

Vincent A. DiDonato

29 Mildred Avenue, Staten Island, NY 10314 • 347-622-3956 • vinny.didonato@gmail.com

CAREER PROFILE

I am a technology-agnostic leader and accomplished technologist with 15 years experience. A self-starter with a genuine passion for technology, I have been responsible for the technical architecture, development and maintenance of award-winning websites and business applications. I possess a unique blend of business acumen, leadership skills and a proven ability to apply common-sense approaches to projects under tight deadlines, evolving requirements and limited budgets.

TECHNICAL PROFICIENCIES

Programming Languages & Frameworks: PHP (CodeIgniter/Warp), Java (Grails/Spring/JSP/J2EE), JavaScript (jQuery/JSON/XML), Design Patterns (MVC/OOP), ColdFusion

Databases: MySQL, MSSQL 7-2005, Oracle 10g (PL/SQL), CouchDB

CMS: Custom-written CMS development, ExpressionEngine, WordPress, Joomla, Ektron CMS400 .NET, some exposure to Drupal

Search: Google GSA (various integrations), parametric search builds, custom search leveraging full-text indexing in MSSQL

Reporting & Platforms: Omniture, Google AdSense, AdWords, Analytics, DoubleClick for Publishers, Chartbeat

APIs: Sailthru, ConstantContact, Flickr, ExpressionEngine, REST & Library-based

COMMUNICATION & LEADERSHIP SKILLS

Technical & Strategic: Can effectively explain the benefits and pitfalls of various technical architectures as they pertain to a client or organization's infrastructure.

Broad Experience: Real-world experience with the different facets of the architecture, development, and management of web application infrastructure & support. Proficient in several different programming languages, frameworks, and architectures.

Soft Skills: Can effectively communicate with various levels of stakeholders. Eager to share knowledge and experiences with team members and employees to foster an efficient and motivated team environment. Excellent at learning and leveraging new technology to existing business needs. Capable of understanding the business model and workflow rapidly.

CURRENT PERSONAL PROJECTS

Developing analytics application using Node.js as the transport mechanism and CouchDB for data storage.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Manhattan Media / New York, NY / Various: nypress.com, avenuemagazine.com, cityandstateny.com, newyorkfamily.com, others

Director of Digital

April 2012 – Present

Operation of all Manhattan Media digital & mobile properties. Primary responsibilities include the day-to-day development of new technologies and applications, traffic/audience growth, content & social strategy, and the creation of new digital ad sales opportunities. Responsible for managing and mentoring 3 junior developers (1-3 years post-university) and multiple freelancers. Development is done on the LAMP stack using dedicated and MediaTemple DV hosting.

- Implemented coding conventions & standards. Previously, development had been done directly on production servers with no source control or QA procedures in place. Integrated Git-based SCM on BitBucket.org and a daily Agile Scrum to organize workflow and prioritize tasks.
- Developed a RESTful CodeIgniter-based service using which simultaneously integrates ConstantContact & Sailthru email provider APIs. This allows seamless newsletter subscription management for newsletter subscribers.
- Re-deployed three core Manhattan Media properties in three months with limited staff and resources. Sites were developed on the WordPress publishing platform and leverage the Warp framework (<http://yootheme.com/>).
- Shortly after being hired, identified and corrected critical issues with several Manhattan Media web properties, increasing pageviews by 41% and unique visitors by 59%. Redesigns and migrations deployed by the previous administration did not take into account the original site content and the impact missing content would have on search engine indexing and rankings. Wrote SQL migration scripts to extract content from a third-party legacy MySQL database to resurrect this content on the redesign site, increasing traffic and rebuilding relevancy with former users.
- Developing a site-scraping application in PHP to extract camp information from several sources.
- Re-architected all aspects of the organization's digital properties, ranging from the implementation of e-commerce providers to re-organizing staff and resources. Core goal is to increase revenue by introducing new products and concepts, while lowering costs and providing the best possible suite of products and in-house expertise.
- Restructured team to fit budgetary constraints by eliminating an unnecessary development position and rehiring effective developers under salary caps.
- Reduced hosting costs by 50% by consolidating websites to two hosts. Identified overbilling and consolidated to a single email provider, reducing costs by approximately 10% while improving reliability.
- Implemented Mantis Bug Tracker to record and report on the prioritization and status of incoming requests.
- Currently developing the groundwork for an e-commerce-based classifieds/listing system to automate ad sales.

