

Shady Sharaf

<title>Principal Software Engineer / Tech lead</title>

<tl;dr>

An engineer driven by a passion for crafting efficient solutions that drive a real impact, with a strong focus on systems design. To me, this means not only writing clean, elegant, and performant code that scales with users' needs, but also ensuring its reliability through rigorous automated testing frameworks, and a commitment to security and performance standards. I prioritize outcomes over processes, ensuring that every line of code contributes to meaningful results.

As a seasoned technical leader, I've learned that the best projects are born from motivated teams who feel heard, empowered, and inspired. My approach blends strategic project management, empathetic team guidance, and a commitment to open-source principles.

With a product-minded perspective and an ownership mentality, my goal is to deliver outstanding solutions that surpass expectations, while nurturing a positive, inclusive team culture that brings out the best in everyone and ensures a growth mindset is front and center.

I have extensive experience with PHP frameworks, primarily WordPress and Laravel. I've also used Next.js and Node.js for mid-scale and side projects. My daily development involves TypeScript and JavaScript. I'm currently upskilling in AI engineering, MLOps, and Python, while continuing to strengthen my full-stack expertise through side projects and independent consulting. I'm a quick learner, and I'm motivated by challenges and creative problem solving opportunities.

My core expertise lies in full-stack development, built upon a strong foundation of PHP frameworks, mainly WordPress and Laravel. I've also branched out into NodeJS / NextJS for mid-scale and side projects, and I code almost daily in TypeScript / JavaScript. I'm always eager to learn, and I'm currently upskilling in AI engineering, MLOps, and Python, all while continuing to grow my full-stack skills through side projects and independent consulting.

I love a good challenge, and enjoy creative problem-solving. I'm a fast learner and I'm confident in my ability to quickly pick up new technologies and skills.

I am a pragmatic open-source advocate, a local tech meetup organizer and speaker, and I occasionally contribute to open-source projects.

You should hire me :)

<mail>shady@sharaf.me</mail>

<links>

[linkedin/shadyvb](#)

[github/shadyvb](#) (+ how i work)

[wp/shadyvb](#)

[heropress/shady](#)

[test/personality](#), [test/logic](#)

<table of=content>

- [Why hire me?](#)
- [What's my ideal job?](#)
- [What have I done before?](#)
 - [Academic / Education](#)
 - [Events](#)
 - [Talks](#)
 - [Testimonials](#)
 - [Team reviews](#)

<tags>

[#infj-t](#) [#chaotic-good](#)

[#people-first](#) [#team-dev](#)

[#architect](#) [#leader](#) [#disruptor](#)

[#always-learning](#) [#ambitious](#)

[#agile](#) [#change](#) [#metrics](#)

[#communication](#) [#trust](#)

[#transparency](#) [#motivation](#)

[#development](#) [#stability](#)

[#standards](#) [#testing](#) [#perf](#)

[#enterprise](#) [#scaling](#) [#security](#)

[#ai](#) [#api](#) [#bi](#) [#cdp](#) [#dxp](#) [#pwa](#)

[#php](#) [#wordpress](#) [#laravel](#)

[#js](#) [#ts](#) [#react](#) [#vue](#) [#nextjs](#)

[#devops](#) [#automation](#) [#ci-cd](#)

[#remote](#) [#digital-nomad](#)

[#speaker](#) [#organizer](#)

[#entrepreneur](#) [#consultant](#)

[#traveler](#) [#foodie](#) [#cooking](#)

[#pineapples-on-pizza](#)

[#coffee-geek](#) [#father](#) [#fifa](#)

<why me>

TL;DR As a seasoned Principal Software Engineer with almost 20 years of experience, my expertise lies in building **scalable enterprise platforms**, **metric-driven leadership**, and building and maintaining **high performing teams**. I am passionate about fostering cultures of **continuous improvement**, **experimentation**, **automation**, **efficient processes**, and **growth**.

I lead, grow, and thrive within HPT teams

Through leading multiple teams, I've practiced key principles for success: cultivating high-performing teams that thrive in collaborative environments, ensuring unified direction on goals and objectives, providing tailored growth support that aligns individual development with project and company needs, and driving agile improvement through the strategic use of tools and processes and experimentation culture.

Ask me about HPTs, Capability maturity efforts, and the four Ts of experimentation (trust, try, track, and train).

I learn in the open, and encourage others to do the same

Embracing the rapid pace of technology, where continuous learning is a hard requirement, I prioritize continuous learning through a tailored Professional Development (PD) plan, ensuring my skills align with the latest industry demands.

I also work on encouraging team members to work on their own PD plans. By learning in the open, and sharing learnings, I was consistently able to get positive responses and results across the team. Which reflected on team morale, and subsequently on the quality of work.

