Nicholas Wieland

Senior Backend Engineer / Tech Lead – Ruby, Elixir

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Open to contract (B2B) or permanent roles · Remote, CET · EU citizen

Summary

Backend engineer and tech lead with 20+ years building and leading production systems in **Ruby on Rails**, **Elixir/Phoenix** and **Python**. Led legacy rewrites and microservices migrations (70% lower resource use at Chorally), raised test coverage from 16% to 40% at indigo.ai, led teams of up to 6, and delivered UK government services for the Cabinet Office, Ministry of Justice and Department for Education. Currently building Torbido, a Rails 8 marketplace, as founder and sole developer.

Skills

- **Languages:** Ruby, Elixir, Python, JavaScript, HTML, CSS, Elm
- **Frameworks:** Ruby on Rails, Hotwire, Sinatra, Padrino, Grape, Karafka, Phoenix, FastAPI, Django
- **Data:** PostgreSQL, Redis, MySQL, MongoDB, SQL Server, Oracle, Elasticsearch, Meilisearch
- **Cloud & DevOps:** AWS (EC2, S3, RDS), Kubernetes, Docker, Heroku, GitHub Actions, CircleCI, Jenkins, Linux
- **Architecture:** microservices, event streaming (Karafka, RabbitMQ), JSON:API, OpenAPI/Swagger, webhooks, background jobs
- **AI tooling:** Claude Code and GitHub Copilot daily since early 2026; Claude API integration

Experience

Founder & Lead Developer · Torbido Feb 2026 – Present · Italy

- Built and launched a marketplace for Italian craft beer and artisanal spirits from scratch as sole developer: producer storefronts, checkout, commissions, reviews, AI-powered recommendations and geo (km 0) search.
- In production, with 153+ PRs merged and 185+ commits.

Stack: Ruby on Rails 8, Hotwire, PostgreSQL, Stripe Connect, Meilisearch, Claude API

Software Engineer · indigo.ai Sep 2025 – Jul 2026 · Remote

- Owned the test suite: audited, fixed and expanded it, raising coverage from 16% to 40% and strengthening the testing culture.
- Moved on to core platform features on the Elixir/Phoenix stack.

Stack: Elixir, Phoenix

Freelance Developer · Safer Feb 2026 – Mar 2026 · Contract · Suzzara, Italy

- Built a Django dashboard to manage work orders, tracking pieces produced and production time; in production.

Stack: Python, Django

Freelance Developer · Telecom Italia Sep 2025 – Feb 2026 · Contract · Italy

- Built a Python system using Tenable to check the security posture of company machines; helped deploy it to production.

Stack: Python, Tenable

Team Lead · Chorally Sep 2023 – Sep 2025 · Remote

- Led a team of 6 rebuilding the legacy architecture as Ruby microservices (Grape, Karafka event streaming) on Kubernetes.
- Cut resource consumption by 70% and improved system stability and data consistency across all services.

Stack: Ruby, Grape, Karafka, Kubernetes, Docker

Lead Backend Engineer · IFAD May 2023 – Sep 2023 · Contract via NoFeed Ltd · Remote

- Backend lead for OPEN, a Ruby on Rails procurement management system for IFAD's international operations.
- Architected multi-locale (English, French, Spanish) and multi-currency support.

Stack: Ruby on Rails, PostgreSQL, Active Storage

Lead Backend Engineer · Cabinet Office Feb 2023 – May 2023 · Contract via NoFeed Ltd · Remote

- Built the Data Catalogue web application from scratch, leading and mentoring a team of 3 junior engineers.
- Containerised the application and set up CI/CD to Heroku; the MVP secured funding for continued development.

Stack: Ruby on Rails, PostgreSQL, Docker, Heroku

Lead Backend Engineer · Mara Oct 2022 – Jan 2023 · Contract via NoFeed Ltd · Remote

- Backend architect for the MVP launch (web, iOS, Android) bringing cryptocurrency wallet access to African markets.
- Built the administration service (Rails with SSO) and the user management service, communicating over HTTP APIs.

Stack: Ruby on Rails, Grape, PostgreSQL, Docker, AWS

Lead Backend Engineer · Soho House Feb 2022 – Sep 2022 · Contract via NoFeed Ltd · Remote

- Lead backend engineer on the Connect team: profile-service, checkin-service, hook and other microservices.

Stack: Ruby on Rails, PostgreSQL, Docker, RabbitMQ, Kubernetes

Lead Backend Engineer · Department for Education Oct 2021 – Jan 2022 · Contract via NoFeed Ltd · Remote

- Lead backend engineer on the Early Career Framework app for teacher professional development in England.

