Kevin Ridgway

Head of Engineering

Buffalo, NY | https://kbr.sh | LinkedIn Profile | GitHub

Engineering leader and hands-on builder with 20+ years across the full stack, leading an AI-native product team — shipping LLM-powered features in production, extending Claude Code through custom skills, hooks, and MCP integrations, and building personal CLI tools in Rust and TypeScript.

EXPERIENCE

Supernormal Technologies, Inc Nov 2025 - Present

Head of Engineering May 2026 - Present

- Leading the Engineering team across TypeScript, Ruby, and Rust codebases; product and engineering sparring partner to the CEO; final call on architecture, code disputes, and the quality bar for the AI agent product
- Driving the 2026 engineering hiring plan to add 3–4 engineers across frontend, backend, and ML; partnering with the CEO on org build and ways of working
- Owning observability and reliability — standing up PostHog for onboarding and conversion analytics, tightening Sentry alerting, and systematically triaging long-tail user dead-ends that block growth
- Onboarding new senior engineers — established a PR-pairing pattern for first-week velocity and tightened repo extensibility documentation so new patterns aren't hidden traps for the next hire
- Co-defining the 2–3 month product North Star with the CEO: Supernormal as a "project manager you turn on" with Slack-first interaction; scoping in/out of scope across marketing, design, and engineering
- Championed and extended Claude Code as a team force multiplier: integrated Figma, Notion, and Linear MCP servers into the engineering workflow; built and shared custom skills and hooks; reduced spec-to-code cycle time across the team
- Mentor engineers across the team and lead code reviews across three codebases (TypeScript, Ruby, Rust)

Staff Software Engineer Nov 2025 - May 2026

- Designed and shipped a composable agent personality system — refactored the system prompt to load identity, tone, and behavioral boundaries from separate markdown files (SOUL.md / VOICE.md / BOUNDARIES.md) assembled at runtime, then wrote behavioral evaluations (Evalite local + Braintrust LLM-as-judge) with 8 probes verifying anti-sycophancy, identity masking, multi-account awareness, and honest limitation handling
- Diagnosed a model behavioral regression where the agent cited its training knowledge cutoff instead of invoking the available webResearch tool — traced to a missing tool-routing directive in the system prompt's tools section; added explicit routing rules and a faithfulness directive, with a regression test to prevent recurrence
- Built multi-layer defense against the Anthropic API's 20MB request limit: agent-harness image stripping at the prepareStep hook before SDK serialization, proxy-level payload trimming preserving the last 6 messages, and an actionable error surface when limits are still hit — research across Cline, Aider, and OpenCode found no other open-source agent does byte-level payload management
- Authored the sandbox agent skill layer for image operations — writing tool contracts, capability documentation, and parameter semantics (image-resizing, image-conversion) that define what the model can do, when to invoke each skill, and how to surface constraints back to users
- Built a dynamic prompt preamble system that detects user intent in AI chat threads and injects connector suggestions (Gmail, Calendar, Drive) at the right moment — each connector's prompt injection gated behind a feature flag, enabling safe, incremental behavioral rollout without a model redeploy
- Owned the AI image generation pipeline end-to-end: multi-model routing between Anthropic and Gemini APIs with per-model capability validation, auto-selecting imageSize and falling back gracefully when aspect ratios aren't supported, and authoring the skill documentation that teaches the model about dimension constraints and when to use each fallback path
- Shipped a new AI agent product ("SuperAssistant") from zero to production in 3 weeks, spanning frontend, backend, and desktop across TypeScript, Ruby, and Rust codebases
- Architected and delivered the artifact sharing system, enabling users to generate, preview, and publicly share documents, spreadsheets, slides, and image galleries — including S3 direct upload infrastructure, public/private toggle, and short-URL routing
- Shipped a user feedback system (thumbs up/down) for AI agent chat sessions, enabling product and data teams to measure response quality and inform prompt and model tuning — implemented end-to-end across Rails API, database migration, and React frontend
- Owned the end-to-end Gmail integration in the Radiant desktop app (Rust), delivering: email autocomplete from Google Contacts, CC/Bcc fields, From-field alias selection, a sent badge, a "Continue in Gmail" dropdown, OAuth

connection management, and a fix to preserve independent Gmail and Calendar OAuth connections when unlinking either service
- Owned reliability of the artifact rendering system: diagnosed and resolved a sustained series of bugs across slides, spreadsheets, image galleries, and artifact state — stabilizing the core output surface of the product
- Diagnosed and resolved an authentication failure blocking Safari and WebKit users from logging in — traced to stricter OAuth redirect token handling — restoring access for a significant portion of the user base
- Restored production error observability by configuring Sentry source maps across legacy and new web applications, giving the team accurate stack traces after they had been silently broken
- Built a cross-browser end-to-end test suite using Playwright with automated Google OAuth flows and 1Password credential injection, enabling continuous browser compatibility verification

