
- Software Engineer (Full-Stack)** **Hannover, Germany**  
*A&L GmbH (software agency)* 2001–2002
- Designed and built a web app for creating web apps using nested, configurable, flexible components.
  - Introduced practices like refactoring, unit testing, and pair programming.
- Co-Founder and Software Engineer (Full-Stack)** **Cologne, Germany**  
*wap3 Technologies GmbH (B2C WAP site hosting)* 1999–2001
- Co-founded and helped build a community site and website builder focused on the early mobile Web (“WAP”).
  - Helped raise 2.6 million DM venture capital and grow the site to 40,000+ users.

## Education

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- BSc in Psychology** **University of Hagen, Germany**  
*in progress (part-time)* 2025–present
- PhD (Dr. rer. nat.) in Software Engineering** **Leibniz University Hannover, Germany**  
*Graduated with distinction (“sehr gut” / very good)* 2008–2013
- MSc in Computer Science** **Leibniz University Hannover, Germany**  
*Graduated with distinction (“sehr gut” / very good)* 2005–2008
- BSc in Computer Science** **Leibniz University Hannover, Germany**  
2002–2005