

CONTACT

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KEY FACTS

Tallinn, Estonia · EET (UTC+2)
Remote, on site as needed
Available for new projects
Freelance via Whyservices OÜ or part-time employment, EU-wide
Born 24 October 1982 · German citizen

CORE SKILLS

Ruby on Rails daily since 2017	●●●●○
Ruby	●●●●○
PostgreSQL & MySQL	●●●○○
Linux servers	●●●●○
Ansible Linux and Windows hosts	●●●●○
Docker Swarm & CapRover	●●●●○
CI/CD GitHub Actions, GitLab CI, Woodpecker	●●●●○
Monitoring & logging	●●●●○
Backup & restore	●●●●○
AWS (EC2, VPC, S3)	●●●○○

●●●●○ Advanced ●●●○○ Proficient

WAYS OF WORKING

Written system review · Plain Rails conventions · Incremental upgrades · Infrastructure as code · Runbooks · Disaster recovery scenarios

INDUSTRIES

Fintech · Hosting & IT services · Education · Marketing · Museums & exhibitions · Agencies & SMEs

LANGUAGES

German (native)
English (C1)

EDUCATION

MA European Urban Cultures
VUB Brussels, Tilburg, MMU Manchester, EKA Tallinn, 2011

BA Area Studies Asia/Africa
Humboldt University Berlin, 2010

Andreas Wagner

Ruby on Rails Developer & System Administrator

I build, take over and run Ruby on Rails applications in production: from the first conversation with the business side to deploys, backups and monitoring.

9 years
freelance Rails development and operations, since 2017

13 years
running production systems, since 2013

30
client sites and applications, run by one person

PROFILE

Ruby on Rails developer and system administrator, freelancing from Tallinn since 2017 through my company Whyservices OÜ. I started in system administration and moved into development to change the software I was running. From 2013 to 2017 I led system operations at a PCI DSS regulated fintech. Since then I have built, taken over and operated Rails applications for clients, alongside my own hosting services WellHost and WellPress. I prefer plain, conventional Rails, upgrade step by step and start every engagement with a written review. As I run the servers myself, deploys, background jobs and backups are part of every change. I studied area studies and urban cultures in Berlin, Brussels, Tilburg, Manchester and Tallinn, and have lived in Estonia since 2012.

PROJECT EXPERIENCE

Takeover and modernisation of the competition platform Defolio.com

2017 – today

Freelance via Whyservices OÜ · Tallinn, remote

Industry: marketing · Role: Rails developer & maintainer · Team: solo, with the client's product owner

The application was in production, but database queries got slower with every competition. Framework upgrades had been applied, but syntax and code style drifted further and further apart. There were no functional tests, and the framework was tightly entangled with the operating system. I started with an in-depth review: reading the code and the infrastructure, then a written report with the risks ranked by severity. Before changing anything, I covered the business-critical paths with tests. I then completed the Ruby and Rails upgrades, replacing deprecated and broken syntax, and swapped custom workarounds for Rails conventions along the way. Deploys now run through a CI pipeline with staging and rollback, and backups have a restore procedure that has actually been rehearsed. The application is back on a supported version (Rails 7 → 8.1), and I resolved almost all N+1 queries. Deploys take 4 minutes from git instead of 30 minutes by hand. The client kept its application instead of paying for a rewrite estimated at €45,000.

Ruby on Rails · PostgreSQL · Sidekiq · Redis · GitHub Actions · Docker

PROJECT EXPERIENCE (continued)

Greenfield Rails application with business stakeholders

2025 - 2026

MTÜ Ruumiharidus · via Whyservices OÜ

Industry: education · Role: Rails developer, from discovery to operation · Team: solo, with two stakeholders on the business side

The non-profit ran its core process by hand in spreadsheets and email, with a WordPress plugin managing students, groups and timetables. Double entries and errors cost the team 16 hours a week, and nobody had a reliable overview of what the software could do. I worked out the requirements directly with the stakeholders: short sessions, written specifications and small releases they could try out early. I built the application as a conventional Rails monolith covering registration, enrolment, attendance and invoicing, in Estonian and English. I also set up hosting, CI and monitoring, so the client had one contact from the first conversation to operation. Live after 12 weeks, with 2 people using it daily. Manual work dropped by two thirds.

