

Mike Mindel

Founder · AI product architect · Senior Python engineer

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Professional summary

Senior Python engineer, architect and founder-operator who combines founder-level product thinking with production AI engineering. I co-founded [Wordtracker](#) in 1998, led its technology from two developers to a team of around 25, and scaled annual turnover roughly 100× over a decade — without ever stepping away from the codebase.

Recent work goes deep into AI/LLM and agent tooling: building working systems rather than reading about them. I balance the creative and the technical, weighing the technical environment, cost and ease of future change to reach the right solution. Remote-native, self-directed, and available now.

“I build products, not just software.”

Key skills

- **Languages:** Python (Pydantic), TypeScript, Bash, SQL (PostgreSQL, Neon)
- **Python toolchain:** uv, ruff, pyright, mypy, pytest
- **Frameworks:** Flask, FastAPI
- **AI / LLM & agent tooling:** Claude Code, Codex, Gemini CLI, MCP, LLM APIs, agentic engineering (own methodology, Stride); Linear / Kanban delivery
- **Full-stack web:** React, Vite, Neon/PostgreSQL, Drizzle / Prisma, Tailwind, shadcn/ui, MDX, Clerk, Stripe, PostHog, Biome, Vitest
- **Data engineering (AWS):** Redshift, Glue, S3, Athena, CloudWatch, IAM / VPC, PostgreSQL, Tortoise / Peewee
- **Cloud & infra:** AWS (EC2, ECS, Lambda, S3), Terraform, Docker
- **Testing & quality:** pytest, unittest, property-based testing (Hypothesis), CI/CD (GitHub Actions, GitLab CI, CircleCI)

- **Architecture & methods:** REST / WebSockets / GraphQL API design, Convex, Sandi Metz OO / flocking rules, design patterns, test-driven development, agile, SRP & atomic commits, Docker; managed and self-hosted hosting (Railway, Upstash, Neon, Coolify, Dokploy)
- **Positioning & product:** positioning (Ries & Trout school), naming, product lifecycle from idea to growth
- **Ways of working:** remote-native, async, founder-operator who ships end-to-end

Professional experience

Founder & technology lead — Stride (getstride.dev) 2026 – present

- Built Stride, an agentic-engineering methodology and tooling that gives AI-assisted development guard rails (traceable, reversible, tied to a Vision) so teams ship AI-built software that lasts past day 30, instead of vibe-coding software that collapses under its own debt.
- Runs on Claude Code and Linear / Kanban delivery, with atomic commits behind pull requests.
- Presented a 25-minute talk, *“Stop building on quicksand — ship AI apps that last past day 30”*, at the AI Global Festival (Suffolk, 2026).
- Proved the methodology in live use on paid client work — it delivered the Even Realities smart-glasses spike below, not just theory.

Co-founder, CEO & CTO — Wordtracker (wordtracker.com) 1998 – 2026

Co-founded the keyword-research / search-intelligence tool with my brother and led its technology throughout. Financial Times–profiled; scaled ~100× over its first decade and ran profitably at national-press scale.

- **Co-founder & developer, 1998–2013:** the technical half of a two-developer team; the CTO role grew with the company to around 25 at peak.
- **CEO / CTO (dual-hat), Mar 2013 – Jan 2026:** ran the company and owned the technology at once.
- Wrote the back-end Wordtracker API in Python (FastAPI), serving keyword data to the front end.
- Built and operated cloud data workflows to ingest and analyse large-scale search / clickstream datasets for the keyword-intelligence products.

- Crunched large volumes of clickstream data on Amazon Redshift (at cluster level, including VPC / IAM connectivity) from a variety of sources to produce up-to-date Google search volumes; evaluated performance trade-offs vs Postgres.
- Designed a cost-aware “burst + stash” compute approach: spin up a larger Redshift cluster for heavy processing, then move outputs to a smaller, cheaper node for storage and serving.
- Implemented an AWS Glue + S3 + Athena workflow for ongoing ingestion / querying of partitioned datasets (year/month/day): crawler setup, schema management, partition-aware querying, and remediation of schema-drift / malformed-file issues.
- Developed and tested positioning concepts such as “**The Keyword Platform**”, framing Wordtracker as a place to bring keyword data together from many sources rather than “just another SEO tool”, to sharpen differentiation and guide product and marketing decisions.
- A pioneering figure in search marketing: Wordtracker was one of the internet’s first commercial keyword research tools, putting keyword *research* at the centre of digital marketing and helping kickstart SEO. Gave many industry-conference talks and collaborated with SEO pioneers such as Aaron Wall (SEO Book) and Ken McCarthy (The System Seminar).

