

Richard Still

Nonneveld 755, 4811 DV, Breda

✉ richard@oakbox.com 🌐 <https://www.oakbox.com> ☎ +31 (0)625485062



Summary

I am a Senior Backend Developer with more than 20 years of work experience. I have worked in large organizations where I am one cog in an immense machine and in small companies where I wore every kind of IT-related hat. I am at home on the command line, scripting languages and Bash are my bread and butter, Nginx and Apache are no mystery to me, MySQL is my third language. If you have a problem to solve, I have encountered it, or an analogue of it, and know the pitfalls to avoid.

I believe the most important skill is knowing which questions to ask. I have lived in the Netherlands since 2001 and my verblijfsvergunning is not reliant on my work status.

Primary Skills

Cross-functional experience in System architecture and redesign, DevOps implementations, Database design and management (MySQL), API development (SOAP, REST, JSON-RPC), Programming, and Project management. I have deep expertise in migrating legacy systems to new implementations and developing robust solutions.

Work History

Programmer IT at Nobralux B.V./LiberoSoftware B.V. (Afinius Groep) (2016 – Present, full-time)

Background: Nobralux B.V. had a problem serious problem, they had an internally-developed software system, written in Perl, and their software developer had moved on to other projects. The code base was completely non-modular, they needed a long list of bugs fixed, and a migration path to the future. I rewrote the system, in-situ, into a backend and front end system (AngularJS) that communicated through a JSON-RPC API. This gave the owners a few years of breathing room to choose their final goal and a clean base to migrate from.

What I did:

- Revamped asset management system 'Liteweb 1.0' to 'Liteweb 2.0' (both in Perl), transitioning an unstable and slow system to a new, more responsive and stable architecture without any loss of productivity and with low resource costs.
- Managed relationships with 12 external systems (asset management systems, citizen systems for reporting problems with public lighting, and smart lighting systems).
- Worked closely with users to streamline their workflows and quickly address problems.
- Starting in 2021, collaborated with a new developer team to move away from Perl to a Laravel PHP codebase. Worked to redesign database structures, develop CI/CD pipelines (Bitbucket), and build worker server that interfaces with external async data store (electrical "smart meter" systems that used a digitally signed SOAP API). Developed and oversaw the migration of 30 years of accumulated data from Liteweb into the new architecture.

System Architect, Online Talent Manager B.V. (2001 – 2017, full-time)

Background: Psychologists Bert Goos and Andre Tjoa had developed a series of psychological tests for use in coaching, selection and assessment in a business context. I was brought in to put these tests online and automate the reporting and test validation steps that were, at the time, incredibly time consuming and expensive.

What I did:

- Designed, built, and maintained a multi-lingual psychometric test publishing platform that focused on flexibility and user experience.
- Reporting, Statistical analysis, Strategic planning, Customer engagement.
- Developed and maintained SOAP and REST API's
- Led English language marketing, training, articles, papers, documentation, and educational videos.
- Front and back end developer (all of the IT hats).

Developer, Learnworks B.V. (2003 – 2022, freelance)

Background: Ron van de Water was a colleague of Bert Goos and also worked with Andre Tjoa on creating psychological tests. Since their models and methodologies were so different, I was asked to work for both OTM and Learnworks, concurrently.

What I did:

- Created software test/reporting systems for detecting workplace stagnation, measuring Axiological scales, competency rating systems, and a coaching platform for the Dialogical Self methodology.
- This position focused on rapid prototyping and improving time-to-market for bespoke systems (for competency management, organizational consultancy, coaching, etc). Ron was always writing new reporting formats, new tests, and creating custom models for individual organizations.
- Much like the work I was doing concurrently for OTM, I was the sole developer and responsible for every level of ICT at Learnworks.

Programmer Journalistic Inc. (1999-2001, full-time)

A magazine publisher located in Chapell Hill, North Carolina needed to automate their mailing and subscription systems. The first position where I was paid to indulge in my coding hobby. The software I wrote their was still being used 15 years after I had moved on to the Netherlands. Perl coding, MySQL, and Apache, the front end design was handled by the in-house graphic artists.

Technical Support Specialist Wachovia Bank Inc. (1996-1999, full-time)

It was a big bank and I was working there during the transition from fax and paper to electronic communications and digital documents. I was also there for the ramp-up to Y2K, which required me to among other things, image 250 workstations for freelance coders brought in to fix the problem.

Service Telephone Support SPSS Payment Systems (1993-1996, full-time)

Telephone support for the largest online service in America before AOL. I was there when the internet became the internet and it went from gopher and usenet to html and email. I learned patience, here, and developed a reputation as the person to handle stressed customers.

On-air personality WQUT (1991-1994, part-time)

Education

Bachelor of Science Degree in Electronic Engineering, East Tennessee State University, 1995.

I have never used this degree professionally, but digital circuit design taught me how to 'think' in code and I found I had a real knack for figuring out what was in the question marks: 'Inputs' => ?? => 'Outputs'

Language

Fluent written and spoken English (native speaker), conversational Dutch.

Community

Active member of the Dutch Perlmongers from 2006 to 2018, gave talks on various aspects of Perl coding and applications to practical problems. I had a habit of attending at least one Open Source Software conference per year, but since Covid that has been online only. I feel that this keeps me up to date with what is going on in the industry and what is being developed.

Personal Interests

Creating board games, experimenting with LLM's (I built a role playing game on the ChatGPT API in February 2003 to see what it could do and I continue installing models locally for testing), cooking, designing escape room props with an engineer, and the Oxford comma.