Eric Lau

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Experience

The Washington Post ⸱ Washington, D.C.
Graphics Intern ⸱ *Jun. 2024 – present*
- Covered the 2024 general election through a visual lens.

The Michigan Daily ⸱ Ann Arbor, MI
Software Engineer ⸱ *Dec. 2023 – Apr. 2024*
- Developed a PDF generator to embed crossword puzzles more seamlessly in The Daily's print newspaper.
- Implemented a scheduling feature to allow editors to publish puzzles more consistently at specific times of day.
- Overhauled mobile app rendering by writing new API endpoints with JSON serialized Gutenberg blocks.

Senior Software Engineer ⸱ *Dec. 2022 – Dec. 2023*
- Led various accessibility efforts: taught engineers how to use a screen reader; started tracking images published without alternative text; advocated for and organized processes for publishing with alternative text.
- Tracked DTE power outages, presented to the Michigan Public Service Commission on outage data gaps.
- Migrated Games from static generation to server rendering, resulting in an instantaneous publishing workflow.

Managing Online Editor ⸱ *Dec. 2021 – Dec. 2022*
- Led a team of 40 engineers, designers, and journalists to publish over 50 special websites, visuals, and stories.
- Advocated successfully for data journalists to use Datawrapper instead of D3 to publish graphics more quickly.
- Built Games website to play and publish crosswords. Used Svelte and SQL. Garnered over 130,000 page views.
- Developed sink to easily deploy websites and visuals to AWS S3 and ingest files and data from Google Drive.

Data Journalist ⸱ *Sep. 2020 – Dec. 2021*
- Wrote a series of 3 stories on university salary data in collaboration with other beat reporters.
- Developed a live election tracker for the 2021 Ann Arbor special election. Used Svelte, D3 and Python.
- Created over 20 data visuals on university feeder schools, city restaurant closures, survey data and more.

DETROITography ⸱ Detroit, MI
Software Engineer ⸱ *May 2023 – present*
- Created a website to crowdsource Detroit neighborhood boundaries using SvelteKit, OpenLayers and PostGIS.
- Launched and customized a CKAN instance for Detroit, serving over 1,000 datasets from 70 organizations.

The San Francisco Standard ⸱ San Francisco, CA
Data Journalist ⸱ *Sep. 2022 – Sep. 2023*
- Wrote 25 automated data newsletter stories localized to California neighborhoods, reaching 10,000 subscribers.

The Texas Tribune ⸱ Austin, TX
Data Visuals Fellow ⸱ *Jun. 2022 – Aug. 2022*
- Wrote about public opinion on abortion, analyzed polling data, interviewed pollsters and created graphics.
- Produced 24 graphics on election fundraising, droughts, public schools, the juvenile prison system and more.

Engineering Fellow ⸱ *Jan. 2022 – May 2022*
- Converted Django template files to flatpages, reducing code duplication and allowing for easier copy changes.
- Modified a Slack bot to show Salesforce campaign names to help evaluate real-time fundraising performance.
- Implemented several quality-of-life CMS features (e.g., copyable photo IDs, flexible grid dimensions, etc.).

Education

University of Michigan (Computer Science, Digital Studies, 2024) ⸱ Ann Arbor, MI

Skills

Data analysis and visualization ⸱ D3, Mapbox, Leaflet, Observable, Python, Datawrapper, Illustrator, QGIS
Web development ⸱ Svelte, React, Next, Django, Flask, SQL, AWS, WordPress, PHP, Docker
Mobile development ⸱ React Native, Expo, SwiftUI

Awards & Honors

Lipsey Multimedia Reporting Journalism Award (2022), SPJ Region 4 Mark of Excellence Data Visualization (2022)