Director — Arrowfile Ltd 1996 – 2004

- Director of the family photographic business in Mill Hill, London, selling photographic albums and storage pages.

Selected projects

Even Realities smart-glasses viability spike — contract (Convex, TypeScript)

- For an early-stage AI startup, ran a fixed-scope two-day go/no-go spike proving a [Convex](#) reactive-database web app could drive [Even Realities G2](#) smart glasses with real-time two-way sync.
- Built a test Convex app and demonstrated a clean round trip between the phone’s companion app and the glasses lens. Because the client’s platform runs on the same reactive database, the result carried straight to it.
- Delivered remotely and asynchronously with a shared repo and a written findings note. (*Client named on request, subject to NDA.*)

Wordtracker keyword-intelligence data platform (Python, FastAPI, AWS)

- End-to-end keyword-intelligence pipeline: FastAPI back-end serving keyword data, fed by large-scale clickstream ingestion and analysis on Redshift and a Glue + S3 + Athena querying workflow.
- Introduced the cost-aware “burst + stash” pattern to keep warehouse-scale processing affordable at national-press scale.

Open source (Python, full-stack)

- [99bottles](#) — my take on Sandi Metz’s OO exercise: polymorphism over conditionals, five-line methods, one reason to change per class.
- [python-template](#) — a Python project template with dependency management, testing, linting and dev tooling preconfigured.
- [app-starter](#) — a one-command full-stack starter: React and TypeScript with Hono, Neon, Clerk and Drizzle.

Education

Years	Institution	Study
1993–1996	Reading University	BA (Hons) Film & Drama, 2:1
1991–1992	Bristol University	Computer Science & Maths (two terms)
1986–1991	Mill Hill School	A-levels in Economics, Maths, Physics and English Literature; 12 GCSEs, including English, Physics and Computer Studies at grade A

Publications and talks

- **Talk** — [“Stop building on quicksand — ship AI apps that last past day 30”](#), AI Global Festival (Suffolk, 2026). The case against vibe coding and for staged agentic engineering.
- **Talk** — [“Five Powerful Ways to Use Keywords”](#), Ken McCarthy’s System Seminar (2008).
- **Spoken word** — [“Get Noticed! \(The Art of Getting Attention\)”](#) (2017); performances at [The Red Lion, Eynsham](#) (2023) and [The Art House, Southampton](#) (2023).
- **Press** — profiled in the *Financial Times*: [“Brothers’ fast-track to success is being hot in the pursuit of words...”](#) ([read the article](#)).
- **Conferences** — many talks through the 2000s and 2010s on technical SEO, content and search algorithms.

Beyond code

- Ran the Wam Bam Club for 10 years — a West End burlesque cabaret at The Café de Paris (Leicester Square) and The Bloomsbury Ballroom (Holborn).
- A filmmaker: made the horror feature *Don’t Let Him In* (2011), released internationally and sold in major retail (incl. Walmart), and *Burning Man | Release!* (2015). Worked as film editor — now specialising in AI editing with tools like Seedance 2.5 and Kling — as well as camera operator, director of photography and producer.
- Created and ran comedy bootcamps — 1 Line Wonders and 5 Minute Wonders — in partnership with award-winning comedian Joe Bor: the same teach-through-practice pattern that runs through Stride, in a different medium.

Additional information

- **Availability**: immediately, remote — UK-based.
- **Engagement**: contract or employment, equally welcome. Ideal is part-time — 2 days a week, 3 at most — with room to scale up for the right project.
- **How I work**: remote-native and self-directed. Happy to lead a team of coders and agents, or embed in yours.
- **AI second brain**: I run a capture-and-retrieve second brain on Cmux and Obsidian, coach teams to build their own, and lean on multi-model panels for hard calls.
- **Industries of interest**: trading (commodities, options, crypto), marketing (landing pages, advertising, media buying), and search / AEO / GEO.

- **Invoicing:** through Webventurer Ltd.
- **Right to work:** eligible to work in the UK.