

John Shaughnessy

Software engineer with broad experience in multiplayer games, virtual reality, backend/cloud infra, web apps, dev tools, and gen AI

✉ john@johnshaughnessy.com
📍 New York, NY
🌐 johnshaughnessy.com
🔗 github.com/johnshaughnessy
👤 linkedin.com/in/john-shaughnessy-8031135a

EXPERIENCE

Founder & Software Engineer

July 2025 - Present

Acorn Talk

TypeScript · React · Electron · Node.js · Express · Python · OCR · NLP · TTS · Auth0 · Stripe · Resend · FFmpeg · Grafana · Docker Compose · macOS · Windows · Linux · Steam Deck

- Founded Acorn Talk to help learners bridge the gap to native Japanese material. Built **Tango**, a web-based vocabulary and kanji learning system, and **Lens**, a companion desktop app for macOS, Windows, Linux (X11, Wayland), and Steam Deck.
- Built APIs to transform subtitles, lyrics, manga, and screenshots into personalized study materials, including OCR, NLP, dictionary disambiguation, kanji decomposition, sentence segmentation, translation, native-speaker audio recordings, TTS, and spaced repetition.
- Built authentication, billing, email, audio recording/processing, and service monitoring dashboards using Auth0, Stripe, Resend, FFmpeg, Grafana, and Docker Compose.

Software Engineer

November 2024 - June 2025

Dopple Works

Android · TypeScript · Three.js · Unity · AI/ML · Embeddings · Object detection · Speech · Backend APIs

- Wrote application, AI, 3D/game, web, and backend software for an unreleased educational device for children, using Android, Node.js, ONNX Runtime, Three.js, Unity, and Cloudflare.
- Built Montessori-inspired learning systems with species/object scanning, collectible cards, quests, and activities designed to foster curiosity about the world outside of the screen.
- Developed experiences using on-device AI constrained by the hardware, including local image classification, object detection, depth processing, image/text embeddings, and speech workflows.

Senior Staff Software Engineer

September 2023 - November 2024

Mozilla Corporation · Builders

New York, NY

AI prototypes · Browser extensions · Local LLMs · RAG · Vector search

- Built several prototypes focused on local and open-source AI, including **Memory Cache**, browser-based AI app experiments, local model workflows, document ingestion, vector retrieval, RAG, and desktop packaging.
- Evaluated open-source AI project submissions and interviewed developers applying for admission into Mozilla Builders' accelerator / grant program.

Senior Engineering Manager (2021-2023), Staff Software Engineer (2017-2021)

September 2017 - August 2023

Mozilla Corporation · Hubs

Mountain View, CA

TypeScript · JavaScript · React · Elixir · Phoenix · WebRTC · WebGL · WebXR · Postgres · AWS · GCP · Engineering management

- Managed a 12-person team of software engineers and technical artists for Mozilla Hubs, an open-source social VR platform whose front-end runs in the browser and whose backend is built for decentralized self-hosting. Led hiring, onboarding, technical planning, releases, incident response, and security audits while continuing to write production code.
- Wrote the Hubs game networking layer for state replication, authority/ownership, presence, permissions, physics sync, media sync, and plugin-oriented extensibility.
- Worked across the rest of the platform, including avatars, animation, identity/auth, WebRTC voice/video, WebGL/WebXR rendering, the Elixir/Phoenix backend, Hubs Cloud, AWS, and GCP.

Software Engineer

January 2015 - August 2017

AltspaceVR

Redwood City, CA

Unity3D · C# · JavaScript · Motion capture · VR

- Built Unity3D/C# avatar and motion-capture systems for a social VR platform, unifying skeletal input from Leap Motion, Kinect, and Perception Neuron.
- Created in-game screenshot sharing, personal-space safety features, artist tools, network-synced animations, and synchronized Netflix, YouTube, and Twitch video experiences.

EDUCATION

Claremont McKenna College

2010 - 2014

BA in Mathematics; Minor in Computer Science

Best Senior Thesis in Mathematics: [Finding Zeros of Rational Quadratic Forms](#) [[archive](#)]

Men's Varsity Soccer

上智大学 · Sophia University

Spring 2012

Study Abroad Program

Tokyo, Japan