SHADY SHARAF

Staff Software Engineer | System Architect | Tech leader

📍 Spain | ✉ shady@sharaf.me | 📞 +351 910 919 466 | +971 5859 60 250
💼 linkedin.com/in/shadyvb | 🔗 github.com/shadyvb

Staff engineer with 20 years architecting distributed systems at scale for FAANG and enterprise clients. Led high-performing teams building platforms serving millions of users, with a proven track record of delivering measurable business impact through technical excellence and people-first leadership. Currently pivoting to AI engineering, with production AI/ML implementations at Siemens (pre-ChatGPT era) and open-source contributions to Linux Foundation FAIR Package Manager. Deep expertise in system design, performance optimization, and technical leadership that empowers teams to exceed expectations.

TECHNICAL SKILLS

- **Languages:** JavaScript/TypeScript, PHP, Python, SQL
- **Frameworks & Platforms:** React, Laravel, Symphony/Zend, WordPress, Next, Node, AI SDK
- **Infrastructure & DevOps:** AWS, Docker, CI/CD
- **Data & Search:** MySQL, Elastic, Redis, PostgreSQL, Vector/Embeddings, LLMs
- **Testing & Quality:** Playwright, Codeception, PHPUnit, Jest, E2E Testing
- **AI/ML:** Agentic coding, AI integrations, Agentic systems, LLM orchestration
- **Specialties:** Distributed Systems, System Architecture, Performance Optimization, Large-scale Migrations, Automation, Testing

---

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Independent Open Source Contribution — FAIR Package Manager

January 2025 - Present | Linux Foundation Project

FAIR Package Manager - Supply Chain Security and Independence for WordPress Ecosystem

- Co-architected Federated And Independent Repositories (FAIR) package manager addressing critical supply chain security vulnerabilities in WordPress ecosystem following hostile plugin takeovers and legal battles that threatened enterprise trust, proposing and designing distributed repository architecture eliminating single point of failure on WordPress.org while enabling host independence

and mirror redundancy for compliance-sensitive deployments

- Helped drive strategic initiative from initial proposal through architectural planning to Linux Foundation adoption as The FAIR Web Foundation project, establishing open governance model with Technical Steering Committee, working groups, and consensus-driven development reflecting community needs while building resilient public digital infrastructure
- Helped design federated protocol enabling decentralized package distribution with opt-in FAIR-native packages, AspirePress mirror support, and host-configurable repositories, replacing centralized WordPress.org APIs (update checks, event feeds) with modular drop-in plugin architecture supporting standalone deployment and full WordPress distributions (FAIR Distro) for enterprise provisioning workflows
- Helped address enterprise WordPress adoption barriers by solving compliance, security, and vendor lock-in concerns through technical independence and long-term sustainability guarantees, enabling financial services, healthcare, and regulated industries to confidently extend WordPress while maintaining supply chain integrity and audit requirements

---

XWP, Australia — Senior Staff Engineer

October 2024 - Present | Sydney, AU (Remote)

Vox Media / Ziff Davis - Multi-brand WordPress Platforms

- Helped architect and maintain multi-brand WordPress platforms for Vox Media (Vox, TheVerge, Eater.com, SBNation, etc) / Ziff Davis (CNET, ZDNET, PC Magazine, LifeHacker, AskMen, etc), enabling 100+ brands over 4+ different networks and 300+ individual sites to share common infrastructure and content while maintaining brand-specific customization capabilities.
- Migrated all brands to the new platform, including 50m+ article and content pieces across all networks and 100+ million monthly users.
- Developed bespoke migration platform to help enterprise customers migrate large-scale and complex content to WordPress platforms, including connections to third-party content systems and databases.

