

Sean Miller

Team Lead / Architect

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In One

I eat impossible code problems for breakfast, leaving concise, elegant and well-tested code in my wake. I've been developing software professionally since 1998, starting with web apps of academic corpora and moving on to large enterprise Java apps. Since 2007 I've led and worked on five large Rails projects, everything from forging a team of Java developers into a productive Rails team to joining a large existing project and championing improvements.

Professional Experience

Consulting for various clients

October 2008 – present

Brought in to help large student-facing app re-architect under tight deadlines

- Rails, MongoDB, mailers, i18n for French and English versions, subdomains, Haml and Scss and jQuery

Worked with Pete Forde on an iPhone web app (side project)

- Rails, jQuery, Haml, jQTouch, Google Maps v3

Taking over, expanding, “robustifying”, and adding proper test coverage to a large Rails business app

- Rails, jQuery, Haml, Cucumber (mostly webrat, but selenium for js), factory_girl, shoulda, state_machine, cancan, ...

Lead developer / architect for innovative newsfeed reading Rails app (reviewed favourably in ReadWriteWeb)

- Rails, scaling apps, optimizing sql, feed reading, background processes, twitter/facebook/Gmail integration

mdlogix, Toronto

June 2008 – September 2008

Joined an existing very large (over 100k LOC) set of Rails projects and set about aggressively championing better and more pervasive testing and more agile practices

- Comment from colleague: "You have made significant improvements in your brief time with us. Certainly more so than I've made in my first three months at any position I've held."
- Emphasis on: Agile coaching, test-driven development and testing evangelism, building ETL systems, Pentaho, writing gems and plugins, unobtrusive Javascript, hitting the ground running on a large Rails project

The Feedroom, Toronto

June 2007 – May 2008

Championed the introduction of and helped spread knowledge of Ruby on Rails and its best practices

- Introduced Rspec and championed the switch to behaviour / acceptance-test driven development
- Built a prototype Digital Asset Management System in four weeks
- Single-handedly built a Flex front end to the Digital Asset Management System, from a standing start, and invented an end-to-end testing framework for it that integrated into our build.
- Became the go-to person on architecture and acting team lead.
- Comments from October 2007 peer review: "Picked up Flex quickly and became a bigger expert than our outside 'experts.'", "Solves 'impossible' problems.", "Someone I feel safe trusting as our 'go-to' guy."
- In January 2008, was invited to transfer to the New York office to lead and train the developers there, and after that led a distributed team of two Toronto devs, three New York devs, and some contractors in Belarus.
- Emphasis on: XP, Ruby, Rails (including customizing plugins and getting inconsistent plugins to work together), Rspec, Selenium, Flex, Web design, Mentoring, Coaching, Design, Behaviour-Driven Development

Intelliware Development, Toronto

April 2004 – June 2007

- R&SA: Claims Fusion project (early 2005 – 2007)

- Sent in to save the project when it was floundering and losing the client's confidence. By introducing new techniques, technologies and processes, turned the project around so that it won the Silver CIPA Award in 2006.
- Introduced Spring Web Flow to provide a simpler and better framework for work flow across sets of pages
- Introduced Selenium to enable testing of javascript- and ajax-based pages and flows
- Emphasis on: XP, Spring, Hibernate, custom html rendering framework, JUnit, HttpUnit, Selenium, Ant, CruiseControl, HSQLDB, DB2, JBoss, Ajax, Design Patterns, Refactoring, OO Design, TDD

- Shoppers Drug Mart: HealthWatch project (2004 – early 2005)
 - Learned a very complex domain quickly to hit the ground running on a huge project, central to Shoppers' strategy and deployed in over 500 stores
 - First championed the use of domain-driven design, and co-ran the original study group
 - Undertook a massive refactoring of the existing record-and-field framework, which by its flexibility in a difficult-to-test environment was causing lots of problems, into the more type safe Semantic Record framework.
 - Championed the adoption of Spring and Hibernate on the project, which had been using EJB entity beans
 - Championed the move from fairly difficult in-GUI integration tests to microtests
 - Emphasis on: XP, Hibernate, SWT, JUnit, Ant, Informix, JBoss, Weblogic, Design Patterns, Refactoring, OO Design, Domain-Driven Design, Test-Driven Development
- General Intellware
 - Gave a “lunch and learn” talk about Spring MVC to the whole company
 - Co-founded the Domain-Driven Design Study Group and the Skills Development Working Group
 - Championed the use of Subversion as a better version-control system
 - Recrafted the wording of the TestCreek website on 48 hours' notice before the launch to make it punchier; also co-wrote papers on Intellware's technology choices of Spring and Hibernate on very short notice for another client. I enjoy and excel at carefully crafting prose as much as code.

CBC, Toronto

June 2003 – March 2004

- Devised and developed a central registration web app for all cbc.ca services, with good test coverage and nightly builds.
- Created a web application seedwork, immediately reused for another CBC project.
- Emphasis on: a custom web application framework (Struts without some of the barnacles), JUnit, HttpUnit, Ant, Maven, CVS, LDAP, XP, Test-Driven Development, Design Patterns

eye Weekly, Toronto

August 2002 -- November 2003

- Created and supported a web application to upload, parse and format wildly inconsistent raw movie showtime data into listings files; saved *eye* one half person day per week

ProQuest Information and Learning, Cambridge, UK

April 2001 – April 2002

- Designed and developed subscription news gateway for schools, backed by RetrievalWare/Oracle, launched May 2002
- Streamlined complex pages with a custom JSP tag library, quickly adopted on other projects

Fitzwilliam Museum of Cambridge University

January 1998 – March 2001

- Designed and implemented a flexible and dynamic web database project, The Early Medieval Corpus of Coin Finds.

Education

Ph.D. from the University of Cambridge (February 1998)

An Analysis of the Anglo-Saxon Charters of the New Minster of Winchester,

published 2001 by the Oxford University Press for the British Academy (ISBN 0197262236)

Tech List

- Ruby, Ruby on Rails, Rspec (for preference, though I've also used testunit and shoulda), Cucumber, factory_girl, state_machine, prawn, authlogic, cancan, etc. etc.
- AWS: S3, CloudFront, EC2 (though mostly hosting on heroku and Engineyard AppCloud)
- Databases (recent): PostgreSQL, MongoDB, MySQL (Postgres by default)
- Web Stuff: jQuery. Haml, Unobtrusive javascript, Scss, Standards-based design
- A ten-year background of thinking hard about software and building various kinds of apps in Java
- “Soft” Skills: Design Patterns, Refactoring, OO Design, Data Modelling, Object/Relational Mapping, Mentoring, Coaching, XP, Test-Driven Development, Behaviour-Driver Development, Domain-Driven Design, Crafting Prose