Ask me about skill mapping and assessment efforts, 360 peer reviews, and PDPs.

I build quality, confidence, and consistency.

Working for enterprise clients, ranging from world-renowned media outlets to banks and universities, honed my expertise optimizing code for best practices of performance, scalability, and security, and building delivery pipelines that ensures confidence using automated tests, and quality using code standards set by the team.

Given the leadership positions, I'm used to hosting and arranging knowledge sharing sessions about development practices like debugging, profiling, automated testing, AI assistants, etc.

Ask me about delivery pipelines and CI, automated tests, and knowledge sharing!

I develop scalable enterprise solutions!

Through almost 20 years of working on the Web, on enterprise **digital transformation projects**, **high-caliber and high-traffic publishing projects**, a **state-of-the-art digital experience / hosting platform** ([Altis DXP](#)), and at least two widely-used projects that require deeper knowledge of WordPress internals: [WordPress Coding Standards](#), which I was fortunate to lead the contributions to in its early days, and [Stream](#), the popular auditing plugin, which I architected and led the development of for the first few versions.

Ask me about my projects, and open-source contributions!

<education>

Agile Scrum Master
Scrum Alliance, 2024

Computer Science
42, US '2017

Business Administration
Cairo University, Egypt '2016

Network Engineering
Microsoft, Egypt '2006

<events/pro-dev>

- **Software Architecture**
NY '17

- **ReactEurope**
Paris '28, '20

- **ETHDubai / Web3**
Dubai '21

- **LeadDev / StaffPlus**
US '22, UK '23, DE '24

- **WCUS / WCEU / WCs**
(frequently)

<talks>

- **WordPress 101**
Cairo '17, Mansoura '18

- **Security in WordPress 101**
Cairo '18

- **WordPress hooks**
Mansoura '18

- **Zero to hero WP Dev**
Cairo '19

- **Editorial workflows**
Online/Client '19

- **Debugging and profiling 101**
Online '20 / London '23 / Lisbon '24

- **GitHub Copilot, tips and tricks**
London '23 / '24

- **Test automation and performance benchmarking with Playwright**
Porto '24

- **4Ts of experimentation, Trust, try, track, train**

<opportunity type=ideal>

TL;DR I value the opportunity to grow, and love to bring the whole team forward. I thrive on challenges, and appreciate the ability to effect positive change!

- **Personal Growth and Progression**

Mutual mentoring opportunities within a collaborative learning environment and continuous improvement culture.

- **Challenges**

Challenging projects that leverage my technical expertise to drive innovation and growth.

- **Leadership**

Positions that empower me to build and lead high-performing, diverse teams.

- **Impact and Social Responsibility**

Roles where technology can be a catalyst for positive social change and community development.

- **Flexibility**

Remote-first working environment, with transparency, strong communication, and appreciation for data-based metrics and decisions.

- **AI & Innovation**

Environments that encourage experimentation with AI, ML, and emerging technologies.

'25 (planned)

- **React Profiling 101**

'25 (planned)

- **Gutenberg API, the index**

'25 (planned)

- **AI assistants and agents, the why, what, how, and where**

'25 (planned)

<quotes:[linkedin](#)>

"I've loved working with Shady over the past few years. The breadth of his experience is impressive [...] I've also appreciated his positive attitude and team spirit, and I look forward to working with him again."

[Weston Ruter](#)

Google, (ex: XWP)

"Shady is an outstanding developer and software architect [...] Next to his technical skills he is a true and inspiring leader for his dev-team, always willing to go the extra mile in order to solve complex issues / master new challenges. Even in tight situations he stays calm and supports his team while pushing them forward."

[Hans-Juergen Bode](#)

Siemens

"Shady is one of those rare developers who has a very strong set of skills across all aspects of working with clients and developing products. His technical skills are outstanding, but what sets him apart is his ability to consider the wider problem and the implications of work that he and his team does; to discuss and understand underlying business requirements with clients in order to architect the best technical solutions; to mentor, lead, and learn from colleagues; and to proactively put in place initiatives and work in an agile manner.

Shady is a strong and thoughtful communicator, whether it's in person, in writing, or on video calls. He leads when he needs to and he listens

<history>

The Times, UK — Principal Software Engineer

April 2023 - October 2024

Helped build an in-house team to manage the editorial suite of [The Times](#), the renowned pioneering British newspaper, taking over from an external agency.

My responsibilities included:

- Help form and level up a new in-house team to take over from an external agency.
- Help form ways of working, implement agile principles.
- Help level up and simplify the technical stack
- Help introduce automated testing framework, improving CI pipelines
- Help deprecate redundant systems, and simplify data flows.