Managed & developed alongside the engineering team responsible for TravelClick's iHotelier Reservation Solutions Systems. The team consisted of 3 permanent employees, several freelancers and approximately 10 offshore India and Canada-based resources. Systems developed by this team are in use by over 5000 hotels spanning 30K users and are critical in allowing these hotels to propagate their inventory through various channels including GDS and online travel agencies (OTAs). Systems are a hybrid mix of ColdFusion, JSP, and Java platforms running under Linux-based JBoss Application Server. Development process followed OOP patterns and utilized Agile development methodology. Evangelized and implemented Agile development processes with fellow managers.

- Developed local JBoss development environments for internal and offshore developers. These local development environments allowed developers to work, thus reducing latency and increasing productivity; especially key for offshore teams.
- Hands-on design, development, and architecture of Java/JSP applications.
- Implemented build process scripts leveraging Ant and SVN.
- Investigated Groovy/Grails as a potential target migration platform to relieve the excessive overhead of SEAM and ColdFusion.
- Identified core performance problems with a mission-critical call center application and, along with actually resolving issues, passed along recommended fixes to offshore and internal developers. Problems revolved around numerous non-tuned, redundant or often unnecessary database queries combined with dated ColdFusion code prone to memory-leaks.
- Evaluated product roadmaps and recommended appropriate staffing, reviews, and evaluation of current employees.
- Development and signoff of technical requirements and documentation.
- Off-hours work and meetings with off-shore development teams, tech leads, and relationship managers.
- Planning and estimation of large-scale initiatives impacting core business rules and revenue.
- Undertook high-visibility project in which core business models are being rewritten for delivery in 1Q2012

Responsible for the architecture, engineering & development of the two-time Webby Award-winning nycgo.com, m.nycgo.com (mobile), and the Official New York City Visitor Information Center (ONIC). Managed and developed alongside the Interactive Media Development team consisting of 5-8 developers. NYC Restaurant Week & many of the city's marketing/tourism initiatives are generated through this organization; as a result the company operates in a manner much like many marketing organizations delivering solutions and programs for various clients. Clients include AT&T, American Express, Yellowpages.com, The Oscars, and more. The role required constant vigilance of technological trends and social media behavior and is responsible for approximately 500k in team salary/budget.