Yahoo! - Media Tools Team - Home Ecosystem Feb 2023 - Nov 2025

Senior Software Dev Engineer

- Core contributor to the auth-service microservice (Auth0 wrapper), and led its integration into the Yahoo Partner Portal — delivering JWT-based role and permission enforcement and audience-aware user management endpoints used across the Content Management platform
- Shipped the full partner onboarding experience for the Partner Portal end-to-end: frontend, backend, auth, and permissions
- Set up AWS Lambda functions for GPT-4-powered content autocategorization, enabling automated tagging of articles processed through Yahoo's content pipeline
- On-call member of the content data pipeline, supporting reliable processing of millions of articles per day across AWS Glue and Lambda orchestrations
- Bootstrapped the new CMS frontend using Next.js, Turbo, and Bun; built Python FastAPI endpoints for the backend; integrated TipTap as the headless rich-text editor
- Created the packaging and distribution pipeline for the internal UI Component Design System using Rollup.js, enabling reuse across multiple Yahoo applications
- Led, planned, documented, and executed the React 18 upgrade on the CMS across a team of 10+ engineers
- Deployed FastAPI-based internal tooling APIs to AWS using GitHub Actions and Terraform
- Coached engineers on Next.js best practices and established coding standards; presented internal tech talks on Next.js, NPM packaging, and Storybook.js to the broader Home Ecosystem team

NFTco - GetBased.com (formerly MessageParty) March 2022 - November 2022

Senior Fullstack Engineer

- Early hire (8th overall, 2nd full-time engineer) at a seed-stage Web3 startup
- Added Solana wallet integration so users could log in and register with multiple wallets
- Built Wallet Tracking for the consumer web app using Solana blockchain data, React.js, Node.js, Prisma, and PostgreSQL
- Built a Fastify API with Postman-maintained documentation; integrated third-party blockchain data APIs behind it
- Created a Next.js burn token site integrating with a Solana smart contract, with continuous deployment via Heroku
- Set up the initial CI/CD pipeline for frontend (React.js) and backend (Node.js) on GitHub Actions
- Configured Kodiak to auto-merge PRs when all checks passed, measurably increasing team velocity
- Led technical requirements and implementation for bringing the Next.js marketing website in-house
- Built PostgreSQL queries for a user-engagement email report that informed product decisions
- Mentored engineers in CSS architecture, TypeScript, browser performance, and React best practices; established PR standards and created the team's PR template
- Participated in engineering interviews including at the CTO level; migrated React 17 → 18 to unblock latest TailwindCSS

ACV Auctions June 2021 - March 2022

Senior Frontend Engineer (Frontend Platform Team) February 2022 - March 2022

- Moved to the Frontend Platform team, supporting all frontend teams across the company (Web, iOS, Android)
- Led performance work that raised the Lighthouse score of the main web app from 17 to 85
- Co-developed and open-sourced a Vue virtual-scroll library that reduced memory consumption, browser paints, and DOM node count — the key driver of the Lighthouse improvement
- Assisted engineers across teams on frontend issues via code pairing and mob debugging

