

Christopher Benjamin ASHTON

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PROFILE

Senior Web Developer specialising in delivering accessible, performant front-end solutions that work across browsers and platforms. Currently leading the Visual Journalism team within BBC News.

KEY SKILLS

- **Technical leadership** – devised and implemented an abstraction strategy to deliver Visual Journalism content across BBC products, third-party sites and platforms (AMP, FIA, Apple News) with minimal development overhead. Led the team’s upgrade to a componentised ES6/SCSS/Handlebars architecture, resulting in lower development time and more robust and consistent content.
- **Accessibility** - promote accessible web design and development at the BBC through my voluntary role as “Accessibility Champion”. I apply progressive enhancement in all of my projects, building up from a core experience of semantic HTML and aria-roles and ensuring that experiences are acceptable whatever your browser or input (including screen readers).
- **Communication skills** - led my team’s adoption of user stories as a communication tool and test specification, rooting out complexity early and saving countless hours of wasted effort. Championed the need for a Pattern Library for better team collaboration and shared vocabulary. Used JIRA in my side company to manage tasks. Have given well-received presentations to technical and non-technical audiences at all levels.
- **Testing** – lead maintainer of the Wraith visual regression testing tool, which has gone on to become the BBC’s most-starred open-source project. Highly adept at authoring declarative Cucumber features alongside clean, reusable Ruby step definitions. Hand-built an in-house BDD framework in Node. Set up suites of automated tests in Docker on Jenkins CI. Regularly develop in a TDD way (Mocha/Chai, Jasmine, PHPUnit).
- **Line management** – I look after six people in my latest role, helping them define and achieve objectives and working with the technical project manager to assign work which align with their goals.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

- Awarded **Best Bachelor Degree in Computer Science** for receiving the highest overall mark when I graduated Aberystwyth University in 2015. My dissertation, *Online Dispute Resolution for Maritime Collisions*, also won the British Computer Society Prize for the **Best Major Project**.
- Awarded **Best Contributor of the Year** at the BBC News Developer Awards 2015, for my contributions to our most-starred open source project: Wraith. The Developer Awards are an internal, department-wide, peer-voted awards ceremony.
- **Travelled to India and Indonesia to recruit specialist developers** for BBC World Service expansion. I’ve been trained in fair selection, have screened CVs and code tests and have organised and ran interviews for software engineers of all levels.
- **Published an article in Smashing Magazine**, outlining my efficient manual-testing strategy - the “Three Phase Attack” - devised during my time as a Test Engineer at the BBC: smashingmagazine.com/2016/02/high-impact-minimal-effort-cross-browser-testing
- I **set up my own company** while at university. Webdapper Ltd has developed over 10 websites, and generated over 20,000 Facebook likes for its clients through advertising campaigns.
- **I’m a tenor in the BBC Symphony Chorus** and have performed at internationally televised concerts. Previously: *National Youth Choir of Wales* (two years), *Elizabethan Madrigal Singers* (two years plus one year as Choral Director).

PROJECTS

SmartResolution

An online dispute resolution platform with plugin support for AI-driven, automated resolutions. Developed for my dissertation at university, it was awarded the *Best Major Project* prize.
smartresolution.org
MVC pattern, PHPunit, Cucumber, Ruby, SQL, PDO, Bash, Bootstrap

GitHooks

A horizontally scalable, hosted webhooks platform, built as a side project. Allows developers to write and share GitHub-integrated webhooks.
githooks.io
LAMP, AWS (Lambda, EC2, Elastic IP, Route53, VPS), GitHub API, Payloads, OAuth, Node, PHP, Composer

MUSIC magazine

I created a number of bespoke WordPress themes and plugins, including plugins defining custom taxonomies ('app reviews') parent/child themes for related magazine websites.
voicecouncil.com
musicmakerapps.com
mobile-musician.com
loopinglive.com
WordPress (theme), templating, inheritance

Secretary

Automatic quality assurance editorial checks for WordPress posts. Rules are config-based and underlying structure is extensible so that anyone can define a new editorial 'rule'.
wordpress.org/plugins/secretary/
WordPress (plugin), YAML, SVN, open-source

3D Solar System

Built a solar system in WebGL for a university assignment.
chrisbashton.github.io/solar-system-webgl/source
WebGL, JavaScript, HTML5, CSS3

BBC Visual Journalism applications

Regularly create engaging content for multiple languages and platforms. I developed the Commonwealth Games Quiz (*Best News Data App*, Data Journalism Awards 2015) and took the initiative to translate it into Welsh. It was featured on BBC Breakfast.
bbc.in/1113XHE
bbc.in/1nDNxjD (Welsh version)
JavaScript & Node, SASS, BEM

EMPLOYMENT

02/2017 - PRESENT	Senior Software Engineer , BBC, London
02/2016 - 01/2017	Web Developer , BBC, London
07/2015 - 01/2016	Test Engineer , BBC, London
08/2014 - PRESENT	Founder , Webdapper Ltd
07/2013 - 08/2014	Trainee Web Developer , BBC, London

EDUCATION

2011 - 2015	Aberystwyth University , Wales BEng (Hons) Software Engineering (1 st). BCS-accredited. Grade: 84% Awards: <i>Best Bachelor Degree in Computer Science, Best Major Project</i>
2003 - 2010	Ysgol Gyfun Llanbedr Pont Steffan , Wales A Levels: Mathematics (A), Music (A), Chemistry (B) AS Level: Biology (B) GCSEs: 13 total, 11 at grade A*/A

REFERENCES

References available upon request.