- The team's work has won several industry awards, including:
 - 2012 Webby Award (<http://bit.ly/KEF8XU>)
 - 2011 Webby People's Voice Award Nomination
 - 2010 Webby People's Voice Award in Tourism (<http://bit.ly/bt1BJg>)
 - 2010 Digital Signage Expo Apex Award in Arts & Recreation (<http://bit.ly/dxw6Q>)
 - 2009 Ektron All-Star Award (<http://bit.ly/c8pPgp>)
- Completely re-architected nycgo.com infrastructure and migrated from Ektron CMS400 .Net to ExpressionEngine, which would provide for more flexibility and in-house development expertise. The site was entirely rewritten from the ground up using PHP on Windows with minimal impact to the site's user base. Project was launched on time and under budget, will yield savings over \$30k annually (reduction in licensing), and has reduced weekly editorial site production time to 2 hours from 1-2 days.
- Developed Restaurant Week application to provide for enhanced sponsorship opportunities; modifications yielded 500,000 new pageviews in the first two weeks of the program. Overall, the Restaurant Week enhancements provided for over \$4.3MM in revenue for participating restaurants and \$70K in direct revenue to the company.
- Architected several large-scale marketing initiatives including NYC Restaurant Week (<http://www.restaurantweek.com>), NYC Extreme Local (<http://www.nycgo.com/x>), and "This is New York City" (original <http://www.nycvisit.com/thisisnewyorkcity> - defunct).
- Leveraged social media APIs (Facebook Connect, Twitter) within NYCGo.com to allow for streamlined content sharing.
- Developed PHP-based cron jobs which aggregated content into an XML feed, retrieved associated content and tarred files together for delivery to the Information Center tables. These feeds were built using OOP principles, thus allowing them to be repurposed with minimal effort for other platforms including mobile.
- Improved post-launch site performance by leveraging ehCache, reviewing and optimizing PHP code, analyzing and tuning SQL queries, moving to a scalable & redundant SQL Server environment and leveraging Akamai/Amazon CloudFront. Page load performance increased by 200%.
- Converted award-winning interactive table technology to touchscreen format. Touchscreens are installed in Central Park's Tavern on the Green. (<http://nyti.ms/al65F2>)
- Developed the personnel roadmap for the engineering/development team. Quickly & effectively hired the best individuals for each role in the group. Team size grew from 1 full-time developer to 5 full-time developers, excluding freelancers. The team had 7 developers at its peak in 2008.
- Recommended a plan for restructuring the organization's Information Technology group into a more efficient and organized unit.
- Evangelized Agile-based development methodology including daily Scrum meetings and product backlogs.
- Architected the code & physical infrastructure for nycvisit.com's rebranding to nycgo.com. Worked directly with several development teams to rapidly develop & launch nycgo.com over a period of four months, completely overhauling the previous architecture while moving to a more robust, cost-effective hosting provider.
- Implemented an R&D development initiative for the back-end and front-end development teams which allocated 10% of a work week to cutting-edge development projects. Several projects were demoed and were integrated into the production environment, including a mobile version of Restaurant Week and a Ruby-on-Rails –based CMS.

- Worked with various booking engines and online travel agents to provide transactional, e-commerce systems on the nycgo.com property. Some of the partners include Travelocity, OpenTable, Shubert Telecharge, and Ticketmaster.

American Express Publishing / New York, NY / <http://www.amexpub.com/>
(Promotion) Manager of Online Development / Lead Developer

April 2004 – August 2007

Managed the Technology Business Application Development group which consisted of three full-time developers and occasional freelancers. Other responsibilities included the hands-on development, planning, long-term direction of the IT and internet infrastructure, as well as tasks/roles which were originally part of the Webmaster position.

- Recipient of several American Express Publishing awards:
 - 2005 American Express Publishing “Will to Win” award for outstanding and exemplary work, results, and work ethic
 - 2005 American Express Publishing “Best Business Innovation” award for the development of an ad reporting/revenue tracking application.
 - 2004 American Express Publishing “Best Editorial Reengineering” award for the development of an Editorial Tracking System.
 - 2004 American Express Publishing “Best Business Innovation” award for the development of an Editorial Tracking System.
- Implemented a development workflow solution for the online and internal application development teams.
- Led the selection & design of a collocated datacenter environment for the company websites. Architected, configured, and deployed the production web and database servers.
- Configured and deployed Citrix NetScaler 7000 series application load balancers in high-availability (HA) mode.
- Developed an editorial tracking system which lets editorial and financial users manage magazine budgets and assets such as photos, illustrations, manuscripts, and contracts. System is comprehensive, including a full reporting suite, email notification, and content-management functionality. The system serves as the blueprint for all future internal applications, and has direct buy-in and support from the CFO-level onward.
- Developed a comprehensive subscriber authentication system for foodandwine.com, including a reporting mechanism, user account encryption algorithms, and XML-based verification against our subscriber database in Tampa. This system functions as a CRM-type application, allowing the customer to update their billing records or re-subscribe to the magazines.
- Developed an authentication and e-commerce system for skyguideonline.com. Skyguideonline.com offers a PDA product that provides subscription-based flight lookups and other valuable information for business travelers.
- Developed a Java/Domino-based ad placement application which is used by more than 120 sales reps for revenue forecasting, ad tracking, and ad order placement requests. It also allows the production groups to position the ads in mock-up magazines for upcoming issues. This application was an award-winning (Best Business Innovation – 2005) application used throughout the enterprise. The application is currently being ported to a J2EE/Apache Tomcat (for Windows) platform.
- Implemented a CVS and staging environment for the Application Development group and introduced Eclipse as the standard IDE.
- Implemented NetScaler Load Balancing and Caching solution for foodandwine.com & travelandleisure.com.
- Managed over 20 servers including WWW, DNS, SQL, and Intrusion/Load Balancers.

