

Craig Deverall

Senior AI Engineer · Full-Stack Developer

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Designer-turned-AI Engineer with 17+ years building developer tooling and intelligent platforms at scale — specialising in agentic AI systems, hybrid graph-vector retrieval, MCP servers, and UX-led architecture.

EXPERIENCE

Bank of New Zealand

4 yrs 8 mos · Hybrid

Senior AI Engineer

Apr 2026 – Present

Wellington, New Zealand

DIY earned a mandate, and the mandate became a role: I now lead wider AI initiatives across BNZ, driving agentic development practices and building the AI tooling that 850+ builders work with. The knowledge graph I'd been growing became infrastructure — a production MCP server, secured behind OAuth, that surfaces organisational intelligence directly inside VS Code Copilot and Claude Desktop. Alongside it I define the security patterns that make agents safe in a bank: scoped identity, JWT-based row-level security, blast-radius controls, and PAT / system-token authentication.

From there I extended the platform into the BNZ AI Marketplace — a home for shareable AI context: Skills, agent definitions, and the processes teams actually work by. It caught fire well beyond engineering; developers, BAs and operations teams adopted it, and a local Skills MCP server now loads the right context dynamically as staff work alongside their agents. I present this work internally — including “Skills for your agent” at DevAI Talks to the full builder audience — mentor BNZ's AI graduates, and build the instrumentation that turns adoption curves and productivity gains into an ROI story leadership can act on.

Key wins: AI tooling for 850+ builders · Production OAuth MCP server · BNZ AI Marketplace · Agent security patterns · DevAI Talks speaker · Mentors AI graduates

Senior Full Stack Developer

Nov 2021 – Apr 2026

Wellington, New Zealand

I joined BNZ as a senior full-stack developer and noticed the same friction everyone accepts in a large organisation: the knowledge existed, but finding who knew it, what it connected to, and how it worked was a treasure hunt. So I founded DIY — an internal developer-knowledge platform — and grew it organically from zero to ~2,192 users across BNZ Technology, with no mandate beyond it being genuinely useful.

Under the hood it became the most sophisticated thing I've built: a stateful LangGraph agent doing multi-step reasoning, self-correction and autonomous planning over a live Neo4j knowledge graph — well beyond basic RAG. I engineered the hybrid retrieval engine combining property graphs with Azure OpenAI embeddings, cut token cost and latency with multi-layer SHA-256 / Redis caching, and designed a schema-first GraphQL API that enforces JWT-based row-level security through nested graph traversals. User behaviour itself became graph data — event chains mapping intent, session journeys and search success — and Playwright E2E pipelines with visual regression kept the whole thing shippable. That platform is why the Senior AI Engineer role above exists.

Key wins: Founded DIY · 0 → 2,192 users organically · LangGraph agent in production · Hybrid graph-vector retrieval · JWT row-level security · Playwright E2E + visual regression

Weta Digital

Contract · 1 yr 8 mos

Senior Web Application Developer

Apr 2020 – Nov 2021

Wellington, New Zealand

Weta came looking while I was at Author-it, and the offer — contract rates to build a scheduling brain for one of the world's great visual-effects houses — was the kind you say yes to. With a small, close-knit team I built Projector, the resource-management and projections tool Weta used to plan staff capacity across its film slate. The star feature was an infinitely scrollable, multi-dimensional timeline: drag-and-drop assignment and scaling of crews against films, with multiple what-if scheduling scenarios planned side by side, backed by Neo4j and GraphQL.

The tenure ended the way the best contracts do — with the work being valued. Unity acquired Weta Digital's tools division, and Projector went with it as part of the deal. Watching software I'd architected get named in Unity's acquisition announcement remains one of my proudest full-stops, and it closed the chapter at exactly the moment BNZ came calling.

Key wins: Built Projector · Acquired by Unity with Weta tools · Infinite multi-scenario timeline · Neo4j + GraphQL scheduling engine

Author-it Software Corporation

Full-time · 7 mos

Senior Software Engineer / People Coach / Agile Architect

Oct 2019 – Apr 2020

Greater Hamilton Area

A short chapter with three hats. I was brought in to establish an Angular UI component library and grow the team around it — setting up the library itself, then facilitating its adoption across development squads so the investment actually compounded. As People Coach I carried onboarding and people-management responsibilities, and as Agile Architect I owned the squad's technical solutions, including diagnosing and fixing browser-rendering performance problems in a legacy Backbone product.