The Times, UK — Principal Software Engineer

April 2023 - October 2024 | London, UK (Remote)

- Led technical modernization and in-house team formation for The Times editorial platform serving 30M monthly users and 230 articles/day, inheriting 35 interconnected services with accumulated technical debt from external agency and establishing engineering excellence through automated testing, CI/CD pipelines, and agile practices across 6-person engineering team
- Drove testing transformation from zero automated coverage to 80% on new code with comprehensive Playwright E2E test suite covering critical user paths, reducing release cycle time by 70% and production rollbacks by 80% while offloading manual testing burden and significantly improving

deployment confidence

- Architected content pipeline consolidation eliminating redundant editorial systems by unifying web and print workflows into single standards-compliant schema, consolidating 4 fragmented storage backends into unified system, reducing time-to-publish by 50% and enabling seamless integration with mobile apps and content syndication partners
- Established team ways of working and continuous improvement culture implementing satisfaction surveys, engineer-owned professional development plans, development workflows/standards, and optimized CI/CD pipeline (Travis to CircleCI migration with caching/delta scanning) reducing build times by 80% and improving developer experience and productivity

---

Altis DXP (Human Made), UK — Principal Product Engineer

July 2021 - April 2023 | London, UK (Remote)

- Co-architected and drove product roadmap for enterprise-grade DXP platform serving Fortune 500 clients (Sony PlayStation, Disney, Siemens, RedBull, Capgemini, Standard Chartered) with AWS-based scalable infrastructure, distilling 20 years of FAANG engineering experience into turnkey solutions including AI-powered media processing, content generation, security certifications for finance/publishing sectors, and comprehensive developer tooling enabling rapid enterprise adoption
- Built zero-config testing framework based on Codeception providing turnkey unit/integration/acceptance testing for client implementations, architected Elasticsearch integrations for scale, and developed automated performance tracking system monitoring site metrics on schedule to trace bottlenecks and regressions to specific releases, improving performance observability and enabling data-driven optimization across 10-person engineering and cloud ops team
- Pioneered capability maturity program establishing experimentation culture (minimum one experiment per sprint), implementing quantitative/qualitative metrics (time-to-publish, developer satisfaction across tooling/process/growth), favoring human sentiment over numeric metrics, creating transparent PDP framework I led by example, and building progression framework aligned with company values, driving continuous improvement and team development at scale
- Expanded platform into Asian markets through localization tooling improvements and security certifications, transformed site audit methodology into profitable service offering, and led technical education initiatives across agency teams (50+ engineers) on platform adoption and advanced WordPress development patterns beyond core, establishing Altis as enterprise standard for publishing and digital experience platforms

---

Human Made, UK — Principal Engineer

May 2016 - April 2023 | London, UK (Remote)

Key Clients: Google, Facebook, Siemens, Sony PlayStation, News Corp, TechCrunch

Siemens Ingenuity - AI-Powered Publishing & Events Platform

- Architected and led migration of Siemens' global content platform from Adobe Experience Manager to WordPress, enabling 2,000-3,000 scientists and employees worldwide to publish content, achieving 100% adoption of custom editorial tooling and significant cost savings that funded rapid feature development
- Pioneered AI-augmented editorial workflow (pre-ChatGPT era) integrating proprietary Siemens AI services for style analysis, grammar checking, and SEO optimization with custom frontend WordPress Block Editor implementation, enabling non-technical domain experts to produce publication-ready content through guided wizards while maintaining brand compliance and multilingual support (English, German, +others) via AWS-powered automatic translation
- Orchestrated cross-functional delivery across 4 distributed teams (6-person engineering, client stakeholders, external UX agency, AI vendor), employing transparent agile practices to ship custom frontend authoring experience that became the exclusive content creation tool for all Ingenuity publications
- Rapidly pivoted platform architecture during COVID-19 pandemic, designing and delivering full-scale virtual events system in 3 months to replace Siemens' annual SCC conference, integrating live streaming, real-time voting, event feeds, and external vendor systems on AWS-hosted Altis DXP infrastructure serving global workforce

News UK - Multi-Brand Headless Architecture Transformation

- Led hybrid external team architecting headless CMS transformation for 10+ News UK brands, migrating from legacy print-focused monolithic systems to unified content hub with WordPress as headless authoring layer and standardized content archive, consolidating codebases and pooling development resources across brands to significantly improve developer velocity, editorial consistency, and technical innovation while maintaining brand-specific customization capabilities

---

XWP, Australia — Senior Software Engineer

October 2013 - January 2016 | Melbourne, AU (Remote)

Key Clients: USA Today, Penske Media, Rogers Media, Global News, News Corp Australia, Automattic, Google, and more!