American Express Publishing / New York, NY / <http://www.amexpub.com/>
Webmaster

March 2000 – April 2004

Manage and maintain company's 14-plus websites and associated servers, which include more than 12,000 pages of content and dozens of ColdFusion, ASP, SQL, and Perl-based web applications; also responsible for multiple-project management, server maintenance and security.

- Designed and developed a system which generates recipe and article XML feeds for third-party retrieval & subscriptions.
- Designed and developed CRM application which allows internal users to report on customer subscriptions to the magazines, email newsletters, and third-party opt-ins.
- Developed custom applications including MSXML COM Objects, search engines, and content management solutions for the company, saving over \$80K annually in development and maintenance expenses
- Led efforts with the technology group on security, anti-virus, collocation, and user-maintenance projects. Established “corporate best-practices” guidelines for coding, security and server rollouts/builds
- Built, configured, administered and developed applications for the company's four SQL Servers, including stored procedures, triggers, maintenance & backup plans, and DTS packages
- Designed, developed, and configured a Cold Fusion-based content management system for Online Media's use in day to day production on company websites.
- Expanded company's internet service hardware from 2 machines in 2000 to over 20 machines in 2003, and secured public-facing machines by moving them into a web DMZ for protection and isolation from the internal network and external internet.
- Increased speed and reliability on public web sites by utilizing caching, load balancing, and HTTP compression tools.
- Developed a recyclable and comprehensive survey application/exporting tool for AOL Romance, T+L World's Best, and America's Favorite Cities.
- Created code base for LDAP intranet authentication.
- Planned and executed the transfer of collocated internet equipment from the provider to an in-house datacenter.
- Developed redundancy and business resumption plan for internet services.
- Ensured sites operated and functioned properly on a variety of modern browsers including MSIE, Firefox, Mozilla, AOL embedded browsers, and Safari.
- Deployed Urchin for web-reporting capabilities.

ICP/Microage / Staten Island, NY / <http://www.icpcorp.com/>
Consultant

April 1999 – March 2000

- Worked as a consultant for various clients including the NYC Board of Education and Audiovox.
- Highlights include development on the company's e-commerce system (Netscape Enterprise Server/BSD) and extensive work on a NYC Board of Education application which allowed teachers to create learning plans for their students.

Bestfoods North America (Now Unilever) / Englewood Cliffs, NJ / <http://www.bestfoods.com/>
Systems Analyst

April 1998 – April 1999

- Developed, maintained and managed intranet web applications which allowed remote salesforce to report on sales and projections. Intranet utilized Microstrategy DSS products.
- Traveled nationally to train salesforce on intranet use.

C3i / New York City, NY / <http://www.c3i-inc.com/>
Help Desk Technician

June 1997 – April 1998

- Led a team of five help desk technicians which provided phone-based technical support to large external clients.
- Clients included American Express Corporate Services, Bestfoods North America, Berlex, and Pfizer.
- Traveled to client training sessions and conducted training for remote sales teams.

EDUCATION

2010 / NYU Certificate Program / Management Techniques

1995 / Kingsborough Community College / Brooklyn NY / Major – Travel & Tourism Management