

# Ershad Kunnakkadan

Staff Software Engineer

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📄 [ershadk.com](https://ershadk.com)

Software Engineer with deep expertise in infrastructure, security, scalable systems, and AI-native product development. Recognized by the U.S. government as an individual with extraordinary ability (O-1A visa). Progressed from hands-on engineer to leading Gumroad as CEO, then returned to full-time engineering to build AI-native products and systems. Background includes open source contributions to Gumroad, GitLab, and Wikimedia, security research recognized by GitHub, and mentoring through Google Summer of Code.

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## Technical skills

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| <b>Languages</b> | Ruby, Python, JavaScript, TypeScript, Go, Elixir, C, C++, Lua, HCL, Shell Script, HTML/CSS/Haml/SaSS | <b>Frameworks</b> | Ruby on Rails, Phoenix, WebDriverIO, ReactJS, AngularJS |
| <b>DevOps</b>    | AWS, Heroku, Cloudflare, DigitalOcean, Docker, Ansible, Chef, Terraform, Nomad, Consul, Vault, Okta  | <b>Databases</b>  | PostgreSQL, MySQL, MongoDB                              |

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## Work Experience and Positions

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| March 2026 – Present         | <b>Staff Software Engineer</b> , <i>Gumroad Inc</i> , New York, <a href="https://gumroad.com">https://gumroad.com</a> .<br>Returned to a full-time engineering role after serving as CEO to build AI-native products, infrastructure, and internal systems.                                                        |
| November 2025 – March 2026   | <b>Chief Executive Officer</b> , <i>Gumroad Inc</i> , New York, <a href="https://gumroad.com">https://gumroad.com</a> .<br>Led Gumroad's overall strategy, product direction, and operations. Accountable for company performance, culture, and long-term growth.                                                  |
| January 2025 – November 2025 | <b>Staff Software Engineer</b> , <i>Gumroad Inc</i> , New York, <a href="https://gumroad.com">https://gumroad.com</a> .<br>Moved to New York on O-1A visa for individuals with extraordinary ability. Staff Engineer for infrastructure, security, and performance.                                                |
| June 2020 – December 2024    | <b>Senior Software Engineer</b> , <i>Gumroad Inc</i> , Remote, <a href="https://gumroad.com">https://gumroad.com</a> .<br>Full-stack developer and lead engineer for infrastructure, security, and performance.                                                                                                    |
| July 2015 – June 2020        | <b>Senior Software Engineer</b> , <i>BigBinary</i> , Remote, <a href="https://bigbinary.com">https://bigbinary.com</a> .<br>Full-stack developer, consulted for various clients of BigBinary.                                                                                                                      |
| Jan 2013 – July 2015         | <b>Software Architect</b> , <i>BangTheTable</i> , <i>Bangalore</i> , <a href="https://bangthetable.com">https://bangthetable.com</a> .<br>Lead of one of the software engineering teams. Designed and implemented solutions for the flagship product EngagementHQ while leading DevOps, scalability, and security. |
| May 2012 – Dec 2012          | <b>Software Engineer</b> , <i>BangTheTable</i> , <i>Bangalore</i> , <a href="https://bangthetable.com">https://bangthetable.com</a> .<br>Contributed to the development of various software products of Bang the Table.                                                                                            |
| Mar 2012 – Apr 2012          | <b>Developer Intern</b> , <i>BangTheTable</i> , <i>Bangalore</i> , <a href="https://bangthetable.com">https://bangthetable.com</a> .<br>Learned and developed software for BangTheTable.                                                                                                                           |

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## Education

- o Bachelor's degree in Computer Science from Bharathiyar University, India.

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## Google Summer of Code (GSoC)

- 2014 **Language detection and filter in Diaspora**, *Swathanthra Malayalam Computing*.  
Mentored and assessed the work of Google Summer of Code participants.
- 2013 **Grandham - Bibliography data project**, *Swathanthra Malayalam Computing*.  
Built Grandham platform and APIs. Successfully completed the project.

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## Security Bounty

- o **GitHub** – <https://bounty.github.com/researchers/ershad.html>  
Found a security vulnerability in GitHub Gist.
- o **Prezi.com** – <https://prezi.com/bugbounty/whitehats>  
Found a security vulnerability which exposed title of presentations in database.