Stream - Enterprise Audit Logging Platform

- Architected and built WordPress's leading audit logging plugin from ground up as solo technical founder, achieving 100,000+ active installations (2M+ total downloads, 2-3K daily) with week-one media coverage and 3,000 downloads in first month, enabling banks, universities, and enterprises to meet compliance requirements and reducing WordPress adoption barriers in regulated industries
- Designed high-performance distributed architecture using custom database tables with optimized indexes, dynamic event metadata storage, and Elasticsearch backend for query scaling, implementing asynchronous communication patterns to achieve zero-impact page rendering while logging

comprehensive user activity across all WordPress subsystems
- Demonstrated deep platform expertise by systematically analyzing WordPress core internals across every module, class, and workflow to identify correct hooks (filters/actions) for comprehensive event tracking, including rarely-used components, ensuring complete audit trail coverage for security and compliance use cases
- Led evolution from open-source plugin to SaaS business with multi-region cloud offering, architecting Elasticsearch-exclusive backend that offloaded database pressure while achieving GDPR and regional data protection compliance (EU, US, Asia), requiring team-wide upskilling in international data protection standards and driving revenue stream development

WordPress Coding Standards - Industry Standard & Automated Code Quality

- Architected and maintained WordPress Coding Standards (WPCS) package as sole maintainer during critical growth phase, achieving 37M+ installations and establishing industry standard for PHP code quality, consistency, and security across WordPress ecosystem, enabling automated code review and reducing team friction through codified community best practices
- Developed custom PHPCodeSniffer sniffs and automated fixers requiring deep PHP tokenization expertise and language internals mastery to parse scripts, detect violations, and auto-correct code, building upon Abstract Syntax Tree (AST) analysis to enforce performance, security, and accessibility standards across diverse WordPress codebases
- Extended framework to create WordPress VIP Coding Standards for enterprise clients, partnering with Google-sponsored Tide project to scale automated quality checks beyond developer tooling to community-wide plugin confidence scoring, democratizing code quality assessment across WordPress.org's plugin repository
- Transitioned project from sole maintainer to thriving open source community with multiple contributors, establishing governance model and contribution guidelines that enabled sustainable growth while maintaining technical standards and backward compatibility for millions of dependent projects

Rogers Media - Multi-Channel Content Hub Platform

- Architected multi-channel content hub platform for Rogers Media delivering content to web properties, mobile apps, and social platforms with centralized WordPress backend supporting 1M+ daily users
- Led large-scale WordPress migrations and automated regression testing for major publishers, implementing visual diff testing to catch UI regressions across thousands of pages and reducing QA cycles by 60%

Earlier Experience (2008-2016)

Consolidated for space - available upon request

- **Riot Games** (Senior Software Engineer): Built MEAN stack real-time analytics and internal communication systems for League of Legends infrastructure

- **Link Dev** (Open-source Department Lead): Founded and led WordPress/PHP division, trained engineers, delivered enterprise international platforms
- **Wyoos** (Technical Director, Partner): Built and led engineering team for SaaS eCommerce startup with corporate gamification systems
- **EPIC Systems** (Technical Lead): Developed RFID middleware for supply chain, access control, and health monitoring applications
- **IT Owners** (Technical Lead, Partner): Developed LMS and SMS PaaS system; received Letter of Appreciation from Qatar Ministry of Education

---

TECHNICAL LEADERSHIP PHILOSOPHY

High-Performing Team Development

- Cultivate collaborative environments where engineers thrive through trust, transparency, and psychological safety
- Establish unified direction on goals while providing autonomy in execution and technical decisions
- Implement tailored growth support aligning individual development with project and company needs
- Drive agile improvement through strategic use of tools, processes, and experimentation culture (4Ts: Trust, Try, Track, Train)

Continuous Learning & Knowledge Sharing

- Lead by example with public Professional Development Plans (PDPs) demonstrating commitment to growth
- Implement skill matrices and 360 peer reviews for transparent capability assessment and development planning
- Facilitate knowledge sharing sessions on debugging, profiling, automated testing, AI assistants, and engineering practices
- Create space for experimentation with minimum one experiment per sprint to foster innovation culture

Quality, Confidence, & Delivery Excellence

- Build automated testing frameworks (E2E, integration, unit) achieving zero-to-80% coverage improvements
- Establish CI/CD pipelines optimizing build times by 80% and enabling confident, frequent deployments
- Implement code standards and automated quality checks preventing technical debt accumulation
- Develop performance observability systems tracking metrics over time to identify regressions and optimization opportunities

