



Kevin Griffin

<https://kevin.jp> me@kevin.jp

I'm an engineering director, senior software developer, and team leader. I have deep experience in Swift, Ruby, TypeScript, MySQL, Postgres, nix, Kubernetes, Linux, and Docker.

As an engineer, I've built entire iOS apps from scratch using SwiftUI, API servers and web applications with Ruby on Rails and Postgres/MySQL, done high-level architecture for code-level APIs and schemas, and built browser frontends with TypeScript and React. I modernized our deployment pipeline and brought a strong culture of code review and daily deployments to our team.

As a manager, I've overseen multiple teams of more than 80 people including 50 engineers. I've built and lead a team as an active contributor that developed and runs everything from video conferencing software to language learning applications to web apps to native mobile apps to AI to high-performance library code.

As a director, I've guided company direction, closed deals with clients, handled HR issues, been responsible for cost reduction, lead hiring, and participated in a fully Japanese environment at a business level.

As a hobbyist, I've contributed to open source projects like nix, run and managed fleets of machines with nixOS, and spent too much time playing with command line tools.

Professional Experience

DIRECTOR OF ENGINEERING, DMM EIKAIWA, 2022–PRESENT

- Manage all projects at a technical and product level
- Work and meet personally with every engineer on the team as engineering manager, including performance evaluations and guidance
- Principal developer, owner, and marketer of DMM Eikaiwa iOS app. Everything from authentication to server communication to multi-threaded concerns to implementing UI components and animations
- Spearheading the company's AI initiatives, including personal contributions and daily releases. Leading the overall schema, feature set, and AI integrations, including cost control and model training
- Personally responsible for communication and collaboration between Japanese-speaking business teams and the rest of the company

LEAD ENGINEER, DMM EIKAIWA, 2015-2022

- Hired and trained 30 engineers to build a new team
- Lead a massive project to unify and replace legacy sites, including schema unification, single sign on, and a new frontend framework with React

- Developed a system to allow our service to be offered as a SASS sold and used by third parties to launch language schools and other businesses
- Lead and developed a project to move the company off Skype and onto a WebRTC-based system, reducing customer service inquiries by 90%, increasing service uptime to 99.9999%, and building it into a platform
- Spearheaded a critical technical project for the company to allow our entire API to be versioned at the model level, enabling zero-downtime deployments despite a growing number of third-party API clients

LEAD ENGINEER, CEREGO JAPAN, 2014–2015

- Rewrote much of iKnow! to integrate a brand new learning engine, adding dozens of new experiences to the app and ultimately resulting in acquisition of the team and company
- Rewrote much of the frontend of iKnow away from jQuery into a modern React app, enabling much better use of the new server capabilities.
- Rebuilt the entire developer workflow, from git strategy to deployments, based on best practices from GitHub. This moved the team from weekly deploys to daily deploys.
- Built a hiring practice, including the interview process, project evaluation step, and success criteria. With this framework, I hired excellent engineers who are still with the company today

SOFTWARE ENGINEER, CEREGO JAPAN, 2012–2014

- Principal developer on integration with third-party services: push notifications, payment providers, OAuth login, logging, error reporting, and more
- Ported the entire application from Rails 2 to 3 as my initial task on the team
- Moved off a number of custom solutions to standard ones, including for localization, background jobs, and ActiveRecord queries
- Rebuilt much of the logic to allow the site to be booted as a second instance in China. This included boot-time configuration, dependency injection, moving behavior from purely code-driven to database-driven. This also included exposing this information over the API to allow the frontend to also respond to the running environment.

SOFTWARE ENGINEER, BOXCAR, 2011–2012

- As an intern, maintained and developed the existing Boxcar web app and API, used for sending and managing push notifications
- Upon becoming a full-time employee, rebuilt Boxcar from scratch to offer it as a SASS to third parties that needed push notifications

Education

Bachelor of Engineering, Computer Science, Wichita State University.

- GPA: 4.0, Dean's Honor List (all semesters)

Language

I'm a native English speaker and fluent Japanese speaker. I do have the JLPT N1 certification, but that doesn't mean a lot, since it's only a comprehension test. I am happy to do any and all parts of the interview process in Japanese, including technical discussion.

Talks

I've spoken at Cookpad's Rails meetups in Tokyo and have been a speaker at Ruby Kaigi.

At Cookpad, I gave talks about the importance of defining your own (limited) object interface (especially in Ruby) instead of bolting onto big library objects or raw hashes parsed from JSON.

At Ruby Kaigi, I talked about my experience at Cerego in porting their large application from Rails 2 to 3 as my first task on the team. (And if you've done Rails 2 -> 3, you know this was pretty serious!)

At DMM, I talked about how we handled building a video calling client in React, going far beyond the typical WebRTC setup of STUN, TURN, and backend to build out rich features for language learning in particular.