# Chetan Ankola

Principal Product Manager · Forward-Deployed AI

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**Four internal AI products solo-built at Yahoo · Echo built in four days to replace a six-figure vendor contract · 300+ apps published by colleagues on DROP**

## SUMMARY

- **Profile:** Product manager who builds and deploys AI tools for the people who use them, including an internal knowledge engine and an app-publishing platform on GCP. Works directly with users, security reviewers and engineers, and stays with a product until it is part of a team's everyday workflow.
- **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.
- **Knowledge inside existing workflows:** Delivered scheduled briefings, repository-triggered refreshes and a searchable training center with video transcription, captions and progress tracking, so squads could onboard themselves.
- **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.
- **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.
- **Ran DROP as a product, not a project:** Per-app subdomains, cloning and sharing, reference apps, templates and developer guidance. Turned a colleague's external-sharing request into deployed, permission-restricted links in under two hours, and built guided recovery for broken drops, sign-in failures and stale previews.
- **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.
- **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, 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.
- **GenAI enablement (2023–2026):** Seeded Yahoo's early generative-AI and Claude Code communities through live demos and knowledge-sharing channels, and personally built working prototypes to align product, engineering, design and data partners around a concrete experience.
- **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.
- **0-to-1 products:** Founded MobX and later led X Team, two small product teams that built and shipped real products to users to find product-market fit. Shipped the first versions of Digest and Spaces in about 14 weeks, grouping related mail and next steps for travel, family and finances, and explored Mail Home conversational-assistant flows.
- **Mail 7 redesign and craft:** Led navigation across iOS and Android, introducing the pill bar, and simplified roughly 40 theme combinations to four. Productized Schedule Send on both platforms, launched a productivity nudge for a 7% lift in core actions, and organized Hacksessibility, fixing 31 of 37 accessibility bugs in one week.
- **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.

## SELECTED DEPLOYMENTS

- **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.
- **Local AI Chat With My Docs:** Built a SwiftUI client and FastAPI retrieval backend for private document Q&A with source citations, ChromaDB persistence and Ollama-first local inference, reachable securely over Tailscale.
- **Saffron, self-service recovery:** Designed actionable connection diagnostics and one-tap repair for invalid endpoints, stale conversation IDs, timeouts and incomplete handshakes, pairing an explanation of what failed with a verified reset and fresh-session recovery.
- **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

**Enterprise:** Slack integrations, security review, Okta / IAP, knowledge retrieval, workflow automation, adoption measurement, operating products after launch.

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

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

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

## EDUCATION

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

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