

James Drakes

STAFF SOFTWARE ENGINEER

Professional Summary

I have 11 years of engineering experience across six industries. I am looking for a staff product engineering role where I can build great products and tackle tough problems.

Employment History

Staff Software Engineer, H-E-B, Austin

JUN 2025

- Delivered 25 tickets across 5 Node services in two weeks by building and governing a personal AI-agentic engineering workflow with hard permission boundaries against autonomous merges, deploys, and force-pushes.
- Set technical direction for the team.
- Maintain the team's GraphQL layer and drive its performance and reliability.
- Architected a distributed circuit breaker system to establish organization-wide fault tolerance and limit the impact of service failures.

CTO, TerraVerum, Austin

JAN 2025 — JUN 2025

- Built the event capture and replay layer that records an annotator's full process, not just the final label.
- Designed and rebuilt the platform's local/cloud file-sync architecture on Supabase, adding resumable uploads and lazy downloads for reliable large-media handling.
- Got the company into the Antler startup accelerator.

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 challenged suspect orders without interrupting legitimate checkout, cutting E-Commerce fraud losses by ~\$500K a period.
- Built the consumer side of the Kafka cashback pipeline and maintained it, keeping every customer's cashback correct on every transaction.
- Extracted E-Commerce payments out of Oracle ATG into a dedicated service, defining its boundaries with 4 partner teams and migrating EBT tender onto it.
- Hardened the payments service against upstream gateway failure modes and instrumented it for observability.
- Raised coverage to 90%+ across the CX Payments codebases, one from no tests in under a week, and documented the payment system to speed onboarding.
- Established the team's ticketing and delivery conventions.

Details

Austin
james@jamesdrakes.com

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 on ECS to connect Salesforce Platform Events to the 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, owning the roadmap.
- Created a pre-filled PDF workflow that improved agent UX.
- Mentored engineers through technical showcases and process reviews.

Software Engineer, Spruce, Austin

JUN 2019 – JUN 2021

- Redesigned the core application code behind the bookings engine.
- 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.
- Decomposed the PHP monolith into TypeScript microservices, owning both the system design and the migration.
- Containerized the core applications so every engineer ran the same stack locally and the CI pipeline became reliable.

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.
- Ran production on GCP and Kubernetes with GitLab CI, with no dedicated ops.

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