Chetan Ankola

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

Four apps shipped solo on the App Store · Catch Up taken from concept to ~19% of iOS weekly actives · Four internal AI products built end to end at Yahoo

SUMMARY

- **Profile:** Engineer and product manager who builds new consumer and developer products from the first interface through launch. Led the mobile inbox and Calendar at Yahoo Mail, founded two zero-to-one product teams, and independently shipped four iOS apps using coding agents.
- **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.

- **0-to-1 teams:** Founded MobX and later led X Team, two small product teams at Yahoo Mail whose remit was to build and ship real products quickly, put them in users' hands and find product-market fit.
- **Digest and Spaces:** Led X Team's first versions in about 14 weeks. Digest summarized recent mail; Spaces on iOS groups related messages and next steps for travel, family and finances.
- **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.
- **Catch Up:** Led the swipe-based inbox review with AI previews from concept to general availability with engineering, research and design partners; Yahoo announced the cross-platform launch in June 2025. It reached approximately 19% of iOS and 16% of Android weekly active users in 2025, with 42% and 32% week-over-week retention and revenue per user up 1.6% and 2.1%.
- **Mobile Calendar and LLM event extraction:** Led the team that built Mail's first native mobile Calendar on iOS and Android, including Gmail Calendar integration; about 10% of Mail's weekly active users used it in 2025. Set the quality bar and confirmation experience with ML partners for LLM-based event extraction, whose 2024 launch improved time-of-interest visibility by 23.9% with 76% user satisfaction.
- **Mobile product leadership:** Led product for Yahoo Mail's Inbox & Organize team on iOS and Android as the iOS app reached 20M daily active users in 2024 (4.7 stars across 4.9M App Store ratings). Owned the main message list, the cards at the top of the inbox and the controls for swiping, pinning and clearing mail, and led the redesign of message rows so people could scan previews and act from the list.
- **AI knowledge and feedback systems:** Solo-built CUSS, a customer insight agent over 370,000+ feedback records from five sources, tested against a 29-case golden evaluation set; OCEAN, a Mail insight agent across 27 squads and 30 knowledge repositories with a 15-workflow evaluation framework, which handled 291 question submissions from July through September 2026; and Echo, an in-house feedback and roadmap app built in four days to replace a six-figure vendor contract.
- **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.
- **GenAI enablement and internal platforms (2023–2026):** Seeded Yahoo's early generative-AI and Claude Code communities through live demos and knowledge-sharing channels. Built DROP, an internal app-publishing

platform and SDK supporting identity, real-time state, files and multi-model Claude/Codex APIs with cost metering and permissions. Colleagues across Mail, Sports and Finance had created 300+ micro-apps by November 2026.

- **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 0□1 BUILDS

- **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.
- **AppTruffle and Polly (iOS App Store):** Shipped a market-research app backed by a Python and SQLite collection pipeline (12,084 apps and about 1.98M ranking snapshots in an August 2026 snapshot) with Cloudflare delivery, and a retro camera app built on AVFoundation, CloudKit backup and StoreKit subscriptions.
- **Foldline Tales (iOS App Store):** Designed, directed, built and shipped a playable 3D pop-up storybook game for iPhone with tactile page-turn physics and interactive narrative pacing.
- **3DITIONS, 3D worlds and games:** Built an editable-world storefront and real-time platform spanning roughly 80 worlds, directing shaders, lighting, camera pacing and mechanics, and sold editable kits to paying customers. Creative posts accumulated approximately 4.52M observed views and 48K likes across 83 tracked posts on X, Threads and Reddit as of November 15, 2026.
- **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).
- **Music and audience:** Composed and released original music on Spotify as PixelPalms, including Civil Unrest, Bells at Hill Temple and Oblique Road, and built Pixel Palms, a subscription product for looping visuals with an approximately 60K TikTok audience.

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

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.

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

Creative: Three.js, Blender, real-time 3D, shader and camera direction, sound design and original music.

EDUCATION

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

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