Ruby on Rails · Hotwire · PostgreSQL · Solid Queue · CI/CD

Back-office application for a hosting business

2015 - today

Whyservices OÜ, own product (WellPress / WellHost)

Industry: hosting & IT services · Role: product owner & sole developer · Team: solo

Running managed hosting for many small clients meant invoicing, client communication, status updates and each site's hosting history were spread across separate tools. Every new client added manual work and the risk of a missed invoice or an unannounced maintenance window. I designed and built a Rails back-office application that brings these together: invoicing, client communication, public status pages and a per-site hosting history. It calls the hosting providers' APIs and manages the administration runbooks. I kept it plain Rails, so that maintaining it stays cheap for a one-person business. One person runs 30 client sites and applications. Setting up a new project takes 30 minutes instead of 8 hours, and invoicing and status communication are automated.

Ruby on Rails · Ruby · Ansible · REST APIs · e-invoicing

Container hosting platform for small companies (WellHost)

2022 - today

Whyservices OÜ, own service · Tallinn, remote

Industry: hosting for SMEs and agencies · Role: architect & sole operator · Team: solo

Small companies ran their applications without operations staff: hand-built servers, manual deploys, no separate staging, and backups nobody had ever restored. A failed server or a bad deploy meant days of downtime and possibly lost data. I built a standardised container platform on Docker Swarm, with CapRover as management layer and servers set up by Ansible. Each client gets staging and production separated at infrastructure level, with backing services running outside the application containers. Deploys run from git through CI (Woodpecker, GitHub Actions, GitLab CI) with rollback. Hourly encrypted off-site backups are restored in regular drills, and TLS, monitoring and weekly updates are part of the service. At most one hour of data can be lost, and restores are proven rather than assumed. 10 applications (e.g. Rails, Symfony, Django, Wiki.js, GitLab, Plausible) run at 99.95% availability. Clients pay from €50 a month instead of a multiple for dedicated operations staff.

Docker Swarm · CapRover · Ansible · Woodpecker CI · PostgreSQL · Redis

Managed WordPress fleet (WellPress)

2013 - today

Whyservices OÜ, own service · Tallinn, remote

Industry: agencies, SMEs, non-profits · Role: architect & sole operator · Team: solo

Agencies and small businesses ran WordPress on shared hosting: updates lagged behind, there was nowhere to test changes, and when a site broke nobody knew what had changed. For agencies, every outage hurt their own client relationship. I standardised server setup in half-automated Ruby runbooks with Ansible. Every site gets its own virtual server in an EU data centre plus an identical staging copy. Core, theme and plugin updates run automatically, and Restic/Autorestic take incremental snapshots of database and files. Monitoring covers external uptime (Gatus), scheduled jobs (Healthchecks), metrics (Prometheus), logs (Loki) and dashboards (Grafana). One person operates 20 sites. A new server is ready in 30 minutes instead of 8 hours, daily backups are kept for the whole subscription, and 99% of incidents in 10 years were caught by monitoring before the client noticed.

Ansible · Ruby · Restic · Prometheus · Grafana · Loki · WordPress

Exhibition IT for museums and the EU Council Presidency

2016 - 2024

Whyservices OÜ, with a data visualisation studio · Tallinn, Brussels

Industry: museums, public sector (EU2017) · Role: infrastructure: hardware, automation, operations · Team: 4 people at the studio, plus museum staff

Each exhibition runs up to 50 Windows terminals and servers for years, in museums without their own IT staff. Opening dates are fixed, and every terminal that goes dark is visible to visitors. I wrote the hardware specifications for the tenders, weighing minimum requirements against the look the designers wanted. I set up network and hardware and configured the Windows terminals with Ansible playbooks. CI/CD pipelines build the exhibition software and deploy it, along with digital assets, to all terminals. For remote operations I added Raspberry Pi out-of-band units, Wake-on-LAN, VPN access (WireGuard, Tailscale) and monitoring. For EU2017 I coordinated partners in Tallinn and Brussels. Five exhibitions delivered: ERM "Digital Encounters" (2016), EU2017 "Flow" (2017), Fat Margaret Museum (2019), "Heaps of Happiness" at the Estonian Health Museum (2021) and Seaplane Harbour (2024). 90% of incidents are solved remotely, without a site visit.

