James Barnes

Design Engineer & Front-End Developer

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Summary

I am a Design Engineer and Front-End Developer with over a decade of experience crafting high-performance digital experiences. I specialize in React and Svelte, writing JavaScript and TypeScript to build responsive, accessible interfaces on clean, maintainable code. With a UI/UX background, I own the full product lifecycle: I shape the visual identity and design systems, then carry the work through prototyping, testing, and launch, with SEO and performance optimization built in. Across independent and enterprise work, I've led projects end to end and become the go-to voice for UI decisions on cross-functional teams. Driven by a craftsperson's mindset and rigorous attention to detail, I turn ambitious ideas into polished, production-ready products.

Technical Skills

Frontend Frameworks: React, Next.js, Svelte, SvelteKit, Astro

Core Languages: JavaScript (ES6+), TypeScript, HTML, CSS

Interface Design: Figma, Design Systems, Storybook, UI/UX Design, WCAG 2.1 AA

Styling Tools: Tailwind CSS, Modern CSS, SCSS, GSAP, Three.js

Component Libraries: Shadcn UI, Bits UI, Radix UI, Melt UI, Chakra UI

State Management: Zustand, React Context API, Redux, Tanstack Query

Project Engineering: Supabase, REST APIs, GraphQL, React Router

Software Quality: Vitest, Jest, Performance Optimization, ESLint, Biome

Development Environment: Vite, Git, Node.js, Bun, Linux Terminal (Bash)

Content Management: Sanity, WordPress, Webflow, Prismic

Certifications

Front-End Engineer - Codecademy
The Complete Agile Scrum Fundamentals Course - Udemy

Languages

English (Native)
French (Beginner)
Afrikaans (Beginner)

Education

Multimedia Design
CityVarsity | Johannesburg, South Africa

Work Experience

Design Engineer

Self-Employed | Montreal, Quebec *June 2026 – Present*

- Works one-on-one with startups, SMBs, and agencies as their **end-to-end web partner**.
- Builds **custom websites and web apps**, including full-stack builds on **Supabase**.
- Designs in **Figma**, then builds custom front ends in **TypeScript, React, Svelte, and Astro**.
- Builds client-managed sites on **Webflow and WordPress** for easy self-editing.
- Leads each project from **strategy and brand direction** through design, build, and launch.
- **Drives growth after launch** through audits, SEO, performance optimization, and retainers.
- Delivers e-commerce**, memberships, booking systems**, and custom API integrations.
- Helps clients reach their **target markets**, locally or globally, wherever they're based.

Front-End Developer & Web Designer

Technology Evaluation Centers | Montreal, Quebec *January 2022 – May 2026*

- Shaped the UI of the company's **React-based website**, from design through launch.
- Designed and built campaign pages in **Kentico CMS** for tier-1 partners like **Salesforce**.
- Built **evergreen marketing pages** optimized for performance and SEO rankings.
- Ran a site-wide accessibility audit and remediation to meet **WCAG 2.1 AA** standards.
- Initiated and led a **site-wide design overhaul**, including a new **enterprise design system**.
- **Bridged design and development**, aligning **cross-functional teams** on UI decisions.
- Redesigned the **internal CRM**'s UX/UI, modernizing workflows and improving team efficiency.
- Optimized **information architecture** and navigation to improve discoverability and UX flow.

Co-Founder & Lead Web Developer

Crux Digital | Johannesburg, South Africa *April 2016 – December 2021*

- Co-founded a **digital studio** offering websites, web apps, SEO, and digital marketing.
- Designed and built websites for **35+ clients** in **WordPress, Webflow, and custom code**.
- Took projects from **concept and UI design through launch**, working directly with clients.
- Ran **SEO and growth audits**, then delivered technical SEO and performance improvements.
- Grew recurring revenue through monthly **maintenance and SEO retainers**.
- Took over **sole ownership** in 2020 and ran the studio until relocating to Canada.

Audio & Video Editor

Out of Motion | Johannesburg, South Africa *2015 – 2016*

- Edited **documentary journalism videos**, including full post-production and audio.

Graphic Designer

Wow Concepts | Johannesburg, South Africa *2014 – 2015*

- Designed magazine layouts, print materials, and social graphics for **BMW and Cell C**.