David Cheal

CTO / Principal Consultant

LinkedIn
David Cheal CV (PDF)

I’m a hands-on CTO / Principal Consultant who enables businesses to succeed, by establishing secure, scalable and cost-effective technology. Over 12 years I’ve led AWS migrations, built consultancies (one acquired by Deloitte), and delivered secure, high-availability systems in finance and ecommerce. I now run my own business, building an AI-driven education platform end-to-end. I’m practical, delivery-focused, and comfortable owning both technical decisions and commercial outcomes.

Core Strengths

Cloud architecture & delivery

AWS-first design, migrations/modernisation, scalable systems, reliability/cost control, serverless

Engineering leadership

Hands-on CTO, pragmatic delivery, hiring/mentoring, stakeholder management

Security & governance

Least privilege, DevSecOps, controls, platform hardening, risk-based decision making

Product engineering

TypeScript/Node backend, React SPA, CI/CD, monorepos, testing, vendor service integration

AI integration

LLM workflow/orchestration design, prompt/tooling patterns, production concerns (quality, cost, observability), governance and security

Professional Experience

Sole Director / CTO — Thermite Consulting

2020–Present

Founded and operating a business that focuses on engineering, security, delivery, and AI.

Product Development

Maverick

AI Software Development Framework | Open Source

- An open-source Claude Code plugin and CLI that enforces quality, security, and operational best practices during autonomous AI-driven development
- 28 built-in skills covering logging, alerting, testing, CI/CD, git workflows, and security governance; plus an upskill system that auto-generates project-specific guidance by scanning the codebase
- Autonomous agents for code review, testing, and technical documentation — isolated from implementation to avoid self-assessment bias
- Dual workflow modes: fully autonomous (from GitHub issues) and guided (with human checkpoints at design/planning phases), plus local task support without requiring GitHub
- Enforcement hooks that prevent dangerous operations (commits to protected branches, secret exposure) at the tool-call level
- Built with Python 3.10+, boto3, Jinja2; includes optional AWS infrastructure provisioning for remote autonomous workers

Python | boto3 | Jinja2 | Claude Code | GitHub Actions

Client Projects

New York-based law firm

- Agentic AI processing of civil suit cases
- Designed and developed a solution for the processing of case documents. This included Amazon Web Services infrastructure, PDF processing pipelines, RAG document processing, agentic analysis and decision making based on case content.

Australian civil case

- GraphRAG solution for case material analysis
- Designed and developed a GraphRAG solution for processing 2 TB of case material (court documents, case material and emails) to enable AI analysis of case material. Utilised Neo4j and a multi-model approach using DeepSeek and Anthropic models.

Australian import/export firm

- Agentic AI processing of shipping processes
- Designed and developed an agentic AI solution for processing sales data and shipping manifests.
- Implemented using Amazon Web Services, Node.js/React development and OpenAI services

SelfWealth

- Complete AWS security review and recommendations.
- Oversaw and assisted in implementing a secure multi-account architecture aligned with the AWS Well-Architected best-practice pillars.
- Implemented a Salesforce ETL pipeline service using AWS serverless and Node.js.

Presspay

- CI/CD workflows.
- Established documentation and operations practices.
- Node.js backend development, running on AWS serverless Lambda.

TDM Growth Partners

- Completed merger and acquisition assessments to identify technology suitability.

Consulting Services

- Merger and acquisition technology assessments.
- Cybersecurity assessments and uplifts, including mission-critical systems for ASX trading and accounting platforms.

- Application and DevSecOps solutions development for a financial loans platform.

Co-Founder / Director / Lead Architect — NC Group

2017–2020

Created a consultancy to deliver ecommerce and ordering/delivery platforms (team ~8 engineers, including offshore staff).

- Led architecture and hands-on implementation of a scalable serverless AWS platform.
- Established delivery practices around automation, DevSecOps and agile execution.
- Managed key client relationships; led hiring and delivery staffing (local + offshore).

Director / CTO / Lead Architect — Strut Digital

2014–2017

Grew from ~4 to ~25 staff over 3 years; delivered a wide range of AWS projects (from small builds to complex regulated/high-availability environments). Business ultimately acquired by Deloitte.

- CTO/lead architect for client engagements: solution design, technical leadership, delivery oversight.
- Designed and implemented AWS platforms across ecommerce, banking, and airline-related systems (incl. work involving Qantas systems).
- Partnered with Amazon Web Services sales and stakeholders to support adoption and migration programs.
- Shared responsibility for operations: hiring, contracts, finance/legal, vendor management.

Co-Founder / Principal Consultant — Krunchtime

2013–2014

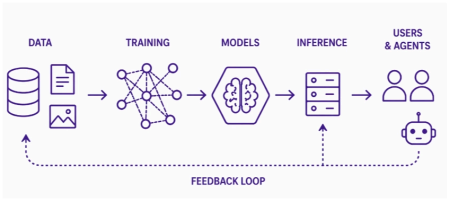
Started an AWS migration and implementation consultancy (2 founders, later hired junior engineer) during early AWS adoption in Australia.

- Owned solution design and hands-on delivery across core AWS services and automation.
- Ran client management and business operations alongside delivery.

Career Timeline

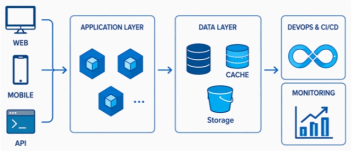
2026

2024 Artificial Intelligence



Global impact
Millions of users
Data-driven decisions
AI-powered automation

2018 Software Development



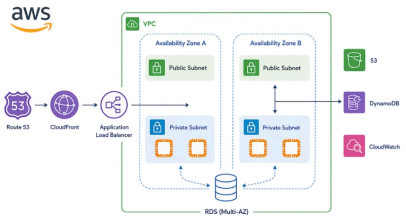
Scalable
Secure
Fast delivery
Great UX

2014 Business (Director / Principle)



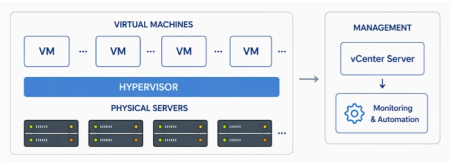
Business growth
High performing teams
Strategic impact
Long-term value

2013 Cloud Engineering



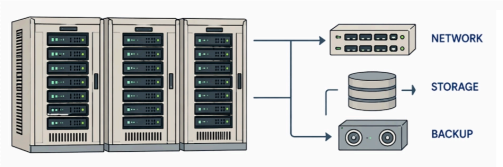
Multi-region
Highly available
Auto scaling
Cost optimized

2002 Hyperviser Engineering



Resource virtualization
High utilization
Isolation & security
Automation

2000 Enterprise Server Support



High reliability
24/7 uptime
Disaster recovery
User support

1998 Server Support



System stability
Hardware support
User enablement

1995 Desktop Support



Happy users
Fast resolution
Productivity

1991 Forklift Driver



Safe operations
On-time delivery
Dependable