Chetan Ankola

Principal Product Manager · AI Platforms
San Francisco Bay Area · cankolabuilds.com · linkedin.com/in/chetanankola · X @chetanankola · GitHub private (on request)

DROP: 300+ apps published by colleagues · OCEAN: 291 question submissions, Jul–Sep 2026 · CUSS: 370,413 feedback records from five sources

SUMMARY

- **Profile:** Technical product leader building AI platforms across retrieval, evaluation, source ownership and access controls. Combines cross-functional product judgment with hands-on engineering and operational delivery.
- **Yahoo:** Since 2012, from front-end and iOS engineering to Principal PM; co-inventor of four US patents (AI email summaries, AR interfaces).
- **Independent:** Ships App Store apps and playable 3D worlds, with 4.5M+ observed views and features from OpenAI, ChatGPT and Three.js.

EXPERIENCE

Yahoo | Product Management and Engineering

June 2012–present · Mountain View, CA

Principal Product Manager, Yahoo Mail · 2022–present

Earlier at Yahoo: iOS Engineer, Yahoo Mail, 2016–2021, leading product and engineering for AR ads from 2017 · Front-end Engineer, Yahoo Search (JavaScript, Node.js, React), 2012–2016.

- **OCEAN, Mail insight agent:** Solo-built an agent that consolidates 27 squads and 30 knowledge repositories into daily reports of what shipped, what was blocked and who owned the next decision, with Q&A on the web, in Slack and as a Claude plugin. It handled 291 question submissions from July through September 2026.
- **Evaluation and feedback loop:** Designed OCEAN's evaluation framework across 15 workflows, combining automated citation checks with independent model grading to flag unsupported claims, and ran its quality loop end to end: postmortem tooling, thumbs-up/down and written feedback that feeds prompt improvements, nightly query-and-response review, admin analytics, source attribution and model routing across Codex and Claude. Built a 29-case golden evaluation set for CUSS to check that answers used the right platform, reported accurate counts and quoted customers faithfully, and validated a release candidate with 3,463 passing regression tests.
- **CUSS, customer insight agent:** Solo-built a self-service customer insights platform and AI agent that unified 370,000+ feedback records from five sources, including both app stores, so product managers and engineering leads can investigate issues and verify findings against customers' own words, with automated weekly reports for desktop, iOS and Android. Fixed five Severity 1 security findings to secure sign-off from Security.
- **DROP, internal app publishing:** Built a platform where an employee drags in a site or app and it goes live with no GitHub or GCP setup: identity, a real-time database, files, collaboration, access controls, usage statistics and a Claude CLI workflow. Colleagues across Mail, Sports and Finance had created 300+ DROPs by November 2026.
- **DROP runtime SDK and APIs:** Designed the window.drop SDK and site-scoped APIs for identity, JSON data, realtime state and presence, channels, comments, file uploads and AI chat and streaming, with provider selection and fallback across Claude and Codex and usage reporting by provider, model, tokens and cost. Separated agent read access from owner editing and delivered expiring read-only links for external partners.
- **Echo, built in four days:** Solo-built an in-house customer-feedback, feature-request and roadmap-tracking web app to replace UserVoice and its six-figure contract, owning the frontend, backend and GCP deployment. Deployed the internal pilot with automated staging deployments, verified rollback and database recovery, and secure routing with Production Engineering.
- **Portfolio operations and security:** Established weekly reviews of the four internal AI products to track adoption, reliability, release readiness and decisions requiring leadership input. Restored endpoint protection across three Signal production servers, repaired Nessus vulnerability scanning on affected cloud hosts and patched OCEAN's production runtime while keeping the service available.
- **Team enablement:** Standardized squad planning updates with Program Management, turned eight training videos into a searchable onboarding hub, created a beta-testing template adopted by other product managers and built a retrospective tool that organized 174 team notes across 13 topics.
- **Customer research and experimentation:** Used funnel analysis to find where users dropped off when trying a new inbox feature and directed experiments that raised adoption from 3% to 16% of weekly active users, exceeding a 10% target. Translated a 30-participant study and eight follow-up interviews into launch requirements for Yahoo Mail Premium Home, defining first-release scope and ownership across Product, Design and Engineering.

