

James Drakes

STAFF SOFTWARE ENGINEER

Professional Summary

Intrinsically motivated engineering leader who turns ambitious ideas into high-value products by solving challenging problems, building strong technical foundations, developing people, and fostering safe engineering cultures where teams can do their best work.

Employment History

Staff Software Engineer, H-E-B, Austin

JUN 2025

- Built and govern a personal AI-agentic engineering workflow with hard permission boundaries against autonomous merges, deploys, and force-pushes, delivering 25 tickets across 5 Node services in two weeks.
- Architected a distributed circuit breaker system to establish organization-wide fault tolerance and limit the impact of service failures.
- Own and maintain the team's GraphQL layer, driving ongoing improvements to its performance and reliability for downstream consuming teams.
- Led platform modernization efforts, including CI/CD migrations and critical infrastructure upgrades.

Co-founder & CTO, TerraVerum, Austin

JAN 2025 — JUN 2025

- Helped develop the core technical approach behind TerraVerum's AI-enhanced annotation platform and built its initial prototype.
- Designed and rebuilt the platform's local/cloud file-sync architecture on Supabase, adding resumable uploads and lazy downloads for reliable large-media handling.
- Led fundraising and networking efforts, securing the company's acceptance into the Antler startup accelerator.
- Directed contracted engineers to meet the technical roadmap.

Staff Software Engineer, Assured Claims, Remote

MAR 2024 — JAN 2025

- Built and maintained FNOL ingestion pipelines for auto insurance claims, giving adjusters a faster, self-service path to manage claims end-to-end.
- Added logic to determine child-safety-seat replacement eligibility per state regulations such as California's.
- Built claims-adjuster dashboard views in React for tracking open claims from multiple perspectives on an accident.

Senior Software Engineer, H-E-B, Austin

JAN 2023 — MAR 2024

- Built a Fraud Assessment engine that reduced E-Commerce fraud, saving the company ~\$500K a period.
- Designed the architecture for a modernized E-Commerce Payments system to handle high-volume transactions
- Coordinated work and designs for major initiatives across 4 teams spanning the E-Commerce payments space
- Built and maintained a Kafka consumer pipeline processing purchase-stream events to ensure customers receive accurate cashback on every transaction.
- Increased code coverage to 90%+ across all CX Payments code bases
- Documented existing E-Commerce Payment system to increase the speed of onboarding new team members

Details

Austin
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Links

[LinkedIn](#)

Skills

Node.js
TypeScript
Vue.js
React
Kubernetes
AWS
Apache Kafka
GraphQL
PostgreSQL
Python
Docker
Microservices
Distributed Systems
Redis
MongoDB
gRPC
CI/CD
Google Cloud Platform
Elixir

Hobbies

Travel
Soccer
Reading Fiction
Ultimate Frisbee
Teaching Financial Literacy

Engineering Team Lead (Platform), Homeward, Austin

JUN 2021 – NOV 2022

- Architected a gRPC and Kinesis microservice running on ECS to connect Salesforce Platform Events with the Homeward Platform, improving data synchronization by 80%.
- Led the migration of core infrastructure from Heroku to AWS, increasing platform uptime to 99%.
- Promoted to Engineering Team Lead after 2 months as Senior Software Engineer, taking ownership of the Platform team's roadmap.
- Improved cloud security by implementing AWS best practices to reduce access between environments and strengthen infrastructure isolation.
- Mentored engineers on professional growth and fostered knowledge sharing through recurring technical showcases and process reviews.

Software Engineer, Spruce, Austin

JUN 2019 – JUN 2021

- Redesigned core booking services and decomposed the PHP monolith into TypeScript microservices.
- Designed and implemented an event-driven architecture integrating with Iterable, reducing unqualified leads by 50%.
- Migrated business-critical cron jobs to AWS Lambda, reducing runtime from 20 hours to 3 hours.
- Standardized backend error handling, reducing support ticket resolution time from 4 hours to 1 hour.
- Improved developer experience by containerizing core applications and strengthening CI/CD reliability.

Backend Services Lead, IdealSpot, Austin

JUN 2017 – MAY 2019

- Built the backend for a location data aggregation platform in Elixir, reducing feature rollout time from 1 week to 1 day while improving server performance and uptime by 70%.
- Created a fully featured expression engine for data visualization, reducing the time to develop new templates from 2 days to 1 hour.
- Architected a distributed authentication system using JWTs and Redis, reducing authentication handshakes to under 100ms.
- Designed a scalable, database-driven entitlement system and subscription billing platform using Stripe.
- Owned DevOps across GCP, GitLab CI, Docker, and Kubernetes.

Software Engineer, uStudio, Austin

NOV 2016 – JUN 2017

- Developed a powerful cloud-based enterprise video CMS and distribution API for clients such as Universal Music Group, Kohl's, Salesforce, and more using Python and JavaScript.

Software Engineer, Cisco Systems, Austin

JUL 2015 – SEPT 2016

- Built a full-stack, real-time dashboard streaming live metrics off CNC milling machines via factory-floor routers, flagging anomalies so managers could fix maintenance issues before machines produced defective parts.

Education

Bachelor of Science in Computer and Electrical Engineering, University of Texas at Austin

2015