Altis DXP, UK — Principal Product Engineer

July 2021 - April 2023

Building [Altis-DXP](#), a flagship enterprise digital experience platform, seeded by WordPress, served by AWS, enhanced via AI, and built by an array of WordPress core contributors and team leads, and +15 years worth of expertise making global enterprise customers happy.

Altis-DXP is a subsidiary of Human Made.

Some of my work there:

- **Capability maturity**
I led the first iterations of Capability Maturity process, which measures and tracks different aspects of team behavior and processes to improve collaboration, engagement, and efficiency. During which, I employed my learnings on HPTs, led initiatives to improve our metrics based on feedback and my suggestions:
 - **Team health checks initiative**
Created a process to use a pulse survey with custom questions and metrics corresponding to HPT metrics, to serve as the input data for our retrospective meetings. Called for an implemented a meta discussion space in each retro call to talk team health and progress, and improvement efforts.
 - **Roles and responsibilities**
Called for and helped clarify and document roles and responsibilities on the team, to have clear understanding of expectations and processes for each one, given the relatively-new team structure.
 - **Continuous improvement, training / skill tracker**
Called for and implemented a skill matrix where engineers self-evaluate themselves on different skills needed within the team, and use that to guide their Professional development plans. Served as a way to understand the team strengths and weaknesses to guide future allocations as well.
- **Sales enablement: audits, matrix**
 - **Automated CWV bulk tracker**
Created a tool/process for bulk checking Core web vital metrics and Lighthouse scores for a list of URLs, to serve as a sales tool, understanding and comparing a prospect to competition, and as a delivery tool, to automatically track performance metrics over time/changes/releases.
- **Open source components / Altis modules**

carefully. His team members learn a lot from him and he allows himself to learn from and understand others. He is humble and he delivers.”

[John Blackbourn](#)

Human Made

“[...] Shady holds a deep technical expertise that lends tremendous value to the work he engages in. I’ve counted on Shady to solve difficult technical problems and he’s come through [...] Shady cares deeply about his work and the people he works with. If you need someone who knows their material and will give you their best, Shady is your man.”

[Jonathan Wold](#)

Automattic, (ex: XWP)

“Shady is a very experienced & detail oriented developer. He really shines when it comes to architecting complex back-end systems and solutions [...] He always has a positive attitude towards things and a “let’s make it happen” mentality. [...]”

[Ahmed El Gabri](#)

Miro, (ex: Wyoos)

</quotes:[linkedin](#)>

<quotes:reviews>

Anonymous reviews ‘2020: (full review PDF is available)

“As a non-dev I always can follow your thoughts and understand why a technical approach is chosen.”

“Shadi is a very smart person who likes to share his knowledge with others. In any situation when there are ambiguities, he is always happy to help!”

“Shadi is a reliable person. Every bug I reported he carefully analyzed and resolved. Also, he has helped me several times for QA problems and always shares good advice.”

“Shadi is always a great sparring partner in the UX Meetings, he always understands our approaches, but he also often has ideas / suggestions for improvement / himself, which

Worked on improvements and implementation of different features in Altis-DXP across the time of my engagement.

- **Altis testing framework, automated tests**
Championed the introduction of automated tests in Altis framework, and extended the framework to allow for a zero-config acceptance testing setup. Using Codeception. Also led implementation of the framework to write tests for Altis modules themselves.
- **Codespaces support in Altis**
Helped implement Altis support for GitHub Codespaces.
- **Altis Accelerate, plugin and architecture**
Helped the separation of Altis DXP into Cloud/Marketing solutions, resulting in the public Altis Accelerate plugin. Led the development of individual features, and worked with the product lead to improve existing ones.

Human Made, UK — *Principal Engineer*

May 2016 - April 2023

Working with a few of the big names in tech and publishing in USA / EMEA / and APAC regions to carry out migration projects / new builds and improvements on several digital properties of each, some hosted on WordPress VIP Platform, and some on HM's Altis.

Some of the clients are:

- Google, US
- Facebook, US
- Siemens, DE
- Sony Playstation, US
- News Corp, UK
- Redbull Media, AT
- TechCrunch, US

Some of my work there (just some highlights):

- [Siemens Ingenuity](#)

Led the development of the Ingenuity portal for Siemens, an outbound blogging portal for professional and scientific content. Built an **AI-assisted front-end authoring environment** that helped industry professionals create SEO-friendly and accessible content using **AI suggestions**, exposing **WordPress Block editor** on the front-end.

The project got a shout out in **WordCamp US** as **the most innovative product using AI in WordPress** that year.

Delivered a **virtual event platform** for thousands of Siemens employees, enabling seamless remote events during the pandemic

- [News UK](#)

Led a hybrid-team setup to develop different features for multiple news outlets and properties. And the transformation of the platform to a headless installation, meshed with a content hub, with WordPress serving only as the authoring environment and content proxy.