Ansible · Windows · CI/CD · Raspberry Pi · WireGuard · Tailscale

Head of System Operations

01/2013 - 07/2017

Cash on Go Ltd · Tallinn

Industry: fintech, regulated (PCI DSS, FCA) · Role: head of system operations · Team: 3 system administrators

The company's main application and database ran on hand-administered servers in the data centre and in the office. A hardware fault would have stopped the business, and as a regulated fintech the company had to pass PCI DSS and FCA-related audits. I led the team of system administrators and moved administration to infrastructure as code, first with Chef, later with Ansible. Together with the development team and external consultants, I migrated the PHP/Symfony application and its MySQL database to a redundant, multi-location setup on AWS (EC2, VPC, S3), with internal services on Proxmox. As primary lead for PCI DSS procedures, I introduced standardised work processes and release policies, and was the main contact for vendors and IT service providers. The core application no longer had a single point of failure, and servers could be rebuilt from code. 3 PCI DSS audits passed without major findings. Received the company's 2014 Einstein Award for work across departments.

AWS · Chef · Ansible · Proxmox · MySQL · NGINX · PCI DSS

CAREER OVERVIEW

08/2017 - today	Freelance Ruby on Rails developer and system administrator, Whyservices OÜ, Tallinn
2016 - 2024	Exhibition IT for Estonian museums and EU2017, via Whyservices OÜ
01/2013 - 07/2017	Head of System Operations, Cash on Go Ltd, Tallinn
2012	Project work after moving to Tallinn: coworking space, events, web administration
11/2011 - 01/2012	Personal assistant to Tamer Alawam, journalist and director, Berlin
2010 - 2011	MA European Urban Cultures, Brussels, Tilburg, Manchester and Tallinn
12/2009 - 08/2010	Student assistant in IT administration, Humboldt University Berlin
2008 - 2009	Term abroad in Damascus, Syria (Arabic)
2008 - 2012	Owner, Whyservices, Berlin

2006 - 2010	BA Area Studies Asia/Africa, Humboldt University Berlin
2005 - 2006	Internship in Benin, then a journey through West Africa
02/2004 - 07/2004	Internship, Thuringian State Chancellery, Erfurt
2003 - 2004	Administrative sciences, Hochschule Harz, Halberstadt (not completed)
2002 - 2003	Civilian service, Johanniter-Unfall-Hilfe, Gotha

EARLIER POSITIONS IN DETAIL

Project work after moving to Tallinn
2012

Tallinn, Estonia

- Coworking space administrator: promotion and day-to-day running, member networking, accounting, design and outfitting of the space
- Project manager for the INURA annual conference (June 2012) and a three-day workshop for the Goethe Institute (September 2012)
- Cultural events with budgets up to €20,000 and teams of up to 20; workshop infrastructure for 20 to 150 participants
- Freelance web administration (Whyservices); trade in wood products

Personal assistant to Tamer Alawam, Syrian journalist and director
11/2011 - 01/2012

Berlin, Germany

- Organised his professional life in a foreign environment
- Technical support
- Communication with German authorities and stakeholders

Student assistant in IT administration
12/2009 - 08/2010

International Research Centre "Work and Life Cycle in Global Historical Perspective" (re:work), Humboldt University Berlin

- Set up the IT of a newly founded research college that hosts ten international fellows a year
- Network and Active Directory administration, user administration
- Setup and maintenance of devices, hardware monitoring
- IT support for visiting scientists and staff, in English and French
- Liaison between the college and the university computing centre

Owner, Whyservices
2008 - 2012

Berlin, Germany

- Telecommunications and internet services for small clients
- Development, hosting, web design, blog administration and remote administration

Internship, telecentre of the Songhai Centre
09/2005 - 12/2005

Ambassador Pamela Bridgewater Technology Center, Porto-Novo, Benin

- Installation, configuration, testing and repair of used hardware, Windows systems and network devices
- First Linux installations (Debian)
- Introduced an inventory list; taught basic repair procedures
- Supported telecentre clients with email, internet and web hosting; data recovery

Internship, European Information Centre Thuringia
02/2004 - 07/2004

Thuringian State Chancellery, Erfurt, Germany

- International symposium "Via Regia – Königsstraße Europas" with the Council of Europe: recruited speakers and moderators along the route from Spain to Ukraine
- Address database for about 1,500 invitations to six European countries
- Multimedia exhibition in the Collegium Majus, Erfurt: installation of the audiovisual technology
- Congress "Die Zukunft unserer Unternehmen im erweiterten Europa" with three federal states and the European Commission

Civilian service
2002 - 2003

Johanniter-Unfall-Hilfe, Gotha, Germany

- Driver for disabled children and for patients between hospitals; dispatching of transport orders

EDUCATION

MA European Urban Cultures (EQF level 7)
09/2010 - 08/2011

POLIS programme: Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Tilburg University, Manchester Metropolitan University, Estonian Academy of Arts Tallinn

Thesis: "Work & The City – Developments in Urban Working Culture: An Exploratory Research about Coworking Spaces in European Cities and their Impact on Urban Working Culture".