Stack: Ruby on Rails, PostgreSQL, Docker, GitHub Actions

Lead Backend Engineer · Funding Circle Feb 2021 – Sep 2021 · Contract via NoFeed Ltd · Remote

- Led dependency management and security vulnerability remediation across multiple production applications.
- Drove the cloud migration: containerised legacy applications with Docker, added security scanning pipelines and deployed to AWS with CI/CD (CircleCI, Jenkins).
- Maintained several internal Python services.

Stack: Ruby on Rails, Python, AWS, Docker, CircleCI, Jenkins

Lead Backend Engineer · Lawbite May 2020 – Feb 2021 · Remote

- Led the backend of a complete platform rewrite, architecting a microservices-based solution.
- Designed and built multiple microservices and a custom CMS admin panel; worked with external teams on the portal rebuild.

Stack: Ruby on Rails, AWS, Kubernetes

Senior Developer · Ministry of Justice Aug 2019 – Feb 2020 · London, UK

- Sole backend developer for the Book a Secure Move API, managing prisoner transport logistics across the UK prison system.
- Normalised complex data structures; built document uploads (Active Storage) and webhooks for real-time event notifications.

Stack: Ruby on Rails, AWS, Kubernetes, Swagger, JSON:API

Tech Lead · Vzaar Jan 2019 – Aug 2019 · London, UK

- Tech lead on the video hosting platform; planned and executed the microservices migration after the Dacast merger.

Stack: Ruby on Rails, AWS, Serverless Framework

Tech Lead · Utelier Dec 2017 – Dec 2018 · London, UK

- Led a team of 3, including recruiting and mentoring a junior developer.
- Chose the stack (Rails + Elm) and rebuilt the platform and its AWS infrastructure, with guidance from The Scale Factory.

Stack: Ruby on Rails, Elm, AWS

Senior Developer · mGage, a Vivial company Aug 2016 – Nov 2017 · London, UK

- Payments team: built a unified administration interface for all company services from scratch with Phoenix and PostgreSQL.
- Built the auth layer for Ruby API endpoints and an Elixir library linking the Phoenix admin app to Ruby microservices.

Stack: Elixir, Phoenix, Ruby on Rails, PostgreSQL

Open source

Creator & Maintainer · Cicerone Jun 2026 – Present · github.com/torbido-hq/cicerone

- Open-source, self-hosted batch recommender engine spun out of Torbido: trains offline, writes top-K recommendations and serves them through a read-only, OpenAPI-documented HTTP API with an ops dashboard.

Stack: Python, FastAPI, LightFM, PostgreSQL, Prometheus

Earlier experience

Developer · The Fool s.r.l. Sep 2014 – Jul 2016 · Milan, Italy

Built EngagementConsole, a social content moderation dashboard used by Banca Mediolanum, Radio24 and Volkswagen.

Lead Developer · Antonioli.eu Apr 2014 – Aug 2014 · Milan, Italy

Sole developer of a new worldwide Rails/Spree e-commerce site with multiple tax regimes; maintained the legacy Rails 2.0 site.

Developer · Sportboom May 2012 – Mar 2013 · Milan, Italy

Ported a marketplace for sport enthusiasts from PHP/MySQL to Rails/PostgreSQL and drove its SEO strategy; hired and managed a team of 2 (designer, junior developer).

Founder & Developer · StyleJam Jan 2011 – Feb 2012 · Seattle, WA

Sole founder of a seed-funded (H-Farm) design showcase platform, covering development, sales and operations.

CTO · Zooppa Apr 2007 – Dec 2010 · Treviso, Italy and Seattle, WA

- Built and owned the architecture of Zooppa from the ground up: a crowdsourcing platform connecting brands with a creative community of 350,000+ members for video and graphic design campaigns.
- Built and led a team of 4 from scratch (developers, designers, sysadmins); also managed the product for part of this period.

Stack: Ruby on Rails, MySQL

Developer · Hotchalk Oct 2006 – Mar 2007 · Campbell, CA

Rewrote a Java application in Rails with full test coverage for launch; low-defect release with 30k+ registered users on day one.

Developer · Assembla Mar 2006 – Sep 2006 · Needham, MA

Contributed to the initial implementation of Breakout, a Rails precursor to GitHub for hosting code via SVN and Trac.

Author · Apogeo May 2006 – Sep 2006 · Milan, Italy

Wrote the database chapter of *Ruby per applicazioni web*, the first Italian-language book about Ruby.

Independent Consultant · Various clients 2003 – 2005 · Italy

Built a Python/Zope website for Monte dei Paschi di Siena and a Python/wxPython fax server client for Telecom Italia.

Developer · Neato Europe 2003 – 2004 · Mantova, Italy

Built the e-commerce site (ported from ASP 3 to PHP) and a CRM, and administered the company's FreeBSD servers.

Education

Liceo Linguistico Redentore (secondary school, modern languages) · 1995 – 2000

Languages

Italian (native) · English (native)