Senior Frontend Engineer (Marketplace Team) June 2021 - February 2022

- Got up to speed quickly learning Vue.js, contributed in first week on the job, code to production in second week
- Created Puppeteer scripts running 'lighthouse-ci' to identify performance gaps on every commit to master on Jenkins for main web app
- Added features to realtime frontend Marketplace using Vue.js, SASS, and responsive design
- Fixed bugs on mobile Safari, and other mobile and desktop browsers in large Vue.js app
- Led discussions in proof of concept of webapp in native webview and its tradeoffs
- Consulted with iOS/Android engineers on having a hybrid WebView in the Marketplace native application
- Contributed to API design meetings for hybrid native app proof of concept
- Wrote Swift proof of concept app in Xcode to demonstrate performance of webapp in webview
- Approved code reviews, fixed issues while pair programming with co-workers
- Presented talks at Web guild meetings on VSCode, ESLint, configuration, and other topics
- Presented company-wide tech talks on Rust, Webassembly, Responsive Design, Frontend Performance, and Browser Extensions
- Helped launch the company engineering blog and was among its first contributors
- Wrote blog post on Hackathons and Entrepreneurship - https://acv.engineering/posts/hackathons-and-entrepreneurship/
- Wrote blog post on company engineering blog on Rust - https://acv.engineering/posts/an-intro-to-the-rust-programming-language/

Nota (TrustNota.com, An incubated start-up backed by M&T Bank) January 2020 - June 2021

Senior Fullstack Engineer

- First in-house fullstack engineering hire; got up to speed rapidly as the original MVP contractor team rolled off and delivered the first end-to-end feature immediately after
- Deployed, monitored, and operated AWS infrastructure in Java: S3, RDS (Postgres), CloudWatch, EC2, SNS, Lambda, Route 53, CloudFront, ELB, EKS
- Improved accessibility scores using Axe, Lighthouse, and browser devtools; implemented Lighthouse CI scoring to continuously track a11y and Core Web Vitals
- Contributed fullstack features across the application — React.js/TypeScript components, React Hooks, Redux Saga, and Storybook.js on the frontend; Java Spring, Hibernate, JPA, and Flyway migrations on the backend
- Led architecture discussions across API, frontend, and AWS infrastructure; influenced decisions that shaped the system as the team scaled
- Investigated and resolved production issues using AWS CloudWatch; led hotfixes to production on deadline
- Led code reviews and mentored engineers on frontend best practices

NY Times - Wirecutter February 2019 - April 2019

Freelance JavaScript Engineer, Wirecutter - Money (Contractor)

- Hired for 20/hrs a week as a contractor to work on Money section of Wirecutter.com using React.js, Next.js, Node.js, GraphQL, MongoDB
- Worked with AWS Services RDS, S3, Cloudwatch, IAM Roles/Security
- Successfully worked remotely, got up to speed fast and contributed quickly for new features of Wirecutter.com
- Built Credit Card Product Page in Next.js application for new feature of Money section of Wirecutter
- Created GraphQL queries in Node.js application for serving frontend
- Wrote tests for new code in Jest, Enzyme, and Cypress
- Worked almost entirely off-hours, communicating asynchronously via Slack, Github, and email. Met periodically with the engineering lead to talk about larger project kickoffs via Zoom.

Campus Labs 2017 - 2020

Senior Fullstack Engineer September 2017 - January 2020

- On a three-person team with high autonomy across every engineering aspect of a data visualization product sold to college campuses
- Improved accessibility scores from a low baseline using Lighthouse and Axe, with continued improvements to screen reader support for data visualizations
- Set up dev environment scripts for Windows and macOS, enabling new engineers to onboard quickly
- Implemented code reviews and team guidelines; improved code quality with pre-commit lint/test hooks via NPM scripts
- Added code coverage reporting for the React.js application and wrote tests to reach an acceptable threshold

- Created a plan to restore Webpack hot-reloading in conjunction with a server-side .NET application
- Added features to the data visualization application using React.js, ES6, Node.js, and Express.js
- Set up Kubernetes in Azure (AKS) via Terraform; ran, maintained, and monitored deployments
- Led architecture discussions around moving the data product toward microservices in Azure cloud
- Built a new C# .Net Core API to replace the legacy API, hosted on Azure Web Apps with CI/CD via Azure DevOps
- Used Jupyter/Python/Pandas to analyze Vault logs and diagnose vault sealing events in production
- Worked with the UX Director and UX Manager to improve design-engineering collaboration and plan new internal tooling

Synacor, Inc. 2012 - 2017

Principal Software Engineer June 2016 - August 2017

- Reporting to Experience Engineering Director, and tasked with moving to an existing engineering team, to help their velocity, get them organized, stay productive, and offer leadership
- Migrating legacy PHP framework to Single Page JavaScript App Portal product for newly won AT&T contract
- Onboarding new team members to ES2015/Preact (https://preactjs.com/) technology
- Writing new PreactJS components for sports, weather, and finance for Single Page App
- Writing unit tests for new JS app using Jasmine/SinonJS

