tessa pahkamaa

tessa@pahkamaa.com ◖ San Luis Obispo, California

Hey! I'm Tessa. Staff Software Engineer with over a decade of experience building performant, accessible, and globally scalable web applications. Proven track record leading migrations, building design systems, and collaborating across strategy, creative, and engineering teams. Strong expertise in Adobe Experience Manager (AEM), React, and marketing-focused development for growth organizations.

Work experience

March 2025 – Present

Staff Software Engineer
Zendesk

- Led successful transition from custom WordPress implementation to AEM, improving content workflows and brand consistency
- Created the first Zendesk brand design system, collaborating with UX and design leads
- Partnered with product and QA teams to guide projects from inception through production deployment

September 2021 – March 2025

Senior Software Engineer
Zendesk

- Increased marketing lead generation by optimizing site performance and implementing strategic UX improvements on Zendesk.com
- Managed end-to-end project delivery, including scoping, dev, QA, staging, and launch

January 2018 – March 2021

Web Engineer
Zendesk

- Identified and remediated key pain points in infrastructure and codebase, improving engineering velocity
- Led A/B testing initiatives using Optimizely to improve conversion rates

December 2012 – December 2017

Experience Engineering Architect
SapientRazorfish *(previously Rosetta)*

- Led frontend development team responsible for building components in AEM for major clients
- Scoped technical requirements and contributed to design feedback for global marketing campaigns
- Delivered accurate dev estimates and contributed to Statements of Work for new business

October 2009 – December 2012

Interactive Developer
Rosetta

- Launched and maintained 30+ regional BlackBerry.com sites using Adobe Experience Manager
- Created AEM-WebSphere connector prototype with cross-functional engineering team

Education

September 2006 – June 2010

California Polytechnic State University
San Luis Obispo

- Bachelor of Science, Graphic Communication
- **Concentrations:** Design Reproduction Technology, Web and Digital Media
- Strong background in design—ask me about it!

Skills & tools

- **Languages & Frameworks:** JavaScript, React, Next.js, HTML5, CSS3, PHP, Java, JSP
- **CMS:** Adobe Experience Manager (AEM), WordPress
- **Databases:** SQL, NoSQL, JCR
- **Build & CI/CD Tools:** Webpack, Node.js, NPM, Yarn, GitHub Actions, CircleCI, Buildkite, Travis CI, Jenkins, QuickBuild
- **Testing:** Jest, Cypress, Playwright
- **Analytics & Optimization:** Segment, Google Analytics, Pendo, Optimizely (A/B testing), Adobe Target
- **Focus Areas:** Accessibility, Localization, Design Systems, Performance Optimization, Cross-functional Team Leadership, Agile Development

Projects & highlights

Zendesk Brand Design System

- Initiated and co-led the creation of Zendesk's first centralized frontend design system to align branding across marketing properties

AEM Migration

- Spearheaded company-wide migration from WordPress to AEM, consolidating content and improving author experience for marketers
- Implemented headless AEM solution to integrate with an existing Next.js frontend application via both Remote SPA and Universal Editors

Performance Optimization

- Implemented caching, lazy loading, and bundle splitting techniques, reducing page load time

Accessibility Audits

- Conducted accessibility audits and remediations across product marketing sites, ensuring WCAG 2.1 AA compliance