- **Mail Home:** Led the Home initiative to explore how Yahoo Mail could work as a conversational assistant. Translated user research into requirements and prototyped which actions people wanted to confirm or undo.
- **Delete by Sender and measurement:** Led the Android launch; reported results included 2% higher average revenue per user and 7% more delete events. Helped establish Triage7 as a more sensitive inbox-organization metric and used adoption, retention and revenue measures to steer iteration.
- **Mobile product leadership:** Led Mail's Inbox & Organize mobile team as the iOS app reached 20M daily active users in 2024 (4.7 stars across 4.9M App Store ratings). Led cross-functional launches of Catch Up, swipe-based inbox triage with AI previews (~19% iOS and ~16% Android weekly actives in 2025; revenue per user up 1.6% and 2.1%), and Mail's first native mobile Calendar (~10% of Mail's weekly actives in 2025) with LLM-based event extraction.
- **AR creative authoring tools (2017–2021, product and engineering):** Built Yahoo Mail's iOS AR ad experiences and the authoring tools, SPAARC / AR Ad Composer and AR Ad Generator, that let creative teams assemble 3D scenes, textures and animations without writing JSON. The work supported $2M in AR ad sales across advertisers including Home Depot, Macy's, Pottery Barn, HP, Walmart and Vodafone.
- **Engineering foundation:** Owned the Yahoo Search Assist front-end library used in production by multiple Yahoo properties, then led the rewrite of mobile search in Node.js and React with reusable, high-performance interaction libraries. Moved to native iOS, building Swift prototypes and Yahoo Mail features including AR, notification settings, onboarding and privacy.

Nokia Siemens Networks | R&D Engineer, Wireless Systems

July 2008–July 2010 · Bangalore, India

Built C/C++ and Python simulation, automation and performance-testing tools for WiMAX, W-CDMA and LTE networks.

INDEPENDENT PRODUCTS AND CREATIVE WORK

- **DexRelay (iOS App Store):** Designed, built and shipped an iPhone-to-Mac control plane for steering Claude Code and Codex projects, approvals and builds: SwiftUI app, installable CLI, QR pairing, LAN-first WebSockets with Tailscale fallback, and a self-healing launchd Mac runtime with health, repair and wake controls. Shipped before OpenAI launched its own Codex remote control.
- **Evidence Council and a Codex–Claude review bridge:** Built bounded multi-model review with independent passes, claim-level challenges, an evidence and decision ledger, hard budgets and stopping rules, plus authenticated two-way consultation between Codex and Claude with read-only and recursion guards.
- **Agent skills and pipelines:** Packaged about 30 reusable Claude Code and Codex skills, and built pipelines from generative tools through Blender (MCP and Python) into Three.js and Unreal Engine 5.9.
- **Recognition and collaborations:** Moonlit Swamp was featured by OpenAI and ChatGPT on Instagram and TikTok; Cozy Creek reached 369K views on X and was shared by @threejs and reposted by OpenAI Developers. Invited paid collaborations with ElevenLabs (Foldline, a driving and music game for the Chroma Awards campaign) and Tripo AI (Arctic Waters).

RECOGNITION

- **2026 Co-inventor, US Patent 12,783,570:** AI-generated email summaries shown in the inbox without opening the message.
- **2020–2022 Co-inventor, US Patents 10,679,414, 10,997,791 and 11,367,261:** "Presenting an augmented reality interface."
- **2018 Lumiere Technology Award, Advanced Imaging Society:** Recognized for RYOT / Yahoo Mail AR.
- **2026 Featured by OpenAI and ChatGPT; shared by Three.js and OpenAI Developers** for independent 3D worlds.

SKILLS

AI and agents: Claude Code, Codex, retrieval and source provenance, evaluations and feedback loops, multi-model routing, MCP connectors, prompt and agent-workflow design.

Platform: API and SDK design, developer experience, identity and access controls, usage and cost metering, self-service publishing, lifecycle and recovery.

Product: Discovery, customer-research synthesis, interaction design, rapid prototyping, experimentation, adoption and revenue metrics, roadmaps, cross-functional delivery.

Engineering: Swift / SwiftUI, JavaScript / TypeScript, React, Node.js, Python, SQL / BigQuery, REST, WebSockets, GCP, Cloudflare Workers.

EDUCATION

University of Southern California, M.S., Computer Science, 2010–2012

PES Institute of Technology, Bangalore, B.E., Information Science, 2008