Team Lead Engineer August 2014 - June 2016

- Promoted to Team Lead Engineer (Frontend), and shipped a ground-up new TV Everywhere (v.3) product in nine months
- Interviewed, hired, and trained new Frontend Engineers, and iOS Engineers for the TV Everywhere product
- Created components and layouts for mobile/native hybrid app (Cordova) in BackboneJS and Objective-C
- Wrote iOS Keychain code to encrypt user login information in a native app in Objective-C
- Architected the iOS/Cordova/Web app integration for using native third-party video players in iOS SDK that was then shipped to the client to integrate into their mobile app
- Collaborated with infrastructure, monitoring, identity management, and many other teams to ship a new product
- Wrote Protractor E2E tests for testing login, and video playback functionality of our client Verizon's site (http://tv.verizon.com)
- Scripted Bash setup script for CentOS box for engineers quickly get their environment setup for development
- Designed architecture for the frontend of large BackboneJS/RequireJS JavaScript application
- Implemented developer workflow for a team of Frontend engineers using GruntJS
- Setup Nginx and Varnish configs for multi-tenant web application

Senior Engineer August 2012 - August 2014

- Led effort in planning and implementing CSS3/HTML5 technologies in new products
- Led development efforts for new TV Everywhere (v.2) product, and integrated heavy CSS3/HTML5 usage (Modernizr, for deciding what experience to serve to what features to browsers that supported them)
- Worked collaboratively with UX team to implement their Photoshop designs in new products
- Integrated third-party video players into custom PHP/JS framework

PERSONAL PROJECTS

fast-code-reviewer — **github.com/program247365/fast-code-reviewer**

Rust TUI for code review, built with Ratatui. Integrates with Claude Code via real-time Unix socket IPC to receive live context from running sessions. Features vim-style navigation, fuzzy file and command search, GitHub PR review with inline commenting, org/repo browsing, and a 24-hour PR catch-up mode. Submits reviews (approve/comment/request changes) directly from the terminal.

qmd (fork) — **github.com/program247365/qmd**

Forked an open-source local hybrid search engine (TypeScript) combining BM25, vector embeddings, and reranking — fully offline. Contributed a Bear.app notes collection and a custom Claude Code skill that enables RAG-powered search over personal notes, turning the tool into an AI-queryable knowledge base.

Claude Code Dotfiles System — **github.com/program247365/dotfiles**

Extensible personal Claude Code setup: custom skills (bear-notes for Bear integration, workday for daily planning rituals, plan-exit-review for plan validation), git safety hooks, and specialized agent configurations — organized as a reusable dotfiles system used daily across personal and professional work.

EDUCATION

University of Tampa

Bachelor of Science in Computer Information Systems

SKILLS

- **Leadership:** engineering management, hiring & org build, technical architecture & code-review authority, multi-language teams, incident response & reliability, product/engineering partnership
- **AI/LLM:** Claude Agent SDK, Gemini API, OpenAI API, prompt engineering, agent design, Claude skills & hooks, AI-assisted engineering
- **Languages & Programming:** JavaScript/TypeScript, Python, Rust, C#, Java, Golang, Ruby
- **Databases**: PostgreSQL, mySQL, MSSQL Server, MongoDB, Redis
- **Frontend & Mobile Development:** React.js, Next.js, React Native, Expo, Playwright
- **DevOps & Infrastructure:** Git, Docker/K8s, Puppet/Ansible/Terraform, Azure/AWS/GCP, Linux/macOS/Windows
- **Design & UX:** Figma, Illustrator/Photoshop, User Experience Design

AWARDS

- 2021 Third-Place in ACV Auctions Hackathon
  - keyboard-shortcut driven Google Chrome extension with C# API for saving/searching important resources that people can crowd-source together
- 2016 Third-Place in Synacor Hackathon
  - for Node.js dashboard called 'Glance' that gave teams insights into Jira, Email, server status
- 2013 Engineering Award @ Synacor, Inc.
  - awarded to one engineer every year
  - for efforts in leading TV Everywhere product reboot