

James Turnbull

Product Engineer · Full Stack Builder · Two-Time Founder

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Product engineer with 5+ years building and shipping products end to end in startup environments. Strong React, TypeScript, Node.js, and PostgreSQL. Two-time founder having built products from zero, talked to users, shipped fast, measured what mattered, and pivoted when the data said to. I started my career in construction management, handling multi-million pound work packages for the Battersea Power Station redevelopment before moving into software.

"Jazz has 2 brothers who are YC founders and possesses the entrepreneurial spirit himself. He built out several apps for the company, some almost entirely by himself as the sole engineer, and is a pleasure to work with!"

- Dhanush Radhakrishnan, former CEO of Symplex (YC S19), via YC Bookface

EXPERIENCE

Full Stack Engineer | Jolt Creative Labs

Jan 2026 - Present

Building the full-stack platform for a writing analytics and social tool that integrates with Google Docs and Microsoft Word tracking writing sessions to validate genuine work vs AI-generated content.

- Designed and built user-facing analytics dashboards and data pipelines for real-time session tracking and authenticity validation
- Developed third-party integrations with Google Docs and Microsoft Word
- Working directly with the founding team on product direction translating user research into features, not specs

Founding Engineer | Yuzu Labs

Mar 2025 - Jan 2026

First engineer at an AI-powered video automation platform. Owned product and engineering end-to-end.

- Designed the core product architecture: a scalable, layer-based video rendering system in TypeScript
- Made product decisions daily with no PM, no designer. Gathered context from users, decided what to build, built it, shipped it
- Balanced user needs with engineering feasibility across every feature decision

Product Engineer (Contract) | Officely

Oct 2024 - Mar 2025

Shipped Officely's meeting rooms product for Microsoft Teams from discovery through to production.

- Defined requirements, and built the full-stack implementation (React, TypeScript, Node.js)
- Owned the feature end-to-end: research > design > build > ship
- Delivered a type-safe, maintainable codebase while hitting launch timelines

Founder | HeySabio

Jan 2024 - Jan 2025

Solo-founded an AI-powered adaptive fitness coach while training for Ironman Austria. Built the entire product from scratch. The core challenge was designing an AI coaching engine that could intelligently restructure training plans around real-world disruptions.

- Built the full product: React Native frontend, Node.js API, PostgreSQL database, OpenAI integration, deployed on AWS
- Designed the adaptive engine: plans that restructured themselves when life got in the way
- Shipped to a real user base, iterated on feedback, learned the limits of solo-founder distribution without a channel
- Built this while training 20+ hours a week. Powered through the 3.8km swim and 180km bike on race day before collapsing 16km into the marathon. Didn't give up until my body forced me to. Came out a fundamentally different engineer

Technical Founder & Engineer | Communion (YC S19, formerly Symplex)

Jan 2021 - Dec 2023

Built a marketing automation platform for customer acquisition processing ad platform data to determine ad variations and improvements. Started as a software engineer and grew into technical founder, which early in my career forced me to learn generalist business development across sales, partnerships, and go-to-market.

- Built backend systems and user interfaces in React Native and Node.js within a small engineering team
- Set up product analytics (quantitative + qualitative) and used data to drive every feature decision
- Shipped integrations with Meta, TikTok, and Google advertising platforms
- Led a strategic pivot from the original product (a habit tracker) to marketing automation based on market signals and user feedback. Killed the original direction and rebuilt around validated pain points
- Formulated product vision and long-term strategic direction as the company grew

Commercial Manager (Placement) | Mace Group

Jun 2019 - Jun 2020

Managed commercial operations on the Battersea Power Station development.

- Owned work packages by year-end. Learned to think commercially under real stakes
- Negotiated with subcontractors and presented Requests for Change (RFCs) to the board, building stakeholder management skills in a high-pressure, multi-disciplinary environment
- Offered a graduate position upon completion, declined to pursue software and product development

PROJECTS

HeySabio

AI-powered adaptive fitness coach. React Native, Node.js, PostgreSQL, OpenAI. Plans that restructured themselves when life got in the way.

SneakyBeep

UK Tetra airwave detector custom built using Raspberry Pi Zero 2W, Low-Noise Amplifier and RTL-SDR hardware. Includes custom waveform recognition software.

Spotlight

Search-based assistant tool (Microsoft Word app) for Pattern Law Firms. Identified the user pain point, designed the solution, shipped it.

TECHNICAL SKILLS

Core stack

React, TypeScript, Node.js, PostgreSQL, Next.js

Frontend

React Native, HTML/CSS, Tailwind CSS, Redux

Backend & Infrastructure

Python, REST APIs, AWS (EC2, S3, Lambda, RDS), DigitalOcean, Docker, Redis, Convex, Trigger.dev, Microservices

Data & AI

OpenAI API, Claude API, Agentic workflows, Tool use / function calling, Prompt engineering, Vector search, RAG pipelines, Data pipelines, Analytics instrumentation

DevOps & Tooling

Git, CI/CD, Vercel, GitHub Actions, Monorepo (Turborepo)

Product

User research, UX design, Feature prioritisation, Go-to-market, Stripe integration, Third-party APIs

Personal setup

My daily workflow is built around Claude Code as my primary development environment, paired with an Obsidian vault for knowledge management, notes, and long-term project context. I use agentic coding heavily, writing specs and letting AI handle implementation while I focus on architecture and product decisions.

EDUCATION

BSc (Hons) Quantity Surveying

University of Reading

Achieved honours degree while self-teaching software engineering on the side.

2017 - 2021

Computer Science (Distinction)

Henley College

2015 - 2017

11 GCSEs

Sir William Borlase's Grammar School

2010 - 2015