Chetan Ankola

Principal Product Manager and product engineer · AI, mobile & interactive experiences

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Four apps shipped solo on the App Store · Four internal AI products built end to end at Yahoo · Engineer since 2008: C/C++, JavaScript, Swift, Python

SUMMARY

- **Profile:** Hands-on builder with an engineering foundation and product leadership across Yahoo Mail, AI tools and independent apps. Owns the path from user problem to working software: interface, APIs, data, deployment and iteration. Builds with coding agents, validates the result and stays close to the people using it.
- **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.

- **DROP, built end to end:** Built the product, Node.js and SQLite backend, browser SDK, CLI and GCP deployment. Supplied identity, data, realtime events, files and AI APIs so colleagues could publish tools, then added owner-scoped editing, recoverable updates and read-only sharing from user feedback. 300+ DROPs created 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.
- **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.
- **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.
- **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.
- **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.
- **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.
- **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.

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

- **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).
- **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

- **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

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.

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

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