Jacob Ikola

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Full-stack engineer, frontend-leaning, with 7 years shipping web products end to end. Led a company's first design-system effort, then built and open-sourced a design system generator. Recent work adds AI features measured with evals, and daily engineering through a self-built agent harness with checks that keep agent work reviewable.

Experience

Independent

Full-Stack & Design Engineer | *Aug 2025 – Present*

- Open-sourced a design system generator: one config file produces design tokens, a CSS layer that decides focus rings, states and surfaces once instead of per project, React components only where behavior needs them, and matching Figma variables and styles. Contrast is checked against WCAG, and a failed check stops the build.
- Built a retrieval-augmented assistant for D&D 5e rules questions on local models through Ollama: query decomposition, embedding search and rank fusion, cited answers validated against a typed Pydantic schema, and each step streamed from FastAPI to a React interface. Also built a tool-calling agent variant.
- Designed its eval harness, scoring retrieval, verdicts and citations separately on a hand-reviewed gold set with a held-out test split and an LLM judge validated against blind hand grades, and used it to choose the retrieval strategy.
- Deployed a scheduled ingestion pipeline on Azure Functions, Blob Storage and Static Web Apps through GitHub Actions, with a monitoring dashboard that catches feeds failing silently and names each failure state by label and symbol rather than color alone.

Stack: Azure · Claude Code · Evals · FastAPI · Figma Plugin API · GitHub Actions · Node.js · Ollama · Pydantic · Python · RAG · React · Structured Output · TypeScript

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Spectrum Net Designs

Full-Stack Developer, UI Designer | *Feb 2022 – Jul 2025*

- Made the case for design systems to company ownership, secured budget for a dedicated effort, and led a four-person group — onboarding two frontend developers with no prior Figma experience into the tooling and conventions.
- Built the company's first design system — Figma components and living docs — that cut style drift and duplicated CSS across the team's output.

- Operated as a 1:1 client-facing developer, leading engagements from requirements through architecture to delivery across concurrent client timelines.
- Contributed full-stack to Auctioneer Software (SaaS) — React/TypeScript UI, GraphQL resolvers, and PostgreSQL schemas for bidding, user management, and auction lifecycle. Shipped through PR review and GitHub Actions CI/CD.

Stack: Figma · Git · GitHub Actions · GraphQL · HTML · JavaScript · jQuery · Kubernetes · React · SCSS · TypeScript

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Independent Contractor

Design & Development Consultant (Remote) | *Mar 2021 – Jan 2022*

- Built a single-page digital year-in-review for Hino Trucks, a Toyota subsidiary, as a subcontractor to a Detroit development firm — wireframing in Figma, iterating with the client's PM and designer, and hosting prototypes on Netlify for stakeholder review.

Stack: CSS · Figma · HTML · JavaScript · Netlify · React

PropelUp

Full-Stack Developer (Remote) | *May 2019 – Jul 2020*

- Sole full-time developer on a B2B learning platform for engineering-team upskilling and retention — organizations enrolled junior developers, admins curated their material, and progress fed into 1:1 reviews. Grew it from zero to a product real companies beta-tested in production, including a community college IT department.
- Traveled on-site with the sales team for user interviews and live product demos, shaping the roadmap from real feedback.

Stack: Express · Figma · Git · Heroku · Node.js · PostgreSQL · React · REST APIs

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Education

Eleven Fifty Academy (now Blaizing Academy)

Full-Stack JavaScript Cohort | *Jan 2019 – Apr 2019*

- 500+ hours of hands-on full-stack training. Awarded the Teamwork Award, voted by peers — arrived having self-studied ahead of the cohort and spent the program mentoring classmates.