- [WPSimpleSSO](#)

stimulate the discussion and lead to a better product! This is really a big plus normally you only expect a developer to have something to say about technical feasibility.”

“Fully agree on Shadi’s understanding of a DevLead role and his dedication to the delivery, the team and the project/product. Always there, always helpful, always calm and polite.”

“Shadi is flexible and always ready for deal.”

“I think one of Shady’s biggest strengths is being able to come up with great solutions to some of the most difficult technical problems.”

“I think the whole team appreciates that Shadi stays even tempered when the pressure of deadlines impacts the team, which makes for a pleasant work atmosphere.”

</quotes:anonymous>

A flexible, lightweight, easy-config, to-the-bone plugin to integrate with SSO Idps like OKTA and Google, primarily using the SAML protocol. Used in Altis.

- **[WP Flags](#)**

A flexible feature flag management system, on a per-user and/or per-site. Used to activate features or change behavior based on user-selected and/or enforced feature flags.

- **Alfie**

A extensible personal assistant for your WordPress site, inspired by mac's Alfred assistant, to facilitate and improve editorial flows. (private repo, in the prototype phase)

- **[HM Content Import](#)**

A system to manage complex and deep content migrations, handles export/import of data from any data structure to WordPress. Eg: Drupal to WordPress, WordPress to WordPress, etc.

- **ADRs (Training article)**

Vouched for and implemented using ADRs to log all architectural decisions to keep a history of the project changes and the reasons behind each, and why a specific solution was deployed.

- **Project reviews**

Vouched for systemic reviews of performance metrics across time, and using that to explore potential improvement opportunities, and extending site audits into the presales process as a sales tool.

- **Workshops**

Did a few workshops on technical topics.

- Elastic(Press/Search)
- Debugging
- Altis testing framework
- Performance reviews

XWP, AU — *Senior Software Engineer*

October 2013 - January 2016

Worked with a few of the big names in tech and publishing in USA / EMEA / and APAC regions to carry out migration projects / new builds and improvements on several digital properties of each, mostly hosted on WordPress VIP Platform.

- USAToday, US
- Rogers Media, CA
- GlobalNews, CA
- News Corp, AU
- Automattic/WordPress, US
- Fox, AU

Some of my work there:

- Built [Stream](#), the flagship audit logging plugin for WordPress, and its hosted logging platform.

- Maintained [WordPress Coding Standards](#) in its infancy, and developed the official automated CS checks tooling for PHPCodeSniffer.
- Helped build a central content hub platform using WordPress, delivering content to a few different distribution channels including different websites, mobile apps and social platforms.
- Helped migrate large network sites to WordPress, and deployed automated regression testing to bulk check for UI changes across releases.

X-Team, AU — Senior Software Engineer

August 2014 - January 2016

Develop solutions in MEAN stack, including internal communication systems and real-time analytics platforms.

Contracted for:

- Riot Games, US (makers of League of Legends)

Link Dev, EG — Open-source Department Lead

October 2013 - Jan 2014

Led the newly founded open-source division, trained employees on Linux systems, PHP, WordPress, and enterprise development.

Assisted migration and build of several properties and high-traffic platforms:

- ItalinaOnline / Libero / Virgilio blog networks, IT

Wyoos, US — Technical director, Partner

April 2012 - May 2013

Built and led an engineering team for a newly founded startup based in the US, architected and developed SaaS eCommerce solutions, including a corporate loyalty and gamification system.

Profile.FM, UK — Senior Software Engineer

October 2011 - April 2012

Developed and maintained 10+ commercial WordPress plugins, an SEO research and discovery platform, and a WordPress bulk management platform.

Egypreneur NGO, EG — Technical consultant, partner

May 2011 - Present

Planned and executed Egypreneur networking platform, and subsidiaries.

Participated in Entrepreneurial events, like Startup Weekend, as a Technical Consultant, provided technical mentorship for startups.

EPIC Systems, EG — Technical lead, Senior Engineer

March 2010 - October 2011

Developed RFID middleware software in applications like Supply chain management, Access Control, Cattle health monitoring.

Developed a distributed online location-aware pharmacy hyper-market.

Was responsible for pre-sale, and deal closing meetings. Also worked with sales/marketing to build up a marketing strategy, to enhance visibility and get more/better clients.

AYB NGO, EG — *Technical lead*

2009 - 2010

Developed internal communication systems and micro-blogging platform, and an online volunteer management platform. And the NGO's network of sites.

IT Owners, QA — *Technical lead, partner*

2008 - 2013

Developed a commercial and interactive LMS and SMS PaaS system based on WordPress multi-site. Worked with the government to enhance online education standards. Received a letter of appreciation from the Qatari government on efforts to uplift standards.

</history>