BA Area Studies Asia/Africa (EQF level 6)
09/2006 - 08/2010

Humboldt University Berlin, Institute of Asian and African Studies

Thesis: "Migration and Urbanization: The Social Construction of Cities exemplified on Lagos, Nigeria", graded "very good".

Term abroad, Arabic language course
2008 - 2009

Arabic Teaching Institute for Non-Arabic Speakers, Damascus, Syria

Scholarship of the bi-national German–Syrian exchange programme.

Administrative sciences (European administrative management)
2003 - 2004

Hochschule Harz, Halberstadt, Germany

Not completed.

Exchange year, high school diploma
1999 - 2000

Bonita Vista High School, Chula Vista, California, USA

Congress-Bundestag Youth Exchange; member of the California Scholarship Federation.

Abitur
1993 - 2002

Staatliches Gymnasium Arnoldischule, Gotha, Germany

Final grade 2.0 ("good").

SKILLS IN DETAIL

Ruby and Rails	Ruby on Rails (upgrades 7 → 8.1), Hotwire (Turbo, Stimulus), Solid Queue, Sidekiq, Active Storage, Action Text, Rodauth, ActionPolicy, CanCanCan, multi-tenancy, i18n, Minitest, Standard, Herb, Honeybadger
Databases	PostgreSQL, MySQL, Redis
Servers and containers	Linux (Debian, Ubuntu), Ansible, Chef, Docker, Docker Swarm, CapRover, NGINX, Proxmox, Windows terminal fleets
Cloud and hosting	AWS (EC2, VPC, S3), Hetzner, DigitalOcean, S3-compatible object storage
CI/CD	GitHub Actions, GitLab CI, Woodpecker, Drone CI, Jenkins, Git hooks
Monitoring and backup	Prometheus, Grafana, Loki, Gatus, Healthchecks, Honeybadger, Pulseway; Restic, Autorestic, restore drills
Networks	WireGuard, Tailscale, OpenVPN, Wake-on-LAN, Raspberry Pi out-of-band units; DKIM, SPF and DMARC for mail delivery
Web and CMS	WordPress (managed hosting, headless API), HTML, CSS, Tailwind
Process and compliance	PCI DSS procedures, FCA audit requirements, release life-cycle policies, runbooks, disaster recovery scenarios, written system reviews
People and projects	Team lead of 3 system administrators, requirements work with business stakeholders, tenders and vendor management, event management

FURTHER TRAINING AND SEMINARS

2009	Summer University "Metropolitan Studies", Georg Simmel Center, Humboldt University Berlin
2008	OpenForum Berlin: "Expansion of civil society in the age of migration" (Citizens of Europe e.V.)
2007	2nd European Youth Festival, Novi Sad; 2nd International Student Week, Belgrade (media workshop)
2006	6th Pristina Summer University: "Globalization, Transnationalism"; 2nd International Youth Exchange, Lagos
2000 - 2001	10th International European Youth Forum, Amsterdam; "Europawerkstatt", Mühlhausen

AWARDS

2014	Einstein Award, Cash on Go: the company's internal award for outstanding effort to facilitate work across departments
2010	BA thesis graded "very good", the highest grade

REFERENCES

> ***"Without the support of Mr. Wagner, the college would not have been permitted to successfully establish its IT sector at the beginning of the scholarly fellow year 2009/2010."***
>
> Prof. Dr. Andreas Eckert, Director, IGK re:work, Humboldt University Berlin (reference, January 2012)

> ***"He is able to familiarise himself with new matters very quickly and to put what he has learned into practice in a structured way."***
>
> Head of the European Information Centre Thuringia (reference, September 2004, translated from German)

VOLUNTARY WORK AND INTERESTS

2005 - 2006	Journey through West Africa: Morocco, Mauritania, Mali, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Togo, Benin, Nigeria, Cameroon
	Former board member of "Art der Stadt Gotha", a socio-cultural platform; class and pupils' speaker; organised concerts, a music festival and exhibitions
	Interests: coworking spaces, urban labour organisation and the professionalisation of IT knowledge