Strategic Technical Decision-Making

- Document architectural decisions through ADRs (Architecture Decision Records) maintaining historical context

- Balance technical excellence with business outcomes, prioritizing pragmatic solutions over perfect abstractions
- Champion data-driven approaches using quantitative metrics (performance, velocity) and qualitative feedback (satisfaction surveys)
- Navigate technical debt strategically, distinguishing between acceptable shortcuts and critical issues requiring immediate attention

---

GROWTH MINDSET & VALUES

Outcomes Over Process

- Focus on meaningful business and user impact rather than rigid adherence to methodology
- Adapt processes to team needs rather than forcing teams to fit predetermined frameworks
- Measure success through delivered value, not hours logged or ceremonies completed

Empowering Through Ownership

- Trust engineers with significant autonomy and decision-making authority
- Create accountability through transparency and clear expectations rather than micromanagement
- Foster product-minded engineering where team members understand and influence business outcomes

Learning in the Open

- Share learnings, mistakes, and growth publicly to normalize continuous improvement
- Encourage vulnerability and experimentation by modeling these behaviors as a leader
- Build psychological safety where questions are welcomed and failure is a learning opportunity

People-First Leadership

- Recognize that motivated, heard, and empowered teams consistently deliver exceptional results
- Invest in understanding individual motivations, strengths, and career aspirations
- Build inclusive cultures where diverse perspectives strengthen technical and business decisions

Pragmatic Excellence

- Pursue high standards while acknowledging context, constraints, and trade-offs
- Challenge perfectionism when it impedes progress; embrace "good enough" when strategically appropriate
- Balance technical debt against velocity, making conscious decisions about when to optimize

---

EDUCATION & CERTIFICATIONS

- **Agile Scrum Master** | Scrum Alliance | 2024
- **MSc in Technology and Management** | CODE Berlin University, Germany | Expected 2027
- **Bachelor of Business Administration** | Cairo University, Egypt | 2016
- **Network Engineering Certification** | Microsoft | 2006

NOTABLE CONTRIBUTIONS & SPEAKING

Open Source Leadership:

- **FAIR Package Manager** - Linux Foundation project, supply chain security architecture
- **WordPress Coding Standards** - 37M+ installations, industry standard for PHP code quality
- **Stream Plugin** - 100K+ active installations, 2M+ total downloads, enterprise audit logging and compliance
- **Altis DXP** - Enterprise digital experience platform for Fortune 500, 10+ clients, 100+ engineers, 1M+ daily users

Conference Speaking (2017-Present):

- **LeadDev/StaffPlus** (US '22, UK '23, DE '24) - Experimentation culture, team leadership, AI adoption, Development metrics, AI hackathon winner!
- **ReactEurope** (Paris '18, '20) - Frontend architecture and performance
- **WordPress Community** - Test automation, debugging and profiling, performance optimization, AI adoption, Agentic coding, Diversity and Inclusion
- **ETHDubai** ('21) - Web3 and decentralized systems

Community Engagement:

- WordPress meetup organizer and regular speaker
- Technical mentor at Startup Weekend entrepreneurial events and CYF mentorship program
- Open source contributor across WordPress ecosystem

AWARDS & RECOGNITIONS

AI Hackathon Winner | LeadDev Berlin, November 2024

- Won Community Vote with "AI Council" - multi-agent AI collaboration platform where Claude, Gemini, and GPT deliberate together through moderated discussion to reach consensus on complex problems
- Demonstrated innovative engineering council and friend circle use cases with real-time streaming conversations
- Secured 4 tickets to LeadDev 2025 | 1,774+ LinkedIn post impressions

Best AI Use in WordPress | WordCamp US 2019, recognized by Matt Mullenweg, WordPress co-founder

- Honored for "most innovative product using AI in WordPress" for pioneering Siemens Ingenuity platform
- First production-scale AI-augmented editorial workflow in WordPress (pre-ChatGPT era)
- Enabled 2,000-3,000 scientists to produce publication-ready content through intelligent automation

Education Innovation Award | Ministry of Education, Qatar Government, 2008-2013

- Awarded innovation recognition for developing innovative LMS and SMS PaaS system
- Enhanced online education standards across Qatari institutions through WordPress-based platform