Mike Pfaffroth

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Profile

I've been an SRE in professional environments for the past 15 years supporting a variety of configurations. I have focused my career on designing highly-available services from the ground up to be reliable, secure, easy to work on, and well-organized. I'm a technology generalist; I focus on being familiar enough to approach any problem, and I work on it until I can fix the issue even if it involves research and testing. I'm currently focusing my skills on CI/CD and Terraform integration with Kubernetes, as well as furthering my programming experience with larger scale Go/Rust projects.

Skills

– INFRASTRUCTURE

Kubernetes	AWS	Datastores
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– PROGRAMMING

Python	Shell	Golang	Rust
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– CONFIGURATION MANAGEMENT

Ansible	Chef	Terraform	Salt
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Experience

10/2023 – present
Richmond, VA,
United States

Staff SRE - Kubernetes Platform
Okta
I was responsible for creating a new Kubernetes platform that would be used across all of Okta. The team set up an environment to run various workload requirements, and do it with security, stability, and flexibility in mind. I wrote Terraform to deploy the platform to EKS using AWS EKS and which used various application support infrastructure like Elasticache, RDS, AWS Secrets Manager, etc. I POCed and helped make decisions on various software for use in the platform, including Kyverno, Istio, Flux, and ArgoCD . I also wrote and implemented much of the CI/CD for the deployment and post deploy validation process. I worked closely with application teams to evaluate applications and implement them with the required security and high availability needs.

08/2021 – 10/2023
Richmond, VA,
United States

Staff SRE - Emerging Product Group
Okta
I spearheaded a project to migrate an existing EC2-based infrastructure to Okta's custom internal terraform framework, based on an EKS model. I helped design and implement the various aspects of the migration, from the EKS resiliency design to the network ingress model, while keeping 99.9% availability and cost as the two forefront concerns. This involved working with many teams and quickly assimilating new information to deliver on technical milestones.

04/2019 – 07/2021
San Francisco, CA, USA

Senior DevOps Engineer
Revinate
I worked to improve the reliability and stability of our distributed platform workloads. I

supported our engineering department to help them design and deliver the most efficient and high-quality software as possible- both in terms of cost and performance. I implemented and maintained multiple Kubernetes clusters that run all of our computing workload. I was responsible for maintaining multiple environments in AWS and GCE in Terraform, as well as being the subject matter expert for any questions about our datastores (MySQL, Elasticsearch, S3, MongoDB) or data streams (Kafka, RabbitMQ). I helped our teams make the best decisions about the use of technologies for their specific needs. I also assisted in cost and security audits as needed, including reporting and implementing any resulting recommended best practices.

09/2019 – 04/2020
Oakland, CA, USA

Infrastructure Operations Manager
Comfy

I was responsible for the quality of our service delivered from our environments. Working closely with our Customer Success, Support, Solutions, Product, and Engineering groups, I was responsible for the availability, security, visibility, and support of our cloud platform. I helped develop operational playbooks, best practices, support tiers, deployment guides, and roles & responsibilities necessary to deploy our service at client sites predictably and reliably. I ensured our team implemented monitoring, alerting, and operations as core features of our product. I helped train operations and support staff in triage, debugging, and escalation.

04/2019 – 08/2019
Oakland, United States

Senior Infrastructure Operations Engineer
Comfy

I was responsible for maintaining company-wide infrastructure, including migration from a single, manually created VPC in AWS to a Terraform-backed system. This new system integrated with CI/CD to allow our team to audit changes and perform tests before deploying. I also was instrumental in our move from a manually created Kubernetes ecosystem to using EKS and deploying via CI/CD.

08/2016 – 04/2019
San Francisco, CA,
United States

Infrastructure Engineer
Revinate

I was responsible for managing, building and improving our CI/CD pipeline, as well as automating all things related to infrastructure. I led the project to revamp our load balancing strategy, making it significantly easier for our developers to launch new services in our Kubernetes cluster. I implemented a new MongoDB backup system to Amazon S3/Glacier, saving $2.5k/month in hosted backup costs. I assisted in answering any questions on our microservices-based infrastructure, which included Kubernetes, etcd, CoreOS, and Docker. I participated in the on-call rotation and provided support for our services whenever necessary.

11/2015 – 08/2016
Emeryville, CA,
United States

Infrastructure Team Lead
Location Labs

I provided leadership for our infrastructure team, while helping to assist in day-to-day technical tasks as well. I helped provide technical mentoring on skills from fundamentals to advanced technologies, as well as provided top-tier support to our on-call rotation in emergency situations. I also provided consultation on infrastructure and security matters for our developers and executive team while planning new products and services.

05/2013 – 11/2015
Emeryville, CA,
United States

Senior Systems Engineer
Location Labs

I worked closely with Engineering and QA to ensure all our servers and networking equipment delivered highly reliable services as needed to our clients. I helped to evaluate, choose, and implement the best solutions for a variety of challenges involving software, networking, hardware, and monitoring. I managed servers, routers, switches, and firewalls, using best practices and configuration management methodologies. I also helped in provisioning new product environments from scratch. I was involved in all layers of the software stack, including web serving, databases, caching, load balancing, and security.

Volunteering

05/2013 – present
Bay Area,
United States of America

Co-Founder
Beaus Bridge Club
I co-founded an animal welfare organization dedicated to saving and improving the lives of pets most at risk in the shelter system through rescue, foster, financial assistance, and adoption. http://www.beausbridgeclub.org

Hobbies

Woodworking   Cooking   Animal Welfare   Music performance

References

Romain Richard
Comfy
I worked with Mike at Location Labs and Comfy for a bit more than 3 years total. Mike was the go-to person whenever we had a question, not just because he's great technically, but also because he's always happy to help others. Thanks to him, everyone on the team got better at their job.

Matt Smith
Location Labs
Mike's charismatic personality often had the rest of us looking to him as a team leader. He always made time to help teach more junior members and the success of numerous projects could be traced back in some way to his involvement.

Steven Elleman
Okta
My experience working with Mike has been distinctly great. Another colleague that I admire told me that an architect requires technical empathy, the ability and desire to understand what others are dealing with and how to address it. Mike definitely demonstrates technical empathy. He consistently demonstrates ownership in his work and consideration for his team mates. I hope I work with Mike again — the sooner the better!

Social Media

/ipfaffy   pfaffy.me   /ipfaffy