CHETAN ANKOLA

Principal Product Manager & Independent Creative Technologist

San Francisco Bay Area, CA

cankolabuilds.com · linkedin.com/in/chetanankola · X @chetanankola · GitHub private (on request)

4.5M+ observed views on my 3D worlds and games · **Featured by OpenAI, ChatGPT and Three.js** · **Paid collaborations with ElevenLabs and Tripo AI**

SUMMARY

Creative: Builds GenAI-driven interactive 3D worlds and game prototypes with Claude Code, Codex, Three.js, and Blender, directing visual style, shaders, camera pacing, and original music.

Shipped: Foldline Tales, a children's pop-up storybook, and Polly, a retro camera, on the App Store.

Recognition: Featured by OpenAI and ChatGPT and shared by Three.js; paid collaborations with ElevenLabs and Tripo AI; creative posts reached approximately 4.5M observed views.

Yahoo: Since 2012, from front-end and iOS engineering to Principal PM. Leads mobile product for Yahoo Mail's Inbox & Organize team on an iOS app that reached 20M daily active users in 2024 and holds 4.7 stars across 4.9M ratings.

AI at Yahoo: Seeded Yahoo's GenAI and Claude Code communities and built internal AI tools adopted across dozens of squads.

AR: Co-invented three US patents for AR interfaces and built AR authoring tools for creative teams.

GAMES, INTERACTIVE 3D & GENAI WORK

3D WORLDS & INTERACTIVE EXPERIENCES

3DITIONS: Storefront of roughly 80 editable, playable Three.js worlds sold as source kits to paying customers; I direct the shaders, lighting, camera pacing, and mechanics. About 4.52M observed views (Threads 1.79M, X 1.51M, Reddit 1.22M) and 48K likes across 83 tracked posts as of November 15, 2026.

- **Moonlit Swamp** · 521K views**:** Moonlit marsh built around water reflections. Featured by OpenAI and ChatGPT on Instagram and TikTok; 344K views on Threads and 129K on X.
- **Cozy Creek** · 728K views**:** Browser 3D creek with Blender-made assets. 369K views on X; shared by @threejs and reposted by OpenAI Developers.

Foldline Tales: Children's 3D pop-up storybook for iPhone and iPad with tactile page turns, built in Three.js and shipped on the App Store.

Arctic Waters · 267K views **× Tripo AI:** Playable Hydra-and-diver scene for an invited paid collaboration, built from Tripo AI–generated meshes I vetted for creative quality.

GAMES

Foldline × ElevenLabs · 196K views**:** Driving-and-music game on roads that defy gravity, built as an invited paid collaboration with ElevenLabs for the Chroma Awards campaign using its generative music and voice: 15 chapters, 15 vehicles, 105 collectible notes, ghost runs, and a daily challenge.

Ironwood Reclamation: Playable mech-combat game in Three.js: wave defence, salvage, upgrades, and a walker that folds into a vehicle. Robots generated with Tripo AI.

Thunder Passage · 108K views**:** Storm-sea boat run in Three.js and WebGPU, rebuilt in Unreal Engine 5.9 (MCP, C++, Python) and shipped to the browser as a WebAssembly/WebGPU build. Picked as a Threads Gem.

Azgard: Open-world ronin action game concept in Three.js and WebGPU with a Nemesis-style captain system.

EXPERIENCE

Yahoo · Mountain View, CA **June 2012–Present**

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

- **GenAI enablement (2023–2026):** Seeded Yahoo's early GenAI and Claude Code communities through live demos, then solo-built, end to end:

  DROP: Yahoo's internal platform for publishing AI micro-apps, like ChatGPT micro-sites, built on Google Cloud Platform. Colleagues across Mail, Sports, and Finance created 300+ apps by November 2026 without managing their own hosting.

  CUSS: Self-service customer insights platform and AI agent that unified 370,000+ feedback records from five sources, 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. Built a 29-case golden evaluation set to check whether AI answers used the right platform, reported accurate counts, and quoted customers faithfully; validated a release candidate

with 3,463 passing regression tests. Fixed five Severity 1 security findings to secure sign-off from Security. It answered 291 colleague questions from July to September 2026.

OCEAN: Mail insight 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 in a web app, a Claude plugin, and a Slack agent. Designed its evaluation framework across 15 workflows, combining automated citation checks with independent model grading to flag unsupported claims; user thumbs-up and thumbs-down feedback feeds prompt improvements.

Echo: Feedback and roadmap tracker, built in four days to replace UserVoice, a popular user-feedback system, and its six-figure contract. Deployed the internal pilot on Google Cloud with automated staging deployments, verified rollback and database recovery, and secure routing with Production Engineering.

- **Portfolio operations & security:** Established weekly reviews of the four 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 & 0-to-1 products:** Founded and led small product pods that built and shipped real products to find product-market fit, including the first versions of Digest and Spaces in approximately 14 weeks with smart message grouping for travel, family, and finances. 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 & 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.
- **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 WAU in 2025; revenue per user up 1.6% and 2.1%), and Mail's first **native mobile Calendar** (~10% Mail WAU in 2025) with LLM-based event extraction (23.9% higher time-of-interest visibility and 76% user satisfaction in 2024).
- **AR creative authoring tools (2017–2021, product and engineering):** Built Yahoo Mail's iOS AR ad experiences and authoring tools (SPAARC / AR Ad Composer and AR Ad Generator) that let creative teams assemble 3D scenes, textures, and animations without writing JSON. Supported $2M in AR ad sales across Home Depot, Macy's, Pottery Barn, HP, Walmart, and Vodafone.

Nokia Siemens Networks · R&D Engineer, Wireless Systems · Bangalore, India **July 2008–July 2010**
Built C/C++ and Python simulation and performance-testing tools for wireless networks.

APPS & TOOLING

GenAI-to-engine pipelines & reusable skills: Tripo AI meshes and image-generated textures through Blender (MCP and Python) into GLB and Three.js; Unreal Engine 5.9 editor automation through MCP, C++, and Python. Packaged about 30 reusable Claude Code and Codex skills (water, fog, terrain, game camera) so each new world starts from proven modules.

DexRelay: Phone remote control for Codex and Claude Code projects, approvals, and builds (iOS App Store), shipped before OpenAI launched its own Codex remote control.

Polly · **Pixel Palms:** App Store retro camera · looping Midjourney-made worlds, about 60K TikTok followers.

RECOGNITION

- **Co-inventor, four US patents:** 12,783,570 (2026, AI inbox summaries) and three for AR interfaces (2020–2022).
- **2018 Lumiere Technology Award, Advanced Imaging Society:** Recognized for RYOT / Yahoo Mail AR.

SKILLS

Creative direction: Visual style and shader direction, narrative pacing, sound design, original music composition and production (Native Instruments Maschine), interactive UX, GenAI-assisted small-form game prototyping.

GenAI and pipelines: Claude Code, Codex, Midjourney (image generation), ElevenLabs music and voice generation, Tripo AI 3D generation, Real-ESRGAN, prompt chaining, tool evaluation for creative quality.

Engines and engineering: Three.js, Blender, Unreal Engine, Godot, Swift / SwiftUI, JavaScript / TypeScript, React, Node.js, Python, Cloudflare Workers.

EDUCATION

University of Southern California, M.S., Computer Science, 2010–2012
PES Institute of Technology, Bangalore, B.E., Information Science, 2008