Michael Zazon

Principal Solutions Architect · Financial services cloud transformation · Author
New York, NY · michael@zazon.us · linkedin.com/in/michael-zazon · github.com/mzazon

ABOUT

Principal Solutions Architect at Amazon Web Services, influencing technology strategy as the firm-wide architect on an AWS account team responsible for a large strategic financial services customer, covering its shared cloud platform, networking, streaming, resilience and identity programs.

Before that, almost five years in AWS Professional Services as a Senior, then Principal, Cloud Infrastructure Architect, where I co-led the technical side of a multi-year data-center exit for a global financial data and ratings provider.

More than 25 years building and running infrastructure: a web hosting company I co-founded in 2000, university systems, my own consulting practice, a cloud-compliance startup and a multi-cloud consultancy. I've led people along the way: technology staff and application developers at Ohio State, where I also wrote code, and delivery pods of four to nine engineers at Cloudreach; at AWS I mentor and coach consultants and architects. Co-author of the *AWS Cookbook* (O'Reilly Media) and creator of Cloud Projects, an open-source library of more than 1,100 cloud recipes.

EXPERIENCE

Principal Solutions Architect

Amazon Web Services · New York, NY Nov 2024 – Present

- Technical lead on the AWS account team for the firm: own AWS's relationships with its technical leaders and decision makers, setting the technical direction for its strategic cloud enablement, and partner with the sales leadership on firm-wide account strategy.
- Lead AWS's response to the firm's most critical needs on AWS services, such as Amazon MSK, IAM and IAM Identity Center, AWS Config, EC2 networking, RDS, and OpenSearch: from hands-on triage to service-team fixes and features that have shipped for all AWS customers.
- Ran multi-day network design workshops with the firm's architecture and networking leads, covering Cloud WAN, Transit Gateway, Direct Connect, firewalls, VPC Lattice and PrivateLink; wrote AWS's position papers and supporting architecture designs recommending a phased network modernization, which the firm is adopting.
- Led the move of the firm's streaming platform traffic from NAT gateways to PrivateLink, cutting its data-transfer cost by more than half.
- AWS networking lead for the firm's central cloud platform, bringing its networking leaders together with AWS service-team leadership in recurring strategy sessions, and technical lead for its hyperscale logging platform.
- AWS technical lead for the firm's moves to AWS of its largest security-logging platforms, its Kafka streaming backbone, and its network inspection.
- Owned the firm's data-perimeter roadmap with AWS service teams, pressing them to support resource control policies, and led IAM and data-perimeter enablement and adoption for its security engineers; set the firm's identity roadmap, closing the multi-region gaps that had blocked its IAM Identity Center adoption.
- Co-led a multi-region resilience program for the firm.
- Drove the firm's adoption of AWS Backup as its standard for regulated backups, including feature requests that now serve all AWS customers.
- Built agentic AI tooling on MCP and Claude Code, including an MCP server that lets AI assistants search a large internal knowledge library and a workflow that keeps product feature requests in sync, and taught internal teams to adopt it.
- Built and ran enablement for the firm's engineers: generative AI enablement days for its software developer community, IAM and data-perimeter training series for its security engineers, and a three-day resilience workshop for six application teams.
- Helped the firm fast-track its isolated developer environments on Amazon EKS to production, on its timeline for bringing AI-assisted coding to its developers.
- Bar raiser for AWS Prescriptive Guidance in the security, identity and compliance domains, and North America ambassador for Unicorn Gym, AWS's internal generative AI hackathon program.
- Interview principal-level architect candidates for AWS's financial services organization, running technical screens built on my own financial-services scenarios, and mentor consultants and architects.

Principal Cloud Infrastructure Architect
Amazon Web Services · Columbus, OH Mar 2023 - Nov 2024

- Modernization technical lead for a global financial data and ratings provider's follow-on modernization program, overseeing more than 20 application migrations in parallel through a division's data-center exit.
- Led the Well-Architected assessment of the provider's 15 tier-1 applications, which its leadership used to build modernization business cases.
- Interviewed candidates for AWS architect and consultant roles from mid-level to principal, and vetted partner subcontractors before they joined Professional Services engagements; mentored consultants and architects, many of whom were later promoted.

