

# Donavon West

Full Stack Developer / Engineering Leadership / Author / Speaker  
New York City or remote



## // About Me

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An experienced technology leader and hands-on individual contributor that leads teams by example. Well-connected in the New York City React and JavaScript communities, having built and coordinated one of the largest React meetups in the country. Author and technology conference speaker. Spoke at Facebook's React Conf, React New York, and others.

## // Professional Experience

**Donavon LLC**  
President and CTO  
Jan 2020 – Present

- Technology consulting services (i.e. outsource your CTO/hire an expert)
- Systems architecture and/or hands-on coding
- Expert in React front-end, full-stack JavaScript/TypeScript
- Helping customers with TypeScript full-stack applications using Node JS, AWS Lambda, and more

**Sessions FM**  
Founding CTO  
March 2020 – Present

- Architected, designed, and coded the B2C site [sessions.fm](https://sessions.fm) aimed at helping professional musicians connect directly with their audience and create new revenue streams during the pandemic and beyond.
- Coded peer-to-peer video calling in the browser (think Zoom)
- Hired and managed the core engineering team
- Tech stack: React, React Hooks, TypeScript, AWS Lambda, AWS Chime, AWS SQS, and MongoDB

**American Express**  
Developer Relations  
April 2018 – Nov 2019

- Was the face of technology for American Express
- Built the role of Developer Relations from the ground up with the goal of attracting top engineering talent
- Coded advanced React on a daily basis
- Elevated Amex onto the [hired.com](https://hired.com) list of NYC Top 10 Tech Brands
- Directed many thousands of prospective hires to the careers site
- Managing Editor and principal author for the Technology Blog at [americanexpress.io](https://americanexpress.io) publishing articles on React, JavaScript, and more
- In 2018 wrote the #1 SEO article on Google search for “React best practices”
- Gave technical presentations at conventions, meetups, and internal coding workshops on React Hooks and coding best practices

**American Express**  
Engineering Director  
Nov 2016 - April 2018

- Led two full stack scrum teams of 7 people each supporting the logged-in experience for the highest-trafficked website at Amex
- Evangelized coding best practices and lead the internal React Communities of Technical Practice (CTP)
- All the time remaining “hands-on”, contributing to the code base and performing code reviews
- Worked with the Product team to determine and execute backlog features
- Tech Stack: React, React Hooks, JavaScript, GraphQL

**Barnes & Noble College**  
Engineering Director/CTO  
Engineering Director  
Oct 2011 - Nov 2016

- Led the entire 120-person engineering organization as acting CTO
- Oversaw 25 people covering all aspects of front-end client development for iOS, Android, Mac, Windows, and SPA web as Director of Engineering
- Co-led the leadership team defining enterprise processes and guidelines
- Worked with Project, Product, and Design teams to define and execute product vision

## // Professional Experience (cont)

[Barnes & Noble](#)  
Engineering Manager  
Oct 2009 - Nov 2011

- Advanced from individual contributor, to lead for a 10-person team, to engineering manager
- Wrote the Windows and Mac desktop eReader for the Nook platform

## Etcetera

Extremely Digital, Owner, Nov 1995 – Oct 2009  
WordPerfect Corp, Director, Aug 1992 – Nov 1995  
MagicSoft, Owner, Aug 1988 – Aug 1992  
USRobotics, Developer, Oct 1984 – Aug 1988

## // Community and Personal Involvement

[useReactNYC](#)  
Organizer  
April 2019 - Present

- Organizer for a New York City React meetup at [useReact.NYC](#)
- Uses contacts in the React community to solicit top industry speakers
- Work with local companies to host events
- Foster diversity and inclusion in the React community

## Open Source

Writes and maintains several OSS packages. Here are a few:

- [Thwack](#) - A tiny modern data fetching solution
- [usePersistedState](#) - A custom React Hook that provides a multi-instance, multi-tab/browser shared, and persistent state.
- [useDarkMode](#) - A custom React Hook to help you implement a "dark mode" component for your application.
- [useEventListener](#) - A custom React Hook that provides a declarative `addEventListener`.

See more on [github.com/donavon](https://github.com/donavon)

## Publications

Tech articles on [donavon.com/blog](https://donavon.com/blog)  
Wrote many articles for the American Express [Technology Blog](#) including the most popular article.  
[freeCodeCamp](#) "Top Contributor for 2018" award winner  
Contributing author Hacker Noon  
Over 2000 views/month on [medium.com/@donavon](https://medium.com/@donavon)  
MSDN Magazine