

Kyle Devereaux Nel



Senior Full-Stack Engineer · TypeScript / React / Node.js / PHP · DevOps

kyle@devnel.com · devnel.com · linkedin.com/in/kdevnel · github.com/kdevnel · devnel.blog

Cape Town, South Africa · Dual South African and British citizen; right to work in South Africa and the UK. Timezone UTC+2. Open to remote or WFH-led hybrid.

PROFILE

I'm a down-to-earth engineer who loves the web. I'm good with people, and I look past the code to the bigger picture: what the business actually needs, how a project or tool should be architected, and which unknowns are going to catch us out later. I do my best work in a team, helping everyone else do theirs. I want to build useful things, not generic ones: apps that solve a real business problem and websites that make a difference.

Over 10+ years I've worked across product engineering, DevOps, technical support and leadership, including six years at Automattic (WooCommerce.com and WordPress.com) and four as Technical Director of a UK agency.

SKILLS

Languages & frameworks: TypeScript, JavaScript, React, Node.js, PHP, Laravel, Astro, Web Components, HTML/CSS/SCSS, Gutenberg, jQuery

Platforms & CMS: WordPress, WooCommerce, WordPress VIP, Sanity

DevOps & infrastructure: Linux, NGINX, Caddy, Docker, GitHub Actions, CircleCI, Cloudflare Workers, AWS, New Relic, Grafana, Smoke & synthetic testing

Data & integrations: MySQL/MariaDB, PostgreSQL, REST APIs, PropData, Google Maps APIs, Algolia, Zoho CRM / Flow / SalesIQ, Zapier, Yoco, Uber Direct, Trino, Superset

AI engineering: AI-assisted development & code review, Human-in-the-loop AI tooling, LLM integration & proxying, Workflow automation, AI security auditing

Support & leadership: Escalation management, Enterprise/VIP support, Team management & mentoring, Onboarding & training, CSAT & resolution time, Customer webinars, Self-serve documentation, Stakeholder management

Delivery: Project scoping, Agile, Linear, Jira, GitHub Projects, Asana

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Senior Web Developer — iGrow Group of Companies

Cape Town, South Africa · Mar 2026 – Oct 2026

Senior developer across iGrow's four brands (Investments, Rentals, Real Estate International and Execu Move). I worked directly with management, marketing and the contact centre, and mentored the other three developers.

- Rebuilt rentals.igrow.co.za on a custom theme with proper caching. GTmetrix grades went from E/F to A/B, and server load fell even as traffic grew in the months after launch.
- Integrated the site with PropData, pulling in 200+ property listings on a schedule and keeping details and availability in sync.
- Built a viewing-booking tool for the contact centre, tied into Zoho CRM for user accounts, leads and bookings. It's used by 25+ contact-centre staff, 10 rental agents and management (with role-based access) for 30+ bookings a day across 200 properties. Prospective tenants could also book viewings themselves, which took people out of a bottleneck to improve booking rates.
- Scoped an agent roster generator to replace manual scheduling: agents grouped by area, a rules engine, and real Google Maps travel times to fit more viewings into each day, plus reporting for management.
- Started a shared Web Components library for use across all four brands.
- Set up and ran the Linux servers for the apps I built, with GitHub Actions pipelines running smoke and synthetic tests before every deploy.
- Brought AI into the team's workflow: landing pages generated from briefs, brief-to-pull-request automation and automated code review. I handled the architecture and reviewed what the AI produced, and rebuilds that used to take months took days or weeks.
- Built automations in Zoho Flow, SalesIQ and Zapier, and wrote direct API integrations where speed, security or data quality mattered. Worked with marketing to track ad spend and lead sources properly.
- Cleaned up the WordPress sites: brought them up to date, removed plugins we didn't need and replaced them with our own code.
- Set up Linear and the engineering workflow from scratch, then helped move the team to Jira.

Founder & Full-Stack Developer — devNel

Remote · 2018 – present · Part-time alongside employment; full-time Apr 2025 – Mar 2026

My own consultancy, building WordPress/WooCommerce and modern web projects (including Astro + Sanity), plus DevOps and AI work, mostly for non-technical clients.

- Build sites end to end, from hosting and deployment to handover, with performance, accessibility and SEO built in.
- Built two live sites for Quiver Café, a social-impact café in Cape Town, on Astro, Sanity and Cloudflare Workers. Online ordering is ready to go: Yoco payments and Uber Direct delivery that the owner switches on with a single toggle in Sanity.
- Audit AI-focused projects for security and put guard rails around how teams use AI tools.

Software Engineer (Full Stack) — Automattic (WooCommerce.com)

Remote · Sep 2023 – Apr 2025

Product engineer on WooCommerce.com, working on discovery, performance, SEO and AI.

- Co-led the React rebuild of the WooCommerce.com Marketplace and architected its product-card components and interaction tracking. It's still the live marketplace today.
- Built the AI proxy integration used across WooCommerce.com, so AI features shipped one consistent way with prompt-level control, usage tracking and cost reporting.
- Shipped an experimental AI product-comparison MVP to help customers choose extensions.
- Removed 40%+ of plugin-based redirects by writing a CLI tool that moved them to NGINX.
- Automated syncing and translation of SEO metadata into our in-house translation tool.
- Planned a shared recommendations setup using Algolia Recommend behind our own API proxy.

Senior Technical Support Engineer / Project Lead — Automattic (WordPress.com)

Remote · 2018 – 2023

Handled escalations for enterprise and VIP customers and led cross-team projects to improve self-service.

- Fixed complex VIP issues involving custom code, server access and platform-specific problems.
- Led the build of automated plan-downgrade flows, so customers could do it themselves instead of waiting on support.
- Named a "Distinguished HE" for customer experience: top 5 of 300+ Happiness Engineers (Automattic's customer support team) in a quarter.
- Mentored new hires through the buddy programme; helped onboard and keep 4+ colleagues.
- Ran live customer webinars and kept self-serve courses up to date.

Technical Director — Illustrate Digital

Cardiff, UK · Feb 2014 – Dec 2017

- Ran engineering, support and project delivery for a WordPress agency. Hired and led a distributed team, owned client relationships and set technical direction.
- Moved the team to remote-first working with Slack and Asana, stayed hands-on with development, and was the escalation point for clients.

Customer Support Manager — Freestart PLC

Wigan, UK · Apr 2013 – Feb 2014

- Managed a team of 3 customer support staff serving web-hosting clients, reporting to senior leadership. Introduced training that improved resolution times and CSAT.

LEADERSHIP & COMMUNITY

Trustee & Volunteer Team Lead — Freedom Church (non-profit)

Cape Town, South Africa · Dec 2019 – present

Trustee on the board of the non-profit arm. Project-managed the AV and network setup for a new building, from choosing vendors to getting it all working. I lead and roster volunteer teams, drawing on 20+ years of running live-production crews.

EDUCATION

BSc Medical Biology — University of Central Lancashire

2006 – 2008 · First-Class Dissertation