Senior Cloud Infrastructure Architect
Amazon Web Services · Columbus, OH Dec 2019 - Mar 2023

- Technical lead for a landing-zone engagement for a top global asset manager: led discovery and design workshops with the firm's technology leadership to set its landing-zone and AWS estate strategy, and moved it from a partner-built landing zone to AWS Control Tower, covering security, networking, compliance, and governance; oversaw a partner team's security and compliance work and delivered on time with every deliverable met.
- Led a two-consultant team that built the same firm's hybrid network to AWS in Terraform, connecting Direct Connect to Transit Gateway through a transit VPC for end-to-end encryption; mentored both new consultants and gave weekly technical readouts to the firm's CTO.
- Co-led the technical side of a multi-year program that moved a global financial data and ratings provider's data centers to AWS, and was technical lead on eight of its projects.
- Built, as the sole engineer, the provider's multi-region Transit Gateway platform in Terraform, deployed to every AWS commercial region, so its product teams could attach their VPCs self-service.
- Co-led the governance and security foundations for the provider's federated multi-account estate, designing governance as code with IAM, service control policies, and AWS Organizations.
- Designed, with the provider's engineers and the Amazon RDS service team, a repeatable Terraform pattern for cross-region point-in-time restore of RDS for SQL Server that met a 15-minute RPO and RTO.
- Led the cutover of the provider's crown-jewel loan platforms to AWS with no reported downtime.

Cloud Architect
Cloudreach Inc Oct 2018 - Dec 2019

- Led cloud operating-model and governance designs for Fortune 500 healthcare and financial-services companies on the three major clouds, built to CIS, NIST, GDPR, HIPAA, PCI DSS and FedRAMP requirements; eight enterprise clients adopted the frameworks.
- Led the migrations that followed, including work as an AWS Professional Services subcontractor.

Cloud Systems Developer Lead
Cloudreach Inc Jul 2017 - Oct 2018

- Led delivery pods of four to nine engineers helping companies from startups to the Fortune 500 modernize on AWS, Azure, and Google Cloud, moving customers from release cycles measured in weeks to deploys measured in hours with CI/CD and containers.
- Docker Certified Trainer, delivering hands-on Docker and cloud training to client engineering teams.

Co-Founder and Co-CTO
iCompaaS Jan 2019 - Nov 2019

- Co-founded a cloud-compliance SaaS startup that automated checks and audits of cloud environments, and served as its infrastructure architect; exited before joining AWS.

Owner and Chief Architect
zEngineering, LLC · Columbus, OH Jan 2008 - Jul 2017

- Founded and ran an independent consulting practice for more than 15 small and mid-size businesses, and acted as their managed service provider; focused from 2014 on migrations to AWS and Azure and on application and infrastructure modernizations, and moved its managed customers to an MSP partner in 2017.

Co-Founder
Solid Solutions LLC · Columbus, OH Jan 2000 - Dec 2014

- Co-founded and ran a web hosting company on infrastructure I built and operated.

Manager of Application Development, College of Engineering
The Ohio State University · Columbus, OH Sep 2016 - Jul 2017

- Managed the College of Engineering's application development team, which built and ran more than 250 public websites and custom applications, and introduced DevOps practices on the college's VMware private cloud.

Senior Systems Manager
The Ohio State University · Columbus, OH Apr 2008 - Sep 2016

- Co-led the consolidation of the college's IT support groups into one ITIL-based operations group, and of its Active Directory domains into a single forest, for about 25,000 users and 12,000 endpoints.
- Chief information-systems architect for ten business units, including vendor selection and federal compliance (NIST, CIS, DFARS) for funded research.

Systems Developer Engineer
The Ohio State University · Columbus, OH Apr 2006 - Apr 2008

- Designed and maintained endpoint and server infrastructure for the university's classrooms and labs, including Active Directory, SCCM, and file, web, and database services.

Manager of Student Computer Centers
The Ohio State University · Columbus, OH Mar 2004 - Apr 2006

- Managed staffing and operations for the university's student computer labs, hiring and supervising student and full-time staff, and running lab renovations and budgets.

WRITING, SPEAKING AND BUILDING

- Co-author, *AWS Cookbook* (O'Reilly Media), a category best-seller with a foreword by Jeff Barr and translations into five languages; built and delivered an internal AWS talk series and approved internal guidance on writing a technical book.
- Creator of Cloud Projects: more than 1,100 open-source multi-cloud recipes, with over 600 GitHub stars.
- Author of more than 100 interactive AWS labs on O'Reilly's learning platform: live sandboxes teaching beginner to advanced AWS in code, Terraform, the CLI, and the browser; also consulted with O'Reilly on building the lab engine on AWS and shaping the product.
- Speaker at many public meetups, workshops and conferences, AWS and third-party.
- I hold my personal projects to the same standards as my professional work: CI/CD, automation, resilience, security, performance, cost optimization, and agentic software development. I build in public, with build notes on my site.

EDUCATION

The Ohio State University
BS, Computer Science and Engineering · 2012 · minors in mathematics and statistics; research in artificial intelligence and image recognition

CERTIFICATIONS

- AWS Certified Solutions Architect, Professional and Associate, and AWS Certified Cloud Practitioner · 2024, valid to 2027
- Docker Certified Trainer and Docker Certified Associate · 2017
- Microsoft Exam 70-534: Architecting Microsoft Azure Solutions · 2017 · Credly badge