Seven months in, Weta Digital made an offer at contract rates I couldn't sensibly turn down. Short as it was, the tenure sharpened something I'd keep: the conviction that a component library is as much a people system as a code system — it only works if the teams around it are set up to trust and contribute to it.

Key wins: Angular component library · People Coach · Agile Architect · Legacy rendering rescue

VizExplorer

3 yrs 6 mos

Development Team Lead / Scrum Master

Jan 2018 – Oct 2019

Wellington, New Zealand

Promotion put me in charge of React and Angular UI teams from first commit to release. This is where I learned that team atmosphere is an engineering output: built deliberately on trust, respect, accountability and communication, it made our productivity — in our peers' words, not mine — outstanding. I embedded UI/UX design directly into the Agile workflow, drove the move to TypeScript and GitFlow, pushed comprehensive unit and E2E testing, standardised the CI/CD pipelines for test environments and release packages, and championed the centralised component library and the SOPs that kept it healthy. Most of the written references on this site come from the people on those teams.

The ending wasn't ours to write: the company consolidated development offshore and the entire New Zealand arm was made redundant in one stroke. It stung, but it handed me proof that the way I build teams travels — the people scattered to IBM, Weta, LINZ and beyond, and they're still vouching for me.

Key wins: Promoted to Team Lead · Scrum Master · TypeScript migration · Component library + SOPs · CI/CD standardisation · Design embedded in Agile

Senior Frontend Developer

May 2016 – Jan 2018

Wellington, New Zealand

I joined to work with the design team on a suite of reusable Angular components for the company's casino-analytics products — and the component suite kept growing ideas of its own. It evolved into a full application builder, with the kind of technical problems I love: a fully functional, performance-optimised data grid and a widget-connection architecture that let non-developers wire live dashboards together. Two years of proving that front-end work is systems work, and the springboard for the team-lead role that followed.

Key wins: Application-builder architecture · Performance-optimised data grid · Widget-connection system

TheScene.Co

5 yrs 4 mos

Director

Oct 2012 – Jan 2018

Wellington, New Zealand

My own venture, run alongside the day jobs — and the closest thing to an MBA I ever did. As founder and product owner I drove the roadmap, feature planning and documentation; managed remote contracted developers; built the mock-ups and prototypes; and ran UX research and A/B testing on real users. I implemented the Angular client against a HAL REST API myself, and went deep on graph-database modelling — years before it was fashionable — to design an architecture that could grow with the business.

TheScene.Co never made me rich, but it made me an entrepreneur: it taught me to weigh every feature against adoption, to hear feedback without flinching, and to think in products rather than tickets. Every platform I've founded since — DIY included — runs on instincts I paid for here.

Key wins: Founder & product owner · Graph modelling early adopter · UX research & A/B testing · Managed remote contractors

StudioQ

7 yrs 3 mos

Front End Web Developer, Senior Designer, Client Support

Mar 2009 – May 2016

Auckland Metropolitan Area

Seven formative years living in both halves of my brain. On the design side: branding, rebranding, product packaging and print production across everything from large-format and vehicle artwork to specialty inks — real brands for real clients, some still out working in the world today. On the development side: I built the studio's in-house website CMS, an online print-sales store and a job/task-management system, front-end developed client systems, wrote the documentation, and ran the Plesk web server that hosted the lot.

I also carried the client relationships — quoting, managing projects, delegating and supporting — which is where I learned that shipping software and earning trust are the same discipline. By the end, the developer had quietly overtaken the designer, and I followed the code out the door. But the designer never left: everything I architect still starts with the person who has to use it.

Key wins: Built the in-house CMS · Design ↔ development hybrid · Client-facing end to end · Ran production hosting

SKILLS

AI & Data: LangGraph, Agentic AI, MCP, LLM APIs (Azure OpenAI, Anthropic Claude), Hybrid graph-vector retrieval, Neo4j, GraphQL, Redis

Languages & Frameworks: TypeScript, JavaScript, Node.js, React, Next.js, Angular, Apollo Client

Platform & Delivery: Kubernetes (AKS / EKS), Docker, CI/CD (Jenkins, GitHub Actions), Playwright, Visual-regression testing, GitFlow

Leadership & People: Team leadership, Scrum Master, Mentoring & coaching, Teaching & upskilling others, Public speaking, Hiring & onboarding, Constructive feedback

Product & Business: Product ownership, UX-led architecture, UX research & A/B testing, Product & brand design, Client & stakeholder management, Roadmapping & planning, Entrepreneurship

EDUCATION

Natcoll Design School — Diploma in Graphic Design (2005 – 2008)

Paraparaumu College (2001 – 2005)