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## Open Source Contributions

- 2017 **GitLab, Inc.**, Built a feature to directly address users in description / comments.,  
<http://contributors.gitlab.com/contributors/ershad-kunnakkadan/commits>.
- 2012 **Wikimedia**, Fixed issues related to Universal Language Selector, <https://wikimedia.org>.
- 2009 – Present **Swathanthra Malayalam Computing**, Developed and translated applications for the local community, <https://smc.org.in>.

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## Blogs

- o **BigBinary Blog** – <https://blog.bigbinary.com/authors/ershad>  
Wrote technical posts on Ruby on Rails and DevOps.
- o **Personal Blog** – <http://blog.ershadk.com>

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## Past Achievements

- Nov 2012 **Hackathon**, *Wikimedia Foundation*.  
Won the prize for 'The most innovative project' in Wikimedia DevCamp conducted at IIM Bangalore
- Jul 2012 **Hackathon**, *Innoz technologies, Bangalore*.  
Won third prize in the National Level Hackathon conducted at Innoz technologies, Bangalore
- Mar 2012 **Shell Scripting Contest**, *Saintgits College of Engineering, Kottayam*.  
Won first prize in the National Level Shell scripting competition conducted as a part of Nakshatra Tech fest
- Feb 2012 **Shell Scripting Contest – Scriptaculous**, *TKM College of Engineering, Kollam*.  
Won first prize in the National Level Shell scripting competition conducted as a part of Conjura Tech fest
- Feb 2012 **Virus infiltration and healing competition – Virus Evacuation**, *College of Engineering Kalloppara, Pathanamthitta*.  
Won first prize in the National Level Virus Healing Contest conducted as a part of Dhanus Tech fest

- Feb 2012 **Linux administration and bash scripting competition – Linux Guru**, *College of Engineering Kalloppara, Pathanamthitta.*  
Won first prize in the National Level Linux based Contest conducted as a part of Dhanus Tech fest
- Feb 2012 **Ethical Hacking Contest – Haxploit**, *Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham, Kollam.*  
Won first prize in the National Level Ethical Hacking Contest conducted as a part of Vidyut Tech fest
- Feb 2012 **Developing Software Bot Contest – Botomatic**, *Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham, Kollam.*  
Won first prize in the National Level Software Bot Developing Contest conducted as a part of Vidyut Tech fest
- Oct 2011 **Shell Scripting Contest – Tux of War**, *National Institute of Technology, Calicut.*  
Won first prize in the National Level Shell Scripting Contest conducted as a part of Tathva Tech fest
- Sep 2011 **Shell Scripting Contest – #!/bin/bash**, *Model Engineering College, Cochin.*  
Won first prize in the National Level Shell Scripting Contest conducted as a part of Excelmec Tech fest
- Feb 2011 **Paper Presentation Competition: Git Version Control System**, *Nehru College of Engineering and Research Centre, Thrissur.*  
Won first prize in the Paper Presentation Competition conducted as a part of Prayaana Tech fest

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## Talks and Workshops

- Feb 2014 **Programming in Ruby for fun and profit**, *National Institute of Technology, Calicut.*  
Led a workshop introducing ruby and its industry applications
- Jan 2014 **Ruby Programming Language**, *NSS College of Engineering, Palakkad.*  
Led a workshop in programming in Ruby
- Sep 2012 **Git Version Control System**, *MES College of Engineering, Kuttippuram, Malappuram.*  
Led a workshop on Git Version Control System
- Apr 2012 **Introduction to free software**, *MES College of Engineering, Kuttippuram, Malappuram.*  
Presented a talk on free software and package management in debian
- Jan 2012 **Free software and web technologies**, *NSS College of Engineering, Palakkad.*  
Presented a talk on free software and web technologies
- Jan 2012 **GNU/Linux Command line tools and Shell scripting**, *NSS College of Engineering, Palakkad.*  
Led a workshop on GNU/Linux command line tools and shell scripting
- Sep 2011 **Git Version Control System**, *NSS College of Engineering, Palakkad.*  
Led a workshop on Git Version Control System
- Aug 2011 **Fun with programming and introduction to Free Software**, *NSS College of Engineering, Palakkad.*  
Presented an introductory talk on free software and how to have fun with programming
- Jul 2011 **Fun with programming and introduction to Free Software**, *MES College of Engineering, Kuttippuram, Malappuram.*  
Presented an introductory talk on free software and how to have fun with programming